

The mystery of God's plan

We are studying Romans 11 in three parts: the first was about how God left 7,000 people who believed in Him and continued the history of salvation, even though Israel did not yet believe at the time. And the second one was that the gate of salvation was opened to the Gentiles because Israel did not accept Jesus Christ. The Gentiles were saved like a branch grafted into the original tree of the chosen Israel. This was grace for the Gentiles. This grace will be given to Israel and all the people of the world.

Today's content is the final of Romans 11. We will learn how great this grace is that we are saved by believing in Jesus Christ. This is the first half of verses 25-26.

V25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in,

V26 and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob."

'This mystery' means 'mystery, secret, or profound' in Greek. You may think that "mystery" is something fantastic and obscure, but the Bible says that "God's plan of salvation" itself is the mystery. First of all, it means that while the Israelites are stubborn and refuse to accept Jesus, the entire Gentile world will be saved. In fact, the gospel has been proclaimed to the whole world for about 2,000 years when this book of Romans was written. Perhaps there is so much so that there is not a nation and country that has not heard the name of Jesus. There are even missionaries who have translated the New Testament into the Papa New Guinea dialect and even to a small tribe in the Brazilian Amazon, so God is still preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

The next part of the "mystery plan" is that Israel will be saved after the salvation of the Gentiles is completed. This is the image of the Word of God. Imagine that you are putting together a puzzle of a picture of the Mona Lisa. You have painstakingly put together a 500-piece puzzle. You have spent many days on it! Now, today is the moment of completion! You have just one puzzle of Mona Lisa's calm and shining eyes in your hands. When you fit this in, your work is complete.

This is the image. This is the time when the salvation of the Gentiles and the salvation of Israel will be completed like this. How we may be witnesses of God's mystery plan of salvation! There were witnesses at Christmas when Jesus Christ first came to this world. We may be witnesses to the second coming of Jesus Christ. I am really getting excited.

V26 and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

V27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Verses 26 and 27 quote the first half of [Isaiah 59:20-21](#) in the Old Testament. "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those who in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the Lord. "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord. "My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants -from this time on and forever," says the Lord."

'Zion', which refers to what is now Jerusalem, was a fortress that was attacked during the reign of King David. And there was a temple there, and the Israelites believed that God was there. It is a prophecy that the Redeemer will come from that Jerusalem. This prophecy was fulfilled because Jesus Christ came from Jerusalem and was crucified, died, and resurrected in Jerusalem. And 'Jacob' refers to the people of Israel. God will provide salvation to Israel when they repent of their sin of rejecting Jesus. God promises to save unbelieving Israel when they repent. God promised a new covenant in the book of Jeremiah about this. [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#). "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah (31). It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband," declares the Lord (32). "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people (33). No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more (34)."

This word is a promise that if Israel repents, their sins will be forgiven. This new covenant does not mean that they will be saved by the law of Moses. It is a covenant of grace that saves through faith in Jesus Christ. Please look at verse 28.

V28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs,

Now Israel is hostile to God. But they are loved by God because of the forefathers of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This content is like the first fruits of wheat that we learned in the last message, in which the kneaded flour become holy things and God loves them. And Israel is now hostile to God. We Gentiles have had times like this before. [Rom. 5:10](#), "For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" God will not forsake His

people, His children, whom He once loved; see verse 29.

V29 for God's gifts and his calling are irrevocable.

This is a powerful statement that God's salvation is not subject to change or cancellation. We Christians sometimes misunderstand about this. We worry that if I do something wrong, God will abandon us and we will not be saved. This is especially happened when we have unhappy things like a car accident, get sick, fail an exam, or get divorced and so on. But this verse is very encouraging to those who have such fears: "I wonder if God really loves me." By believing in Jesus Christ, we have become able to call God, the Lord of creation, 'Our Father'. Rom. 8:15: "The spirit you received does not makes you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father'." We can now call the God of Creation 'Father, Otto, Dad, Papa, Daddy, Appa.' And even when we fail, get sick, or are betrayed by others, the Holy Spirit pleads daily and testifies that we are children of God the Father. Our earthly father may possibly say, "If you don't get into the medical school of Tokyo University, you are not my child!" But since a loving God has saved us by grace and invitation to believe in Jesus Christ, there is no change or cancellation of our salvation. Philippians 1:6, "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." God has had mercy on us even in our sin and disobedience because of our weakness. And He is still at work in us. This mercy that we Gentiles received is available to the chosen people of Israel, verses 30-31.

V30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedient,

V31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you.

Just as God grafted the Gentiles from the branches of the wild tree into the branches of the cultivated tree, so He will graft Israel back into the original tree of salvation when they repent from the branches from which they were cut off. This reversal victorious grace of salvation is God's way. This is an amazing mystery, a profound mystery.

As Japanese, we are often the only Christian in our family. It would be sad to see a family member who does not come to church. However, God's salvation is open to our family and our friends who do not yet believe. Even when they are closed-minded and disobedient to God, God is always waiting to save them when they repent.

V32 For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

God has opened the gates of our salvation and invites everyone to salvation. Revelation 3:8, "I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I

know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.”

God is willing to save even our mustard seed of faith. This grace is immeasurably rich. Finally, the apostle Paul gives praise to God; look at verse 33.

V33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

Oh, how deep is God's wisdom and knowledge! Even if one were to master God's decree and His ways, man would never be able to master them. Who would have thought that the elect Israelites and the unbelieving Gentiles who had opposed God would be saved together? We thank God for His abundant grace.

V34 “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”

No one would have known that God had such a wonderful plan. God has willed the salvation of mankind by Himself. Salvation is not by our deeds, but by God's love and his grace.

V35 “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?”

V36 For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

All things are born out of God, are kept, and are toward God. God has fulfilled the secret plan of this gospel through Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul describes who Jesus Christ, God, is as follows.

Colossians 1:15-17: "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation (15). For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him (16). He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (17)."

We confess Jesus Christ as Lord because He is the true God. At this time, I am teaching the Bible to the ex-members of the former Unification Church that is one of the cults and they were taught that Jesus Christ was a man. And they believed strongly in Moon, Sun Myung as the Messiah. We may think, ‘How can they believe such a foolish thing?’ However, among us Christians, there are those who say, "I like Jesus, but salvation can be obtained in other religions. People around me don't like it when I talk about Jesus all the time. Why not any religion?" Some of us think, "It doesn't matter what religion I follow."

One day, Taishi told me that he wanted a pair of "Nike" sneakers when he was in elementary school. I asked him, ‘Nike’ is very expensive, so how about ‘Nice’? He refused, saying, "No, I don't like Nice because they are not real!" I was in trouble. From that day on, the battle between the real and the fake between parent and child began, and in the end, the real won. The real is clearly present even in our daily lives. We cannot compromise on our salvation, much less on our eternal life or death. We should tell the truth as the Bible teaches, ‘Believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved’. John 10:10: "The thief comes only to steal and

kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." There are many who have not yet heard this wonderful and compassionate gospel in the world. **John 3:16-18** "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (16). For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (17). Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

Let' pray together. God's plan of salvation will be completed when Gentiles and Israel believe in Jesus Christ. We thank and praise God for the mystery of salvation. I pray that the day will come soon when all people of the world will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, just as in this wonderful plan. Amen.