

Bible Study: Letters of Paul
Central Presbyterian Church
November 30, 2025
Session 13/16: Romans “God’s Plan for Humanity”
Readings: Romans 11: 25-36
English text taken from the Lexham English Bible
Greek text taken from SBLGNT (Society of Biblical Literature Greek New Testament)

Romans 11:25–36: The Unveiled Mystery & Doxological Climax

Macro-Context

- Romans 9–11: Paul’s apologetic theodicy—defending God’s righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) amid Israel’s unbelief.
- Ch. 11 Structure: 11:1–10: Remnant proves election
- 11:11–24: Olive tree metaphor → Gentile warning
- 11:25–32: Climactic μυστήριον—eschatological resolution
- 11:33–36: Doxology—epideictic praise

Audience:

- Gentile majority in Rome (11:13);
- risk of supersessionist arrogance.

Date:

- ~57 CE, from Corinth;
- post-Claudian expulsion (49 CE),
- pre-Neronian persecution.

Verse 25

Greek text:

Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο, ἵνα μὴ ᾗτε ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι, ὅτι πώρως ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ,

LEB:

For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you will not be wise in your own sight, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved, just as it is written, “The deliverer will come out of Zion; he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

Gloss:

| Οὐ | γὰρ | θέλω | ὑμᾶς | ἀγνοεῖν | ἀδελφοί | τὸ | μυστήριον | τοῦτο | ἵνα |
 μὴ | ᾗτε | ἐν | ἑαυτοῖς | φρόνιμοι | ὅτι | πώρωσις | ἀπὸ | μέρους | τῶ |
 Ἰσραὴλ | γέγονεν | ἄχρι | οὗ | τὸ | πλήρωμα | τῶν | ἐθνῶν | εἰσέλθῃ |
 | Not | for | I-want | you | to-be-ignorant | brothers | the | mystery | this | so-
 that | not | you-be | in | yourselves | wise | that | hardening | from | part | to-
 the | Israel | has-come | until | that | the | fullness | of-the | Gentiles | may-
 come-in |

Grammatical & Discourse Analysis

- Οὐ...θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν – Disclosure formula (1 Cor 10:1; 12:1; 1 Thess 4:13); rhetorical urgency.
- τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο – Definite article + demonstrative → specific, previously hinted (cf. 11:11–14).
- ἵνα μὴ ᾗτε...φρόνιμοι – Negative purpose clause; φρόνιμος = self-conceited wisdom (Stoic phronēsis parody).
- πώρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους – Prepositional phrase of source + extent; partial (not total) hardening.
- γέγονεν – Perfect tense: state resulting from divine act (cf. Exod 7–11).
- ἄχρι οὗ...εἰσέλθῃ – Subjunctive of indefinite future; eschatological horizon.

Historical-Theological Context

- μυστήριον: In Qumran (1QM, 1QH), God’s war plan; in Paul, Christological-eschatological (Eph 3:4–6).
- πώρωσις: Medical term (Hippocrates); LXX uses for Pharaoh (Exod 8:15) → judicial hardening.
- πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν: Echoes Gen 48:19 (Ephraim as “fullness of nations”); eschatological ingathering.

Roman Context:

Gentile Christians saw Jewish rejection as proof of superiority → Paul counters imperial hubris.

Synthesis:

- Paul unveils a divine strategy: Judicial hardening of most (not all) Israel →
- Full inclusion of Gentiles →
- Catalyst for Israel’s jealousy → salvation (11:11).

Rhetorical goal:

Humility—Gentiles are not replacements, but provocateurs in God’s plan.

Verse 26a

Greek:

καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται·

LEB:

and so all Israel will be saved,

Gloss:

| καὶ | οὕτως | πᾶς | Ἰσραὴλ | σωθήσεται |
| and | thus | all | Israel | will-be-saved |

Grammatical & Lexical Notes

- οὕτως – Modal adverb (“in this manner”), not temporal (“and then”).
- Parallels: 1 Cor 11:28; Gal 1:6.
- πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ – Corporate totality (cf. 1 Sam 7:5; 1 Kgs 12:1); not every individual.
- σωθήσεται – Future passive: divine act at parousia.

Intertextual:

Paul fuses Isa 59:20 + Isa 27:9 (sin removal) + Jer 31:34 (forgiveness).

Historical Eschatology:

- “All Israel” in m. Sanhedrin 10:1: All Jews except apostates.
- Zion redemption: Central in Psalms of Solomon 17–18, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch.
- Deliverer from Zion: Messianic, post-exilic hope → Christ’s return.

Synthesis

- “All Israel” = ethnic covenant people (remnant + restored majority) saved through faith in the Deliverer at the end.
- Manner (οὕτως): Via Gentile salvation → Jewish jealousy → national turning.

Verse 26b–27

Greek:

καθὼς γέγραπται· Ἦξει ἐκ Σιών ὁ ῥυόμενος, ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.
καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἡ παρ’ ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

LEB:

just as it is written, “The deliverer will come out of Zion; he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me with them when I take away their sins.”

Gloss:

| καθὼς | γέγραπται | Ἦξει | ἐκ | Σιών | ὁ | ῥυόμενος | ἀποστρέψει |
ἀσεβείας | ἀπὸ | Ἰακώβ |
| just-as | it-has-been-written | Will-come | out-of | Zion | the | Deliverer | he-
will-turn-away | ungodliness | from | Jacob |
| καὶ | αὕτη | αὐτοῖς | ἡ | παρ’ | ἐμοῦ | διαθήκη | ὅταν | ἀφέλωμαι | τὰς |
ἁμαρτίας | αὐτῶν |
| and | this | to-them | the | from | me | covenant | when | I-take-away | the |
sins | of-them |

Textual & Syntactic Notes

- καθὼς γέγραπται – Scripture-proof formula; divine speech act.
- Ἦξει...ὁ ῥυόμενος – Futuristic present; parousia implied.
- αὕτη...διαθήκη – Resumptive apposition; New Covenant (Jer 31:31–34).
- ὅταν + aorist subjunctive – Indefinite future; eschatological “when”.

Covenant Theology

- παρ’ ἐμοῦ – Divine initiative (not bilateral).
- ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας – Atonement language (Yom Kippur, Lev 16); Christ’s work applied.

Synthesis:

- Israel’s salvation = New Covenant enactment: Deliverer (Christ) returns from Zion →
- Removes sin →
- Fulfills forgiveness promise.

Verse 28

Greek:

κατὰ μὲν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐχθροὶ δι’ ὑμᾶς, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοὶ διὰ τοῦς πατέρας·

LEB:

With respect to the gospel, they are enemies for your sake, but with respect to election, they are dearly loved for the sake of the fathers.

Gloss:

κατὰ	μὲν	τὸ	εὐαγγέλιον	ἐχθροὶ	δι’	ὑμᾶς	κατὰ	δὲ	τὴν	ἐκλογὴν
ἀγαπητοὶ	διὰ	τοῦς	πατέρας							
according-to	on-one-hand	the	gospel	enemies	for-the-sake-of	you				
according-to	on-the-other-hand	the	election	beloved	for-the-sake-of					
the	fathers									

Rhetorical Antithesis:

- κατὰ μὲν...κατὰ δὲ – Dual perspective (forensic vs. covenantal).
- ἐχθροὶ – Passive: “regarded as enemies” (by God for salvation history).
- ἐκλογή – Corporate election (9:11); not individual predestination here.
- διὰ τοῦς πατέρας – Merit of ancestors (rabbinic zecut avot).

Historical Paradox:

- Gospel opposition: Jewish leaders persecuted church (1 Thess 2:14–16).
- Abrahamic covenant: Unconditional (Gen 17:7; Ps 105:8–10).

Synthesis:

- Present hostility serves Gentile salvation;
- Covenant love remains because of patriarchs → future hope.

Verse 29

Greek:

ἀμεταμέλητα γὰρ τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλήσις τοῦ θεοῦ.

LEB:

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Gloss:

| ἀμεταμέλητα | γὰρ | τὰ | χαρίσματα | καὶ | ἡ | κλήσις | τοῦ | θεοῦ |
| irrevocable | for | the | gifts | and | the | calling | of-the | God |

Lexical Depth:

- ἀμεταμέλητα – Hapax in NT; “without regret” (2 Cor 7:10 contrast).
- χαρίσματα: 9:4–5 (adoption, glory, covenants, law, promises).
- κλήσις: Effectual summons into covenant.

Covenant Irrevocability:

- Num 23:19: “God is not man that he should repent.”
- Rabbinic parallel: Berakhot 32a—God’s oath to Abraham eternal.

Synthesis:

God’s election gifts to Israel are non-negotiable → guarantee of restoration.

Verses 30–31: Mercy Reciprocity

Greek:

ὥσπερ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ποτε ἠπειθήσατε τῷ θεῷ, νῦν δὲ ἠλεήθητε τῇ τούτων ἀπειθείᾳ, οὕτως καὶ οὗτοι νῦν ἠπειθήσαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ νῦν ἐλεηθῶσιν·

LEB:

For just as you formerly were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of the disobedience of these, so also these have now been disobedient for your mercy, in order that they also may now be shown mercy.

Gloss:

| ὥσπερ | γὰρ | ὑμεῖς | ποτε | ἠπειθήσατε | τῷ | θεῷ | νῦν | δὲ | ἠλεήθητε | τῇ |
| τούτων | ἀπειθείᾳ |
| just-as | for | you | once | disobeyed | the | God | now | but | you-were-shown-
| mercy | by-the | of-these | disobedience |
| οὕτως | καὶ | οὗτοι | νῦν | ἠπειθήσαν | τῷ | ὑμετέρῳ | ἐλέει | ἵνα | καὶ | αὐτοὶ | νῦν |
| ἐλεηθῶσιν |
| thus | also | these | now | disobeyed | by-the | of-you | mercy | so-that | also | they
| now | may-be-shown-mercy |

Instrumental dative:

Disobedience as means of mercy.

Salvation-Historical Logic:

- Gentile past: Idolatry (1:18–32) → mercy via Jewish rejection.
- Jewish present: Unbelief → mercy via Gentile faith.
- Future: Jewish jealousy (11:11) → faith.

Synthesis:

Divine jujitsu: God uses disobedience to channel mercy in both directions.

Verse 32

Greek:

συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπειθειαν ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσῃ.

LEB:

For God confined them all in disobedience, in order that he could have mercy on them all.

Gloss:

| συνέκλεισεν | γὰρ | ὁ | θεὸς | τοὺς | πάντας | εἰς | ἀπειθειαν | ἵνα | τοὺς | πάντας | ἐλεήσῃ |
 | locked-up-together | for | the | God | the | all | into | disobedience | so-that | the | all | he-might-show-mercy |

Semantic & Theological Depth:

- συνέκλεισεν – Fishnet/prison metaphor (LXX Hab 1:4; Gal 3:22).
- τοὺς πάντας – All without distinction (Jews + Gentiles), not all individuals.
- ἵνα...ἐλεήσῃ – Purpose clause: Disobedience is pedagogical.

Augustinian vs. Arminian Readings:

- Not universalism; not double predestination.
- Corporate: All groups under sin → all groups offered mercy.

Synthesis:

God orchestrates universal rebellion to display universal mercy—sovereign grace over both.

Verses 33–36: Doxology

Greek:

Ὡς βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ· ὡς ἀνεξεραύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ. Τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου; ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο; ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ; ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα· αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

LEB:

Oh, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how incomprehensible are his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who

has given in advance to him, and it will be paid back to him?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for eternity! Amen.

Gloss:

Ὡς	βάθος	πλούτου	καὶ	σοφίας	καὶ	γνώσεως	θεοῦ			
O	depth	of-riches	and	of-wisdom	and	of-knowledge	of-God			
ὡς	ἀνεξεραύνητα	τὰ	κρίματα	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	ἀνεξιχνίαστοι	αἱ	ὁδοὶ	αὐτοῦ	
how	unsearchable	the	judgments	of-him	and	untraceable	the	ways	of-him	
τίς	γὰρ	ἔγνω	νοῦν	κυρίου	ἢ	τίς	σύμβουλος	αὐτοῦ	ἐγένετο	
who	for	knew	mind	of-Lord	or	who	counselor	of-him	became	
ἢ	τίς	προέδωκεν	αὐτῷ	καὶ	ἀνταποδοθήσεται	αὐτῷ				
or	who	gave-first	to-him	and	it-will-be-repaid	to-him				
ὅτι	ἐξ	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	δι’	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	εἰς	αὐτὸν	τὰ	πάντα
because	from	him	and	through	him	and	to	him	the	all-things
αὐτῷ	ἢ	δόξα	εἰς	τοὺς	αἰῶνας	ἀμήν				
to-him	the	glory	into	the	ages	amen				

Theological Climax:

- Unsearchable: Not irrational, but transcendent.
- No human contribution: Grace alone.

Telos:

All history → God’s glory.

Synthesis:

- Paul silences speculation with awe.
- The mystery of Israel/Gentile salvation → doxological surrender.

Summary Table

Verse	Greek key	Theological thrust	Historical echo
25	μυστήριον, πύρωσις	Partial hardening → Gentile fullness	Qumran eschatology
26-27	πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ, ῥυόμενος	National salvation via Deliverer	Isa 59:20, Jer 31
28-29	ἐχθροὶ / ἀγαπητοὶ	Dual status; irrevocable gifts	Abrahamic covenant
30-31	ἀπείθεια → ἔλεος	Mercy reciprocity	Acts mission pattern
32	συνέκλεισεν...ἐλεήσῃ	Universal sin → universal mercy	Gal 3:22
33-36	βάθος...δόξα	Doxology of sovereignty	Jewish berakah

Final Theological Center:

God's wise, merciful, sovereign plan enfolds Israel's temporary hardening and Gentile inclusion into a single redemptive drama culminating in Israel's salvation and eternal praise.

Application for Today:

- No room for anti-Judaism (v.25).
- Hope for Jewish mission (v.26).
- Worship as response to mystery (v.36).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does Paul describe God's plan for Israel and the Gentiles?
- What does this teach about God's sovereignty?
- How can we trust God's plan in uncertainty?