

Romans: Mercy on All
Romans 11:1-36

If God were small enough to be understood, he would not be big enough to be worshiped.
(Evelyn Underhill)

#1 - God is a faithful Savior (vv. 1-5)

- The evidence of God's faithfulness to Israel:
 - The Apostle Paul, a Jew, was converted.
 - The 7,000 people in Elijah's day were preserved.
 - The remnant in Paul's day were chosen by grace.
- God is faithful to His Word.
 - The promises of the Bible have no loopholes, no fine print, no confusing legalese...
 - The promises of the Bible are simply "yes" and "amen" in Christ.

#2 - God is the fountain of all mercy (vv. 6-10)

- Why was the majority of Israel not saved?

The hardening we have here is a "judicial" hardening. Hardening is a fitting punishment for a proud spirit. Pride and self-centeredness lead to hardness and lovelessness. Rejection of God leads to rejection from God. Though God executes it, it is a natural consequence. (Tim Keller)

- Why was anyone in Israel actually saved?

But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. (Romans 11:6)

- The primary point of election in the Bible is simply what the psalmist declares and what Revelation repeats—that salvation belongs to our God.

Salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people! (Psalm 3:8)

And crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:10)

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God!" (Revelation 19:1)

- Application:
 - Does it not fill you with the wonder that God saved you?
 - Does it not fill you with hope that God can save anyone?

#3 - God is wise and good in all that He plans and does (vv. 11-36)

- Israel's rejection of Jesus led to Gentile reception of Jesus. (vv. 11-16)

But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. ⁴⁶ And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (Acts 13:45-47; see also 18:6; 19:8-10; 28:24-28)

- Gentile reception is meant to provoke Jewish acceptance. (vv. 11-16)

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)

- The people of God are the people who trust God, regardless of ethnicity. (vv. 17-24)

- God is willing to forgive and cleanse and restore and renew.
- But God is severe to those who presume instead of trust.

The only way we know that God's sovereign love is upon us is that we continue; we persevere in seeking to be like Jesus, until the day we meet Jesus. If that continuing disappears—if we start to live for ourselves and live in sin, or start to rely on our own performance for our relationship with God—then we will and should begin to wonder if his kindness is upon us. (Tim Keller)

- And "all Israel will be saved..."

- Option #1: A great ingathering or conversion of ethnic Jews at the end of time.
- Option #2: The ongoing salvation of elect Jews throughout history.
- Option #3: The sum total of Jews and Gentiles—the true Israel—who trust in Christ.

For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. (Romans 2:28-29)

For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. (Romans 9:6)

- Application:

- Trust in the wise ways of God.
- Praise God for His grace.
- Recognize and embrace the God-centeredness of everything.