

Romans Lesson 15 Articles

11:29 — For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Once you have placed your faith in Him, God will never cast you away. He will never abandon you, reject you, or turn you away. As a loving Father He will discipline you, but He will never throw you away.

11:28–32. Paul concludes this eschatological survey of the future of Israel, and Gentiles as they relate to Israel, by revealing what is behind the plan of God for both: **God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.** This universalist-sounding summary is not what the cynic might propose, that “after all this” God is going to have **mercy** on, and save, everyone. Rather, Paul is saying that both categories of humanity, Jews and Gentiles, will one day find themselves in the favor of God solely on the basis of his **mercy**. While it might have been said before Israel’s hardening that it was only the Gentiles who were shown **mercy**, now Israel has **become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy**.

This statement takes us back to the end of Genesis 11 when God looked out across the earth and found a human family disobedient to him. A flood did not keep the newly reproduced race from rallying together in the plains of Shinar and attempting to make a name for themselves apart from God. If they were going to be saved, it would simply be because of God’s **mercy**. God first saved Abraham, then sent his descendants to tell the others that God would forgive them if they would turn to him. Abraham’s descendants failed in their mission, so God has set them aside temporarily. He exercised mercy on the rest of the human race apart from the Jews, but will ultimately exercise mercy toward the Jews as well in order that all the human race, Jew and Gentile, may see and receive the mercy of God.

At the moment, Israel is the enemy of the **gospel**, but **as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs**. God’s promises made to Abraham and his descendants still stand today since **God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable**. While there is only one people of God, the spiritually faithful from both Jews and Gentiles, the nation of Israel still stands as the God-preserved testimony to all the earth of his faithfulness to his promises. One day, when the glory of the Lord covers the earth, it will be because the mercy of God is being praised by both Jew and Gentile alike. The Jews received mercy in the calling of Abraham because of the Gentiles’ disobedience, and the Gentiles received mercy because of the Jews’ disobedience.¹

Paul has used the OT often in these three chapters, but in this section, he turns to Isa. 59:20–21, Isa. 27:9, and Ps. 14:7 to show that the OT promised a coming Deliverer who would cleanse and restore Israel. He states the “mystery” of Israel’s blindness, a mystery being a truth hidden in past ages but now revealed in its fullness in the NT. “The fullness of the Gentiles” (v. 25) refers to the number of Gentiles that will be saved during this church age. When the body of Christ is completed, He will catch it away in the air; then will begin the seven-year Tribulation here on earth, “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). At the end of that period, the Deliverer will come, and the believing remnant will enter into its kingdom. “All Israel” does not mean every last Jew; rather, it means that the nation of Israel at that day will all be saved; it will be a redeemed, regenerated nation. God’s promised covenant is quoted (Jer. 31:31–34) in v. 27. This “new covenant” will apply to Israel when it trusts Christ as its Redeemer and turns from its sins. Though the Jews may seem like enemies of God’s will today, they are still beloved in God’s sight because of the covenants He made with their fathers. Men may change, but God cannot change or revoke His promises (v. 29).²

¹ Boa, K., & Kruidenier, W. (2000). *Romans* (Vol. 6, pp. 344–345). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 398–399). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.