

God Keeps His Promises (11:28,29)

11:28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 11:29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

God’s Enemies

- How were the ethnic Jews/Israel “enemies” of “the gospel”? READ 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16.
- “...for your sake...” How does the animosity of the Jews to the Gospel of Jesus Christ benefit the Gentiles (non-Jews)? READ Acts 8:2,4 (see also Matthew 10:16-23). **God providentially uses persecution of His messengers to spread the Gospel even further.**
- How does God treat some of His enemies? “...if while *we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life*” (5:10; see also Colossians 1:21,22). READ Matthew 5:43-48//Luke 6:27-36. In six weeks, Lord willing, we’ll be looking at Romans 12:17-21 where this is further applied to our lives in Christ.

Beloved for the Sake of the Fathers

- Paul’s “kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs...the promises, whose are the fathers” (9:3-5). Speaking of those “promises” given to “the fathers,” Paul introduces this section of Romans 9-11 with the assertion “it is not as though the word of God has failed” (9:6).
- READ Deuteronomy 7:7,8a (see also Isaiah 41:8,9; 44:1,2; 51:2).¹
- God freely chose to call Abram (an idolater, Joshua 24:2,3) out of Ur of the Chaldeans and made

¹ God’s love and His election go together in the N.T., as well: Romans 9:13,25; Ephesians 1:4,5; Colossians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

a promise to bless “all the families of the earth” through him (Genesis 12:3) – a promise Paul calls “the Gospel” (Galatians 3:8). **This promise to save a people from out of all the nations through a descendant of Abraham (Jesus Christ) is the Gospel – the “olive tree” of Romans 11:17-24.**

Trusting the Faithful God

- READ Romans 3:3,4.
- We need the biblically-witnessed doctrine of the immutability, or unchanging nature, of God.² God’s promises reveal His character to us, which means His promises are true because His nature and character are unchanging.³

This Gospel Age (11:30,31)

11:30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, 11:31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

² Numbers 23:19; Deuteronomy 28:63; 1 Samuel 15:19; Psalm 110:1; Jeremiah 4:28; Ezekiel 24:14; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 6:17,18; James 1:17. While there are passages that seem to say God does change His mind (Genesis 6:6,7; Exodus 32:12,14; Judges 2:18; 1 Samuel 15:11,35; 2 Samuel 24:16; 1 Chronicles 21:15; Psalm 90:13; 106:45; 135:14; Jeremiah 15:6; 18:8,10; 26:3,13,19; 42:10; Ezekiel 5:13; Joel 2:13,14; Amos 7:3,6; Jonah 3:9,10; 4:2), I regard those as *anthropopathisms* (describing God using the language of human emotions). Human beings change. When they are in harmony with God’s unchanging nature/commands, God is revealed as favorable toward them. When they change, and go out of harmony with His unchanging nature/commands, God is revealed as unfavorable to them.

³ We read about this in Hebrews 6:13,17,18.

Mercy Now to Disobedient

- Unbelief is disobedience, and true belief/faith will result in obedience.⁴

God’s Plan

- These verses really restate Paul’s teaching from 11:11,12 and 11:15 – and it’s a summary of the entire chapter:

God’s Plan (Romans 11)

1. **The Gospel of Jesus Christ came first to the Jews, who had received the promises of it in the Old Testament. Most rejected it. So the Gospel went out to the non-Jews (Gentiles).**
2. **The non-Jews (Gentiles) began accepting the Gospel “from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9). This makes some Jews jealous – Christianity is the fullness of Old Testament Judaism, after all – and some accept the Gospel.**
3. **In this way God saves from both Jews and non-Jews through the Gospel of His Son Jesus throughout this Gospel Age (the time between the first and second comings of Christ).**

God’s Purpose Through Humanity’s Unbelief (11:32)

^{11:32}For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

All

- Paul does not mean here that every human individual will receive God’s mercy. A great theme of the entire letter to the Romans is God’s plan to save a people made up of both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews). “All” refers to both groups.

- This does not violate human free will (or responsibility). Ephesians 2:1-3 shows us that human beings, as children of the original rebel Adam, embrace by nature disobedience to God. God isn’t making people disobedient; He’s holding them in their natural disobedience to reveal to them their need for His grace.
- Romans 11:32 is paralleled in Galatians 3:22.
- God is going to save a full number out of Jews and non-Jews, completing His purpose and promise to, through Abraham’s Seed (Jesus Christ), bless “*all the families of the earth*” (Genesis 12:3// Galatians 3:8).
 - “...through [ethnic Israel’s] fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more **their fullness**” (11:11,12, N.K.J.V.).
 - “...a partial hardening has happened to Israel until **the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**” (11:25).

Mercy

- Remember: mercy is not required, or it is not mercy. God is perfect in His justice against rebellious humanity and gracious in His sovereign mercy and grace (READ 9:14-18).

Because You Have Received Mercy

- READ 1 Timothy 1:12-16
- “...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, **so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you were once not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy**” (1 Peter 2:9,10).

⁴ John 3:36; 14:15; 15:10; Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 16:26;
2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17; 1 John 2:3,4; Revelation 14:12.