



When in Romans Do as the Righteous Do

“Paul the Apostle: International Manifestor of Mysteries”

Romans 11:25-32

Who doesn't like a good mystery? *Paul the apostle!* He is the chief user of the word in the New Testament. He kept revealing mysteries to the Christians.

You see, in the Bible, a “mystery” isn't something that is hard to understand. It is a truth previously unrevealed but which is now being revealed.

One of those mysteries revealed by Paul is explained in this section of Romans.

Romans 11:25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

The mystery here is the identification of the fullness of the Gentiles which was not a subject of revelation in the Old Testament.

Paul seemed extremely concerned that Gentiles would “be wise in [their] own opinion” about God setting aside Israel and bringing the Gospel directly to the other nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. Looking back over history, he was wise to be concerned as you see the prevalence in every generation of anti-semitism. *There is no place for it in the church!*

The “blindness” or *hardening* as some translate it is the aftermath of Israel's leaders officially rejecting Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Instead of ushering in the promised kingdom of God on earth, God is disciplining the nation of Israel, having dispersed Jews all over the earth. Individual Jews

can be and are saved; but God is dealing with the nation in a very particular way.

Meanwhile the Gospel goes out to the Gentiles until “the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” As we understand prophecy, this age in which we live will come to an end when Jesus returns in the clouds to resurrect and rapture the church. According to one commentator, the Greek word translated “fullness” was a nautical term referring to the number of sailors necessary for a commercial ship to set sail. Also the word translated “come in” meant *to arrive at a destination*.

Paul used these metaphors to describe the church leaving Earth and arriving at our destination. With the church in Heaven, God will resume His direct dealings with Israel as a nation by taking them through the Great Tribulation.

One of the arguments we offer that the church will not be involved at all in the Great Tribulation is that the purposes of that seven year period are clearly stated and they have nothing whatsoever to do with the church.

The twofold purpose for the time of the Great Tribulation is this:

1. To bring to conclusion 'the times of the Gentiles' (Luke 21:24); and
2. To prepare for the restoration and the regathering of Israel in the millennial reign of Christ following the Second Coming.

Gentiles and Jews are all that you read about during the Great Tribulation. The church is never mentioned.

Many of those who say the church will go through the Great Tribulation say it is because we need to be purged and purified.

Is that how believers in Jesus Christ are made ready to go to Heaven? Not according to Jesus!

Ephesians 5:26 [Jesus will] sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

Ephesians 5:27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

The Great Tribulation has another informative name. It's called "the time of Jacob's trouble," relating it primarily to the nation of Israel. The godly remnant that survive the Great Tribulation are pictured as Israelites or as Gentiles who aided Israelites, not members of the Church.

God is, of course, dealing with Israel as a nation today. Obviously He has preserved them for the past two thousand years. And He has fulfilled His promises to gather them back to their land.

All of that is preparatory to His direct dealing with them, to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB;

"The Deliverer" is, of course, Jesus Christ. He will deliver Israel in the sense that "all Israel will be saved." Not automatically, simply because they are ethnically Jews. All believing Jews will be saved. The prophet Zechariah tells us that the unbelieving portion of the nation will be killed.

Zechariah 13:8 And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the Lord, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it:
Zechariah 13:9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.' "

What is the "fire" God will bring them through? It is the Great Tribulation.

Let's pause and discuss this word "Zion." Occurring over 150 times in the Bible, the word "Zion" essentially means *fortification*. Zion was one of the hills in Jerusalem.

The first mention of the word "Zion" in the Bible is Second Samuel 5:7, "Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David."

Zion, therefore, was originally the name of the ancient Jebusite fortress in the city of Jerusalem. Zion came to stand not only for the fortress but also for city in which the fortress stood. After David captured "the stronghold of Zion," Zion was then called "the City of David" (First Kings 8:1).

When Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, the word Zion expanded in meaning to include also the Temple and the area surrounding it (e.g., Psalm 2:6). Zion was eventually used as a name for the city of Jerusalem, the land of Judah, and the people of Israel as a whole.

In order to "come out of Zion" Jesus must first return to Zion. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth is a principle Christian doctrine. There are, in fact, more references in the Bible to Jesus Christ's Second Coming than there are to His first coming.

“And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” The AV translates this, “He will banish ungodliness.” It is a description of the righteous rule of the Lord over the earth from His throne in Jerusalem.

Romans 11:27 FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

The covenant referred to here is called the New Covenant in the Book of Jeremiah. Here is what God promised the Jews He would do:

Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...

Jeremiah 31:33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Jeremiah 31:34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

“After those days.” We know this is yet future to us because it is a time when “they all shall know [the Lord].” It can’t be describing any other period of time, when everyone knew the Lord, “from the least of them to the greatest of them.”

God will “forgive their iniquity” and not “remember” their sin because they will receive Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

“Concerning the Gospel” going out freely to the Gentiles the Jews were “enemies” of God’s program. Paul was a good example. He was the chief persecutor of the Gospel until he got saved, after which he was the chief target of the Jews to be persecuted!

But the Jews remain God’s “elect” nation, “beloved” by God because of the unconditional promises He made to the “fathers,” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

We always think of the word “elect” as a synonym for the word “saved.” With regards to Israel, it is God’s “elect” nation, but within it each individual must come to personal faith in Jesus Christ in order to be saved. Isaiah refers to the entire nation as God’s “elect” at least three times (45:4, 65:9, 65:22). He also refers to Jesus Christ as God’s “elect One” (42:1). Biblical scholar William Klein, in his book *The New Chosen People*, concludes that election is primarily used in the Bible in this corporate way, not of individuals per se. He goes on to argue that “Christ is God’s chosen One, and the church is chosen in Him.”

It is a biblical view of election known as “corporate election.” It presents the scenario in which God’s will is for whosoever will to be saved - not just a predetermined, select, restricted number. Individuals are actually saved when they receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

It solves the problems raised by those who believe God’s election is unconditional of certain individuals to salvation, namely that certain others are elected by God to damnation. Corporate election raises a few problems of its own, but in the end they are less injurious to the love of God for lost mankind.

Romans 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

A lot of time you'll hear this verse quoted to talk about how once God gives you a spiritual gift He won't take it away. That's not at all what it means! In context this verse is discussing God's promises to the nation of Israel. His "gifts and the calling" to the physical descendants of Abraham were unconditional and He will not, He can not, revoke them.

Romans 11:30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,

Romans 11:31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

This is like a mini history lesson. When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, he sinned for all of his future offspring as our representative. God immediately began to explain the way of salvation. As time went on mankind continued in rebellion against God, not wanting to retain the knowledge of God. First in the days of Noah, then later at the Tower of Babel, God intervened.

Then history took a critical turn. God chose Abraham and his descendants as His special people, as His "elect," through whom the promised Savior of the world would come.

When the Savior came to His own and they rejected Him, because of their "disobedience" the Gentile nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues "received mercy" as the Gospel went to them.

Though disobedient as a nation, individual Jews could see the "mercy shown" Gentiles and "also obtain mercy."

Romans 11:32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

In other words, while the nation of Israel is set aside, God having given them over to their own decision to be "disobedient," He is extending "mercy on all," both Jews and Gentiles, whosoever will believe in Him and be saved.

We live at the intersection of these great movements in history. The time of the Gentiles is nearly full. Israel is in her land. The Great Tribulation is

within prophetic sight. The return of Jesus to resurrect and rapture the church is imminent.

“Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!”