

A Little Secret

Romans 11:25-36

Dr. Edwin P. Elliott

I. God Hasn't Finished with Israel

A. The problem with old Israel is temporary; God had plans He has not finished. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that ***blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.***” (Romans 11:25)

1. A single event may have multiple implications and consequences. “Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things*? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD *are* right, and ***the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.***” (Hosea 14:9)

2. Acknowledge God and submit to Him even when what He is doing isn't obvious. “***In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*** Be not wise in thine own eyes: ***fear the LORD, and depart from evil.***” (Proverbs 3:6-7)

B. All the elect will eventually be saved in the same way—by grace. “And so ***all Israel shall be saved:*** as it is written, ***There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.***” (Romans 11:26-27)

C. The disruption between the Jews and the Gentiles is the instrument of gathering elect Gentiles, but it is not an exclusion of elect Jews. “As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes.” (Romans 11:28)

D. God does not change His mind; He will finish what He starts. “For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.” (Romans 11:29)

II. Electing Love Is the Key

A. People who were utterly beyond hope entered the household of faith because the Jews in Paul's time rejected the gospel. "For as *ye in times past have not believed* God, *yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.*" (Romans 11:30)

B. The salvation of the Jews will come in the same fashion when God is ready; the Gentiles will become instruments of saving Jews. "Even so have these also now not believed, that *through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*" (Romans 11:31)

C. In all cases, the underlying reality is God's electing grace; God has closed all other doors to Himself. "For *God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*" (Romans 11:32)

D. No one is better or worse, because all have sinned; salvation must be by grace. "What then? *are we better than they?* No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that *they are all under sin;*" (Romans 3:9)

III. Praise God

A. God is too big and too gracious for human boxes and philosophical constructs. "O the *depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and *his ways past finding out!*" (Romans 11:33)

B. No one understands the inner mind and no one is large enough to instruct God. "*For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?*" (Romans 11:34)

1. God does not take orders. “*Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.*” (Isaiah 40:13-15)

2. Christ, however, is the expression of the mind and purpose of God; Christ displays electing love. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But *we have the mind of Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 2:16)

C. God acts from Himself rather than from things foreseen in people. “Or *who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?*” (Romans 11:35) “For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and *what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*” (1 Corinthians 4:7)

D. Everything in life takes its meaning from God; nothing is independent. “For *of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:* to whom *be glory* for ever. Amen.” (Romans 11:36)

E. Nothing is outside the gracious providence of God. “*Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine;* thine *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and *thou art exalted as head above all.* Both riches and honour *come* of thee, and thou reignest over all; and *in thine hand is power and might;* and in thine hand *it is* to make great, and to give strength unto all.” (1 Chronicles 29:11-12)