**GOD WORKS THROUGH HIS MERCY**

Romans 11:1-36

Key Verse 11:32

*“For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.”*

**\*Introduction[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. How did Paul’s life prove that God did not reject His people Israel? (1-2a) What further evidence did Paul present through Israel’s history? (2b-4) What do both these examples reveal about how God works? What hope does this give us today? (5-6)
2. What happened to the majority of Israelites who sought righteousness by works? (7-10[[2]](#footnote-2)) Why are these serious spiritual consequences? In context of the key verse, what is the only way for their spiritual eyes and ears to be opened?
3. Did Israel fall beyond recovery (11a)? Why was Paul convinced of this? (11b-12) What hope did Paul have (13-14) and on what basis? (15) How does the two metaphors Pauls used of the dough and the root support this truth? (16[[3]](#footnote-3))
4. In Paul’s Olive Tree metaphor, who are “some of the branches” and “a wild olives shoot”?[[4]](#footnote-4) (17) How did God give grace to the Gentile believers and what should their attitude be toward the Jews (18-22)? What would happen once the Jews turn from unbelief? (23-24)
5. What mystery did Paul make the Gentiles aware of (25-27)? Who is the deliverer and how will he bring about the salvation of Israel? How should Gentile believers understand the Jews (28-29)?

1. Read verses 30-32. What did Paul discover about God’s salvation work? What song of exaltation sprang forth from Paul and why (33-36; ref 9:1-2)? What can we learn about God in this passage?

1. In chapter 11, Paul deals with Israel’s unbelief. Through his sincere struggle, Paul realized that God works through His mercy. This gave him hope for his people to be saved. Then his anguish turned into a song of praise to God. When we see those who are disobedient and rebellious, it is hard to have hope for them. We easily despair, become critical and judge them. But when we turn our eyes to God and see how merciful He is, we find hope. We can be merciful as our Father is merciful. **The key word of this chapter is “mercy.” When we have God’s mercy in our hearts we can see anyone with hope. Let’s learn how God works through His mercy**. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Their table refers to their feast of spiritual nourishment through God’s word. The law was given to them to lead them to the Messiah. When they rejected the Messiah, their source of nourishment became a source of trouble. It became a snare, a trap, a stumbling block and retribution for them, for it bound them under the curse of the law. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Paul used two metaphors: the dough and the root. The first fruits refers to the Jewish patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to the saving promises given to them. Since they are consecrated to God by faith, so are their descendants - the whole lump of dough. Similarly, the root probably refers to the patriarchs and the branches to their descendants. Of course, as Paul has already explained, this is not a guarantee that every single Jew will be saved. But it indicates that God will be faithful to his promises and seems to imply that the nation as a whole will be saved. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The cultivated olive tree represents God's promised blessings. The olive tree was a symbol of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament (Jer. 11:16-17; Hos. 14:4-6). So some interpreters believe that the wild olive tree therefore represents the Gentile world. The "rich root" of the cultivated tree probably corresponds to the Abrahamic Covenant (or the patriarchs, or Abraham) from which all of God's future promised blessings sprang. We might add to the illustration by saying that the roots derive their nourishment from God Himself. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)