

Romans 11 • The Incredible Redemptive Plan of God

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · August 30, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Father in heaven, we thank you so much for the opportunity each time we gather to spend some time in your Word, to spend some time in your presence, to open our heart, Lord, to what you want to say to us, and we really pray tonight that you would help us to tune our hearts to your voice, that we would hear from you, hear your heart, your thoughts, your truth, that you would speak to us, and Lord, we pray, I pray specifically tonight for those among us who have come here really kind of even desperate to hear from you. Really pray that you would guide and direct and speak to each person. We look to you in this, Father, and we thank you. In Jesus' precious and holy name we pray, amen, amen, amen. Romans chapter 11, this is the last of the three chapters that I talked to you about, 9, 10, and 11, where the Apostle Paul really expresses his heart on the nation of Israel, his desire for them, his grief over them, and so forth, and it is also the last chapter of what Paul presents to us really of a more doctrinal nature.

What I mean by that is that beginning with chapter 12 and onward, he's going to become much more practical, and not to say that theology isn't practical, but he's going to talk really more about just living in Christ, whereas really these first 11 chapters of Romans have really been pretty thoroughly theological, and sometimes they're even challenging, and I've said several times, sometimes you have to put your hip waders on, and that's going to be a little bit of the case again here tonight. In fact, so much so that I want to start off with a little bit of a glossary of terms which I'm going to put up on the screen for you here, and it has to do with two very important words and they are elect and chosen. Now the thing you need to know about these two words, and you'll see both of them tonight, is that they're the exact same Greek word. There's really no difference between the two in terms of the Greek and the meaning of the Greek. They are interchangeable, but the translators simply put in what they thought would work best in each sentence.

But essentially they refer, or yeah, this is kind of, I'm laying it out here, they refer to believers, and so they refer to Jews before the time of Christ, and so Paul will use the word elect to describe the nation of Israel before Jesus even came on the scene in human body. And he will also use the term to describe Christians, which of course are made up of both Jews and Gentiles. And the thing that I want you to see

here is that the words elect and chosen are words that are used in the Bible to describe believers from God's perspective. And what I mean by that is it's how God sees you. It's not necessarily how you see you.

You see yourself as a believer, somebody who has put their faith in Jesus, and yet God sees you from the perspective of eternity. And so he didn't have to wait for the day that you chose him. He didn't have to wait for the day that, you know, however you came to Jesus, whether you were in church and you came down front and you accepted Jesus when someone did an altar call or maybe a family member or a friend shared the Lord with you, or maybe you were raised in a Christian home, and as far as you know, you've always been a Christian. It doesn't really matter. You and I think, though, in those terms, and the reason I bring this up is because I believe that this idea, or rather a misunderstanding of this idea, has been a cause of great pain in many people's lives to the point where I've had people ask me, Pastor Paul, how do I know if God has chosen me?

And the simple answer to that is really, if you're going to think of it in true technical terms, there's no way you could know. There's no way you could know. Well, somebody might say, well, if you come to Jesus, then you'll know. And that's kind of a pat answer, and I've used it before, but technically it removes the assurance of our salvation because people might say, and there are a lot of tenderhearted people out there that struggle with assurance, and then they hear somebody, you know, teaching from the pulpit and saying that God has chosen you before you were even born, and He's chosen some people, but He's not chosen others. And so they walk away going, well, which one was I?

Was I chosen or was I not chosen? And it has caused great grief in many people's hearts and minds. Once again, our perspective is very different. We're looking at our salvation from the standpoint that I've accepted the promise that God has given in His Word, that if I confess my sins and I turn to Jesus and I accept Him and receive Him as my Savior and all that He did on the cross, I will be saved. And I don't sit and stop and think about whether I was chosen ahead of time or whether I am one of the elect.

I don't use that term. God uses that term. And He says to me, Paul, I chose you before the foundations of the earth. But you see, that's His vantage point. His vantage point is eternity because, again, God doesn't have to sit and wait around for things to happen to know that they've happened.

And that's the thing you need to know. He calls you His chosen predicated on His foreknowledge, and He has foreknowledge of all things. And He knew the day that you would come to Him and so forth. I want you to consider, as we go into this, a couple of passages on the screen, first from 1 Peter. Listen to this.

Peter, he writes at the beginning of his epistle, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who are elect, and that's that Greek word, but look what he says here, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. So how are you elect? According to the foreknowledge of God, right? That's why the Lord refers to you that way. You've been elected, you've been chosen, according to His foreknowledge, because He always knew, right?

Romans, and then, you know, you might remember this next passage, we studied it a few weeks ago. Romans 8, it says, for those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, right? So who did He predestine? Those whom He foreknew, right? That means He saw it, right?

So we need to have these terms in order, or we're going to struggle with some of our understanding related to these things. And I don't probably have to tell you that there are churches, there are pastors, there are leaders, many of whom I have deep respect for, who I believe get this wrong, and they fixate so much on the idea of chosen that they obliterate the invitation and the choice that we make to receive Christ as our Savior. And it truly comes across as you're chosen, and there's really nothing you had to do with it. In fact, people who believe this doctrine, this idea that people are chosen, and they're chosen apart from any decision they make, or ever will make, these people, they don't evangelize like you and I evangelize. We're praying for people's hearts to be changed.

We're praying and asking God to do a work that people would be open to hearing the gospel. You know, Jesus said, no man can come to me unless he's drawn by my Father. And I believe, this is my personal belief, I believe the Father draws everybody. But I believe some people don't respond to that drawing. They simply choose to harden their heart.

And there are so many warnings that are given to us in the Word of God about turning away from faith and embracing unbelief, that it would seem to just blow this idea out of the water that you had nothing to do with it. You read what the biblical authors say, and it's like, I don't think that's what they believed. I don't think that's what they taught. If they did, why would you ever say to a chosen elect person, be careful? Be careful not to turn away from the Lord.

Why would you even say that? If that person was known from the foundation of the world that they were a believer? Now here's the point. You were known from the foundation of the world that you would be a believer. But the warnings are still there.

Why? Why are there so many warnings sprinkled throughout the New Testament, you know? And we're gonna actually talk about these. You know, the Apostle Paul, in this chapter, is going to use an

important word that we're going to look at that tells you there is an element of this that's on you, and that is the receiving part. You know, when John wrote his first gospel account, he said, yet to all who received him, to those who believed on his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

I believe it's John 1, 12. You probably know that passage. It doesn't say to all who were elect. Now, that wouldn't be inappropriate to say that, necessarily, but he doesn't say it there. He says to all who received, who believed.

That's on you. See, that's your part. You can't take one part and say, this is the only one I'm gonna believe in. I'm only, because people will do that. You got people over here that say, well, it's all about God's sovereign choice, and you got people over here who say, it's all about our personal choice, and they ignore one another, and they create a camp.

I'm in this camp. I'm gonna put my flag in the ground, and I'm gonna defend my camp from all these other, and pretty soon, evangelism becomes bringing people to my camp, not bringing people to Jesus. Oh, and that's the sad part. So, what we have to do is we have to say, no, no, no, no, we're gonna abolish the camps on these polar opposite sides, and we're gonna embrace what the Bible says. The Bible says, you were chosen.

You were elect before the foundations of the earth according to God's foreknowledge, and also, the Bible says, to all who received him, to those who chose to believe, he gave the right to become children of God. So, Paul begins chapter 11 by continuing to talk about Israel, and by the way, this is important, too, because Israel is in the news. Israel is in people's hearts right now. Israel is, Israel has a big target on its back right now in the world. There is a rising anti-Semitism in the world, which I believe is demonically inspired, and there's a great hatred right now going on about Israel.

Here's, I don't, you know what? However you decide to think about Israel, just make sure it's biblical, okay? Don't think about that country from just a purely political standpoint, and I know you can't get away from that, but if that's the only way you're seeing Israel, you're gonna follow the rest of the lemmings right off the edge of the cliff, but you and I need to be thinking biblically. We need to say, listen, my understanding of Israel should be formed by the Bible, what the Bible says, and Paul is gonna give us some important information about Israel. Look at what he says in verse one.

He says, I ask then, has God rejected his people? Do you know what? There's a good many people in the world today that would say the answer to that is yes, and some of them are YouTube influencers, and they're influencing a lot of people, but look what Paul says. Look what Paul's answer is. By no means, for

I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, so Paul is making the point that his own salvation is proof that God has not completely rejected the Jewish people, all right?

He goes on to say in verse two, God has not rejected the people whom he foreknew. There it is. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? Lord, they've killed your prophets, they've demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life, and what is God's reply to him, Paul asks? I have kept for myself 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

So too, at the present time, Paul writes, there is a remnant chosen by grace. So Paul is using the story that is given to us in 1 Kings chapter 19 during the ministry of Elijah. You'll remember, Elijah had just had a huge victory against the prophets of Baal, but that really got Jezebel irritated. When Ahab went home and told her about it, he destroyed 400 of your prophets, and she wrote him this poison pen letter, and basically promised that by the very time the next day, he would be dead, and so Elijah ran for his life. He literally ran scared, and when the Lord finally confronted him, he complained to the Lord.

He said, I'm the last one. I'm the only one who loves you, cares about you, or is devoted to you in any way, and the Lord said, actually, that's not the case. I have preserved a remnant. I still have a remnant of people that are still faithful, and here's Paul's summary now in verse five. Look with me in your Bible at verse five.

So too, at the present time, there is a remnant, and that means today. It was true in Paul's day, and it's true today. God still has a remnant, and I want you to notice how Paul describes how this remnant was chosen. Look what he says at the end of verse five. Chosen by grace, right?

That's such an important phrase. It was chosen by grace, and then Paul explains what that means in verse six, and if it's, he says, if it's by grace, it's no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace. You can't have grace and works at the same time. If you do, if you bring works into grace, grace becomes something other than grace, right?

And here's the deal. One of the reasons that the majority of the people of Israel stumbled over the gospel and Jesus as their Savior is because they focused on salvation as something to be earned. You know that, and Paul reminds us here that the remnant of Jews that God has retained, he has retained through grace, not by works, right? And that means these people, these Jews, came to a saving faith, you know, according to the promises of God. They didn't do it by works, and so Paul then asks the question in verse seven.

Look with me there. What then, he says, Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking, which was righteousness. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened. As it is written, he's gonna quote Isaiah 29 here, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear down to this very day. And you might look at that verse and you say, ah, that doesn't seem fair.

Why, God gave them a spirit of stupor? So they couldn't see and they couldn't hear? Well, then how can he judge them? If he's the one that hardened their hearts, I mean, doesn't that sound just tremendously fair to you? God hardens somebody's heart, and then he judges them for having a hard heart.

And you might look at that and kind of go, well, that doesn't make sense at all. But what you need to understand, and we've talked about this before, God didn't harden the heart of the Jews just because he felt like it. He hardened their heart because they had been hardened through their own unwillingness to hear the gospel, and they were so prideful and clung to their own self-righteousness through acts of goodness and law-keeping and da-da-da-da. They became so legalistic that God eventually gave them over to that condition, and that's what it means when it says God hardened their hearts so that they could no longer hear, they could no longer see. He's literally giving them over to the condition they were in.

And what that means is God is no longer attempting to reach them because they've been given over. You know, Paul talked about this way back in Romans chapter one, about people being given over. It's a phrase that is used in the Bible to describe being given over to a condition that we've already chose to live in and refused to leave, because there was a refusal to repent, a refusal to change. God finally said, fine, that's the way you wanna live, then that's the way you're gonna live. And with the Jews, it's like if you believe, if you really are going to live in this state of pridefulness and rejection and stubbornness, I'm going to give you over to stubbornness and you will be stubborn.

You know, this is really just the law of sowing and reaping. We all know about the law of sowing and reaping. What a man sows, so also shall he reap. Well, can you sow hardheartedness and then reap hardheartedness? Of course.

Can you sow stubbornness and reap stubbornness? Absolutely. You know, if you choose to close your ears to God, you're eventually gonna reap a condition of deafness. If you choose to close your eyes to God, you're eventually gonna reap a condition of blindness. And that's what happened to the majority of the Jews because they rejected God's purpose and plan.

through His Son, Jesus Christ, their Messiah, even though God had foretold His coming. Now Paul goes on. You'll look with me in verse 9 here. He's now going to go on to quote David from Psalm 69. He

says, and David says, Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them.

Let their eyes be darkened so they cannot see and bend their backs forever. And what Paul is doing by quoting this is he's saying that even David prophetically announced God's judgment on the house of Israel and on their hardness of heart and stubbornness and refusal to believe. And he literally prays and says, Lord, turn their table into a snare. And their table is representative of all the things that God has blessed them with, all the privileges that He has given to them over the years. This is their table, right?

And so what is David praying? Turn the blessings and privileges into a stumbling block. And that is exactly what God did because they refused to repent. So having said this, Paul goes on to pose another question in verse 11, a very important question. So I ask, Paul says, did they stumble in order that they might fall?

Now I want you to notice in this sentence that Paul is differentiating stumbling and falling. Did you catch that? He refers to stumbling as a temporary, whoops, but you didn't fall down. You caught yourself and you didn't fall down. You ever done that, right?

At my age, you stumble and you're going down. There's no more catching myself. It's just all I have left is just to count the bruises. But, you know, when I was younger, I could actually stumble and go, whoa, my balance was such that, you know, and strength. Here's what he's saying.

He said, have they stumbled to the point of actually falling completely? And his answer is, by no means. Rather, he says, through their trespass, or you might even say through their stumbling, salvation has come to the Gentiles so as to make Israel jealous. All right? Guys, don't overlook the importance of this verse.

This is so good. You can see here that Paul is making an important statement. Yes, Israel has stumbled, but they have not fallen beyond recovery. Okay? Yes, they have stumbled, but they have not fallen beyond recovery.

Is that what you believe about Israel? That's a biblical understanding of Israel. And I expect, as a Bible teacher, that that is going to influence your understanding of Israel, your outlook, your view. And you're going to say to people, yeah, you know, they've stumbled. They are basically living in unbelief.

But the Bible says they have not stumbled so as to be beyond recovery. Okay? Do you understand, can you see here from this verse, the reason that we have a heart toward Israel isn't because they make good

decisions, or they're politically motivated in a moral way, or that we like their leadership, or that we think that they're just the neatest people on the face of the earth. That's not why. The reason we have a heart toward Israel is because God has a heart toward Israel, and he has a plan, and he has a purpose.

And that plan is not done yet. That's it. Our relationship to Israel is based solely on our relationship to God. You cannot dismiss Israel without dismissing a great deal of God's word. God's not done with those people.

And I know, I know that the majority of people in Israel are atheists. I know that. But that is not, that is not the primary influence in my heart as it relates to my view of that nation. The Bible is my primary influence. Okay?

So Paul is telling us here, they've stumbled, yes, but not beyond recovery. God still has a plan. Verse 12, he says, now, if their trespass, and again, that could be, or if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean? Oh, what is he saying here? Is he telling us prophetically that there will be an inclusion?

Let's keep reading. Now I'm speaking to you Gentiles, inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry. In other words, I make a big deal of it. In order, somehow, to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

And then he uses a metaphor. If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump. And another metaphor, if the root is holy, so are the branches. This can be a kind of a challenging paragraph to unwind, but let me put it on the screen in bullet form. Maybe that will help.

Here's what we get out of these last verses that we just read. You ready? First of all, Israel as a nation has rejected the gospel. We know that. Israel as a nation was hardened and set aside.

We know that too. The rejection of the gospel by Israel became a blessing for Gentiles, and that probably is most of us in this room, if not all of us. And then lastly, since their rejection produced blessing, and I would consider my faith in Jesus a blessing, how much more will their restoration result in blessings for the whole world? What is Paul saying? He's telling us that Israel will be restored one day.

Guys, Israel will be restored one day. And that is exactly what we're told prophetically in the Bible. Listen, there are many passages in the Old Testament that speak of that period of time that we call the

millennial kingdom. It's also referred to as the messianic kingdom because it is a 1,000-year period of time after the Great Tribulation when Jesus will rule and reign upon the earth. I've told you this before.

Guess where he's going to rule and reign from? Zion, Mount Zion in Jerusalem. And it is amazing to me. I've taught through the Old Testament three times, and it's amazing to me how many prophecies relate to the millennial kingdom. And it talks about how Israel is going to be exalted on the earth during the millennial kingdom.

I want to show you a couple of examples. First, Isaiah chapter 60 on the screen. Check this out. Arise, shine, for your light has come. He's talking to Israel here.

And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you, for behold, darkness shall cover the earth. In other words, the rest of the earth is going to be in total darkness and thick darkness, the peoples. But the Lord will arise upon you, and the glory will be seen upon you. And look at this. And the nation shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

This is a prophecy in Isaiah of the millennial kingdom. And what is he saying? The world is going to be in utter darkness. Jesus is going to come to Israel at the end of the tribulation period, fight on their behalf in the battle we call the battle of Armageddon. And at the conclusion of that, as the millennial kingdom begins to unfold, the nations of the earth are going to pour into Israel.

Into Israel. Okay? Check out Zechariah chapter 8 on the screen. Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and entreat the favor of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, in those days, ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew saying, let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

Again, this is a prophecy of the millennial kingdom and how the Jews are going to be exalted, the remnant that will be saved during that period of the great tribulation. And then another passage from Zechariah, this time chapter 14. It says, on that day, living waters shall flow out from where? Washington, D.C.? Nope.

Jerusalem. Half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter, and the Lord will be king. over all the earth, on that day the Lord will be one and his name one." These are prophecies again of the Millennial Kingdom and it tells us in these prophecies how you know the condition the status of Israel at that time. This should affect your view of Israel again not just news not just influencers online this should be your influence your primary influence and I'm not saying you have to agree with everything Israel says and does.

I don't at all you can still have an opinion and you can still say that that was junk that was flat out wrong and I didn't like that and that was bad and I don't mind saying it but that doesn't change my understanding of the nation of Israel. All right now beginning in verse 17 the Apostle Paul draws a lesson here now for believers today from the example of Israel because we're supposed to learn from them and he says in verse 17, But if some of the branches were broken off and you, talking to the Gentiles, although a wild olive shoot, you can call each other that here when we get done with the service just look at somebody go, Oh, you wild olive shoot. Yeah, that's what you are. He says, You were grafted in among the others and you now share the nourishing root of the olive tree. All that means that's the blessings and the privileges that go along with being children of God.

Here's the warning do not be arrogant toward the branches. In other words, Israel those that were lopped off don't be arrogant toward them. If you are remember it's not you who support the root but the root that supports you. Then you will say, Well branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. Yeah, he says that's true.

They were broken off. But remember why? It was because of their unbelief and you stand fast through election. Oh, it doesn't say that does it? Now that again, that wouldn't be incorrect to say.

Paul's not talking from God's perspective now. He's talking from your perspective and he says, How do you stand? You stand by faith, right? That's our perspective. That's today's perspective.

I have faith in the in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, right? You stand fast through faith. So he says don't be proud but rather fear for if God did not spare the natural branches neither will he spare you. There's a warning. There's a warning.

Note then the kindness and the severity of God severity toward those who have fallen. That's Israel, but God's kindness to you provided provided and by the way, if you have a different translation of the Bible, yours doesn't say provided it says if. If and that's really the same sense provided you continue in his kindness and that means you continue to put your faith in what Jesus did for you on the cross. Look what he's how he ends this section. Otherwise, you too will be cut off.

Would you consider that a warning? Because I would and the Bible is full of them. It's full of them. But what are these warnings predicated on? Faith and unbelief.

Okay, I get questions almost every day of the week from people wanting to know if this sin or that sin is going to disqualify them from the kingdom of God or if they even just struggle with sin. You know

Pastor Paul, I struggle so much with sin. Am I even saved? I'm like dude that proves you're saved. Like I've told you guys before, before I knew Jesus, I didn't struggle with sin.

I just sinned. I didn't struggle with it at all. Now once I got saved and God put his spirit in me and I understood what it is to grieve the Holy Spirit. Now I started struggling because I knew this wasn't right. I should be doing better.

So, you know, but people are always asking, you know, this or that or Pastor Paul, let me give you a hypothetical situation, you know, and then they come up with some, somebody does this, are they still saved? Listen, listen, your salvation is not predicated on how rotten your sin is or how good your heart is. It's predicated on faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, period. So stop asking dumb questions, you know, because it's about faith and that's what you're going to see as you read through the New Testament. They don't sit and talk about, well, if you do the big, the big one, the big one, you know, no, it's all about faith.

He says, provided that you continue in his kindness and that's faith and understanding in what Jesus did. Otherwise, he says, you too will be cut off and so he's using a word picture here and the whole section we're reading here is this picture of this tree that represents the blessings and privileges and he says, you've been grafted in but don't be arrogant toward those that were cut off. Don't be arrogant. But what you need, what we need to avoid is unbelief. Unbelief.

Why do you think the enemy is so busy in our schools and colleges today to cause young people to come out of those places largely filled with unbelief? Because that's the key. That's the key to destroying their lives. Right? Now what Paul did in this passage where he used that word that I kind of had you focus on there, provided you continue and again in other Bible translations, it's if you continue and if you know your grammar, you know that provided and if are what we call a conditional clause and what that means is that the word if or provided introduces a condition into the equation and the condition must be met for something to happen.

Okay, I might say to you, well, we're going to go have a picnic if the weather holds out and what I did is I introduced a conditional clause. The condition is based on the weather. Okay, when your kids are little, you say to them, well, we'll go and get you an ice cream cone this afternoon if you'll be quiet for an hour or go in your room and play quietly and if you can do that, we'll go get an ice cream cone or something like that. You introduced a conditional clause to your child. Okay, Paul introduced a conditional clause.

Right? He says, again, verse 22, note then the kindness and the severity of God, severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you if, if you continue to walk in faith and trust and hope and that sort of thing in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. You know, this isn't the only place where Paul uses a conditional clause. I want to show you 1 Corinthians 15 on the screen. This is another important passage.

Paul says, now, I would remind you brothers of the gospel I preach to you, which you received, talking to believers, in which you stand, and by which you're being saved, if, did you notice the conditional clause? There it is. If you do what? You're a good person. No, it says, if you hold fast to the word, doesn't it?

That's faith. If you hold fast to the word, I preach to you, unless you believed in vain. Okay. Okay. First of all, I got a question for you.

Is it possible to believe in vain? Paul thought so. There's a lot of people that don't believe it is possible. Paul thought so, the apostle Paul. And he introduces this, this, this conditional clause.

He says, I'm talking to believers and you are believers He says, I'm talking to believers and you are believers in Jesus Christ and your salvation is secure if you hold fast. That's it, you know, if you hold fast. So, you know, again, this, this kind of, this draws people into more questions because, you know, they hear what the word says, but they still want to question it and they want to, okay, well, then let's talk about this. What if, and you know what? I don't even want to go there.

I have stopped answering people's questions when they ask me, Pastor Paul, is it possible for a believer to lose their salvation? I don't go there. I don't even answer the question anymore. You know why? Because the apostle Paul and the other biblical writers didn't really answer that question either.

What they did was they sounded warnings and the warning was always about faith and unbelief. That's all you got to know. That's all you need to know and I'm not going to step out on a broken branch and try to say something that isn't supported by the word of God. Listen, the issue is between you and Jesus. All you need to know is that he says, here's the deal.

Salvation is by grace through faith. It's free. It's a free gift from God. Accept it by faith and you're saved. You have the promise of eternal life, but then he also gives you these warnings, right?

He says, don't fall into unbelief. Keep your faith strong and so forth. That's it. We're not going to go any further. We're not going to get into all these, well, what if?

And you know, what I want to ask people when they say to me, well, what about, I want to say, why? Are you planning on testing your salvation to see if you can lose it? Are you checking to see if you can go so far and where the drop-off point is? We're not going there. We are to rejoice in our salvation.

We are to rejoice in what Jesus did on the cross and the fact that we have an assurance of our salvation. Our assurance is not based in you. It's based in him and what he did, okay? We're saved by grace through faith. Now, Paul says in verse 23, again, concerning Israel, he says, and even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in.

For God has the power to graft them in again. Of course he does, he can do anything. For if you, and now he's speaking to Gentiles, that's us, if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and you were grafted, and he tells you it's even contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, talking now about Israel, the natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree? You've been grafted into Israel's tree that was given to them. It's pretty crazy, isn't it?

So you can see that Paul refers to Israel as the natural branches. You guys are the unnatural, me too. We're the unnatural branches. We should get a T-shirt or something, right? The church of the unnatural branches.

Of course, we wanna make sure we'd invite Jews to be there too. Somebody could, they could come in and say, I'm a natural branch, right? Anyway, he goes on to explain this whole thing. Verse 25, lest you be wise in your own sight, and that's a way of saying don't be so proud of your wisdom that you end up being stupid. He says, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery.

By the way, in the Bible, a mystery is something that was previously withheld that has now been revealed. So it's not like a Sherlock Holmes mystery that we have to wait for Sherlock to figure it out. It's already been revealed, but it was previously unknown. So he says, listen, I don't want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers. A partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Interesting, that's a time term. And in this way, he says, all Israel will be saved. As it is written, the deliverer will come from Zion. He will banish ungodliness from Jacob. That's talking about when Jesus, in his second coming, comes to Israel, and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

And he quotes things from different passages, prophecies in Isaiah, but he reveals the important details about God's plan for Israel. First of all, he tells you and me that what hardening Israel has has been partial, not complete, and then he goes on in that very same verse to tell you how long that hardening is gonna

continue. It's until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. So the Gentiles, interestingly enough, and that's us, we recognize that there's a timing element to our being in Christ. And when the fullness of the Gentiles has come into the flock, into the faith, into the kingdom, then something's gonna happen.

Something's gonna happen. And you say, well, how are we gonna know when the fullness of the Gentiles is in? Well, you're gonna hear a trumpet. And you're gonna start levitating off the floor. And you're gonna meet the Lord in the air in what we call the rapture.

That's when you'll know. That's when you'll know the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. But this timing thing about Gentiles is spoken elsewhere in the scripture as well, where Gentiles become a timing element to end times prophecy. And there's something that Jesus said about timing related to the Gentiles. It's in the Gospel of Luke.

Let me put it on the screen for you. From Luke 21, here's Jesus. He says, they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations. He's talking about Israel here and essentially the fall of Jerusalem. He says, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, look at this, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

God has a timetable. And the Gentiles are on that timetable. Now, let me ask you a question. Are the Gentiles still trampling the courts for Israel? Yes, they are.

Israel is a nation. We're very happy about that. Happened in 1948. But the Gentiles are still there and they're still trampling the courts. And that's gonna continue until their season is done.

And God is the one who determines that season, okay? So there are these interesting timing elements that go along with Gentiles. So Paul says in verse 28, if you keep reading with me in your Bible. So here's our conclusion. As regards the gospel, they, and he's talking about Israel, they are enemies for your sake, right?

But as regards election, and that means God's purpose and plan for Israel, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. And I want you to really see that, people. I want you to see it. I want you to get it in your heart. He says, listen, even unbelieving Israel is beloved.

Why? For the sake of the patriarchs to whom God made a promise and he is not gonna go back on his promise, okay? God doesn't go back on his promises. We do. He doesn't.

And he made promises to Abraham and he reiterated those to Isaac. And he reiterated those to Jacob and all of his sons and all of the Jews since that time. And God's gonna fulfill his promise. And that's why we consider Israel beloved, okay? Again, it's not for their politics.

It's not for their lack of morality or their morality. It's not for any of the things that CNN talks about. It's what the Bible tells us. They're beloved. How do you feel about Israel?

I say, well, they're beloved. They're beloved because God has a plan. God has a purpose and God's not done with Israel. Yes, they've been set aside. And we live in that period of time called the church age.

And it started at the inauguration of the church when the Holy Spirit fell upon the assembled disciples in Acts chapter two. And it has continued to the present day. And it will continue until you and I hear the trumpet. And then at that particular time, when the rapture takes place, that's when that watch clicks again for the nation of Israel. God's purpose and plan begins to, he takes them off the shelf and puts them center stage.

And they will be center stage during the entirety of the great tribulation period. And God refers to that period of time as the time of Jacob's trouble. That's how he prophetically calls it. The time of Jacob's trouble because the tribulation is going to be horrific for Israel. Absolutely horrific.

And only a remnant is gonna come through unscathed. Well, I don't even know if they're gonna be unscathed. I think there'll be plenty scathed. But they will be alive. There will be a remnant who will be alive at the end of the tribulation.

And they will see their Messiah return in the clouds with great glory. And we'll be coming back with him. And they're gonna recognize him as the one they pierced. And the book of Zechariah tells us they're gonna mourn for him as one mourns for an only son. And because they're gonna realize this is the one we crucified.

This is the one we rejected. And he was the one. But they're also going to embrace him. And he's gonna fight on their behalf. He's gonna save them from the assembled nations who come to destroy them.

And it's gonna be a beautiful thing, but it's gonna be a horrific thing too. Terrible, terrible time. Verse 29. This is where Paul reminds us of an important principle. And he's going to say it in relationship or in context with Israel.

Here's the principle. For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. Let me just pause there just to reiterate what he's saying. The gifts and the calling that he's placed upon Israel are irrevocable. But you know, this is one of those passages you can take out of context.

You can take out of context context because it's a passage that says something true about God and whatever the Bible says about God can be taken out of context because God is true in every context, you with me? There are some passages you can't take out of context, but some you can and what you can take are anything about God. If the Bible says God is love, he's a God of love in every context. If the Bible says that God is a God of justice, he's a God of justice in every context. If the Bible says that God's gifts and calling are irrevocable, that means his gifts and calling are irrevocable, meaning they cannot be and will not be revoked in any context, right?

So in other words, that applies to you too. And this makes some Christians crazy. I'll get notes from time to time from people that will say, you know, they'll reference some evangelist or pastor or somebody who fell into sin. And they'll say, Pastor Paul, I don't understand how that person could be so anointed. Because this was going, we found out this thing was going on in their life for like the last 10 years.

And I saw them two years ago, I heard him preach, and he was powerful. And hundreds of people came to a saving knowledge of Jesus. Just how is that possible? You know, my answer is, the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. God anointed that man, and he's not going to take it away because he's dabbling in sin.

Now, it's going to be hurtful. It's going to cause devastation. And whatever he got into is going to come back to haunt him for the rest of his life. But God's not going to pull away the anointing. Did you really think God would remove the anointing just because you sinned?

If that was the case, he'd be taking our anointing every day, several times a day. I'm pulling that back. You just said something nasty to your wife. You know, the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Other translations say, without repentance.

It means the same thing. He will not pull them back. It's important for you to know. It's important for you to know, because it's something that's true about God. Verse 30, For just as you were at one time disobedient to God, but now have received mercy, now he's talking to us Gentiles, because of their disobedience, meaning Israel, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you, they, Israel, also may now receive mercy.

For God consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all. Or as the NIV says, that last verse, God has bound all men over to disobedience, so that they may have mercy, or so that he may have mercy on them all. And you know, that's an accurate description of all of our lives before we knew Jesus, right? Bound over to disobedience. That was me before I knew the Lord.

And it was you too. And he's basically just saying, we were all captive to the flesh before we knew Jesus. Before we read these three final verses, which are called the doxology, and it's a very fitting doxology, by the way, to conclude this massively important and incredibly complex theological treatise that the Apostle Paul has recorded for us here. I want to just have you think about all the things we've talked about since Romans chapter 1. These have been hard chapters to go through, some of them.

They've been challenging to understand. But we look at what Paul has written here, and it's masterful in his discourse of God's plan of salvation, because Romans chapter 1 through 11 is all about God's redemptive program. The whole thing, the whole shoot and match, all about God's redemptive program. And as we ponder all these things, we're blown away by how deep Paul has gotten. We're still, by the way, we're still struggling to understand some of the things that Paul wrote in these first 11 chapters.

Now, keeping all that in mind, Paul ends this chapter by saying in verse 33, Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable, have you used that word lately? I never do. It means beyond comprehension. How inscrutable or beyond comprehension are his ways?

For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Have you ever noticed we try to do that though, in our prayers, don't we? We try to be the Lord's counselor. Lord, I need to pray about something here, but here's what I think you should do.

And I think you just need a little counsel to understand the situation like I do, because I'm personally involved. And I'd like to tell you, this is what you should do. We're trying to be his counselor. Paul says, who's ever done that and succeeded? And by the way, that's a quote from Isaiah 40.

I love verse 35 too. Who has ever given a gift to him that he might be repaid? I like that too. And by the way, that's a rare quote from the book of Job. And I love the way he ends, for from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever. Amen. I have a sense that the Apostle Paul was aware of the grace that had been given him to write those first 11 chapters. I think Paul got done writing those first, and they weren't chapters to him. It was just the first section of his letter.

The chapters came much later. But I really think Paul got done writing this section and he was like, where in the world did that come from? Well, he knew. He knew it came from the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It came from grace.

And it was that overarching work of the Spirit to inspire, to direct, and to grant him the kind of insight that it took to write all that stuff. But lest he think too much of himself, because you know, Paul learned some important lessons about becoming prideful because of what he'd been given. And he even talked about it in his letter, his second letter to the Corinthians. He said, in fact, you know what? Because of the incredible things that God has shown me over the course of my life, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh to keep me from becoming conceited.

And he said, I didn't like it. That's a paraphrase. You know, I prayed three times, Lord, take this from me. The Lord said, no. There's a purpose to that thorn.

Paul, it's going to keep your feet on the ground. It's going to remind you that the glory doesn't go to you. It goes to me. You're just my instrument. You're my servant.

And Paul had learned that lesson very well. And he says, all glory to him. To him be glory forever. Amen. Let's pray.

Lord, we love you so much. And we love the fact that you have given us your word, spoken it to those who wrote it down and then preserved it so powerfully for those of us who live in this day that we might feed upon it, be nourished by it, and encouraged in our walk with you. And we thank you for that. We thank you, Lord, that we can take time like we are doing tonight to just dig into the scriptures and be reminded of such incredible and rich blessings that are ours through Jesus Christ. And we thank you also, Father, that you have given us a biblical perspective on how we should view the people and the nation of Israel.

Help us, Lord, to have a biblical outlook and to truly know what the word of God has to say. I thank you, my Father, that you have filled us with grace and goodness and that your gifts and your calling upon our lives is without repentance irrevocable. And we thank you for that anointing. You have opened our ears. You have opened our eyes and you have opened our hearts.

And we thank you and praise you in the authority granted us through the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, and all God's people said together, Amen. Amen. you