

## Finish Faithful — Episode Notes

### Romans 11: The Mystery of Israel

Two thousand years ago, a mystery was put into writing—one that still divides scholars, fuels headlines, and leaves even seasoned theologians wrestling with the same question:

#### **Has God’s promise to Israel failed—or is the story still unfolding?**

In this episode, we step into one of the most challenging (and important) chapters in the Bible: **Romans 11**. We’ll ask the hard questions:

- Has God moved on from His original people?
- Does Israel still hold a unique place in God’s plan in the modern world?
- How do we get from Israel’s rejection of Jesus as Messiah to the day when Messiah rules from Jerusalem in the 1,000-year kingdom?

We’ll peel back the layers of Paul’s “mystery” and what it reveals about God’s national destiny for His chosen people—Israel. Whether you’ve studied Scripture for years or you’re simply curious about the future of the Middle East through a biblical lens, this chapter has something you need to see.

Welcome back to **Finish Faithful**. I’m Jeff Tideman. I’ve wanted to cover Romans 11 for a long time—because it not only fits with the end-times prophecies we’ve discussed, it also helps *explain* them.

### Romans 11 — Teaching Notes (with slide cues)

**11:1** — *Has God rejected His people?* By no means. God has always had a national relationship with Israel.

#### Zooming Out: Where Do I Fit in God’s Bigger Story?

We live in what people often call “the me generation.” Everything is tailored—your playlist, your news feed, your coffee order. People even talk about truth as “what’s true for me.” Without realizing it, we can bring that same mindset to the Bible: “So...what’s God’s plan for *my* life?”

That’s not a wrong question—but Romans 11 keeps pushing us toward a better one: “Where do *I* fit inside God’s bigger story?” Yes, He knows the number of hairs on your head, and He knows what you need before you ask. We come to Him dependent, like children.

But maturity means lifting our eyes—taking on the values of our Father’s house—and realizing the story was never meant to orbit around us.

Christian believers get to play our part in the Body of Christ. And when it comes to the Jewish people, the call for every individual is the same as it is for everyone: believe in Messiah Jesus.

**But Romans 11 insists there's more going on than individual stories: God's covenants, promises, and blessings on Israel are largely national in character.**

Yes, He loves Jews as individuals—and individuals can truly experience His mercy—but God is also dealing with Israel as a nation, as a whole.

So let's press it personally:

- Does Jesus love the Jewish nation He will one day rule?
- Does He approve of how Israel is living right now?
- Does He approve of other nations hating Israel?
- Should the Body of Christ hate Israel—or love what He loves?

**SLIDE:** At Mt. Sinai — Exodus 17:5–6

**SLIDE:** David's revelation from God — 2 Samuel 7:24

11:1 Talks about the nation and about Paul as an individual Israelite who does believe in Jesus as Messiah. So, this chapter deals with God's plan for Israel as a nation and also individuals who receive salvation by grace through faith.

In the interest of time, we will skip some of the verses in this chapter.

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:5–6 — Jewish believers who become part of the elect

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:7 — Two groups: the elect and "Israel" (the rest of the nation)

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:8 — A spirit of stupor (and the predestination/free-will tension)

### A Quick Note on Predestination and Free Will (Romans 11:7–10)

In verse 7, we read that *the elect* obtained what they were seeking. In verse 8, we read that God gave *the rest* a spirit of stupor—so they cannot see or hear the truth.

This chapter is often referenced in predestination debates. Here's where I land: the Scriptures teach that God chooses, and they also teach that humans are responsible to respond in faith and obedience. Rather than forcing one truth to cancel the other, I'm willing to accept it as a paradox we may not fully resolve.

In verse 8, Paul quotes **Isaiah 29**. It foretells conquest and captivity for Israel as judgment for disobedience—including God giving a "spirit of stupor" so they cannot recognize or understand the truth.

But it also points to restoration: God will finally open their eyes, receive them, and bring the prophecy to its fullest end-of-the-age fulfillment.

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:11 — Israel’s blindness and God’s plan to bring salvation to the nations

**SLIDE:** Deuteronomy 32:21 (quoted in Romans 10:19) — The Song of Moses and God’s warning

Years ago, I was having a conversation with a Christian brother from an orthodox Jewish background—a Messianic Jew. I said to him, “the Jews did reject Jesus and have him put to death, didn’t they?”

He replied, “Would you rather that they didn’t?”

I always remembered that. If Israel hadn’t rejected Jesus and had him put to death, how would I be saved? If they had believed in the resurrection and turned to the Lord Jesus, would the gospel have spread all over the world to the nations?

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:12 — Prophets, judgment, and the New Covenant promise

**SLIDE:** Ezekiel 36:22–28, 35a — God dealing with Israel *nationally* (New Covenant renewal)

### Israel and the New Covenant (Ezekiel 36; Jeremiah 31)

Also notice the land imagery: it will be like the garden of Eden—curse lifted, creation restored.

**SLIDE:** Jeremiah 31:31–34 — What is the New Covenant?

**SLIDE:** New Covenant — key bullet points

**SLIDE:** Jeremiah 31:35–36 — Israel’s national destiny affirmed

Across the New Covenant passages, the emphasis is consistent: **this is something God will do**. Israel will not purify itself by the Law (they have continually violated the Sinai covenant). The LORD will forgive their sins, change their hearts, and put His Spirit within them.

**SLIDE:** Jeremiah 30:11 — Israel chastened before New Covenant renewal

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:13–14 — “Now I am speaking to you Gentiles...” (to whom?)

**SLIDE:** Getting the “to whom” correct. Each of these bulleted categories are in this chapter. We need to be more precise than just saying, “it’s to the Gentiles”.

- Individual believers

- Body of Christ
- Gentile believers as a group
- Gentile believers as individuals
- Jewish believers as individuals
- Jewish nation who rejects Jesus as Messiah

Paul says he magnifies his ministry as apostle to the Gentiles to make his fellow Jews jealous and save some of them. This salvation would obviously be for Jews to convert to believe in Jesus as their Messiah. Then, they would be part of the Church of God. Let's ask a question, "are saved Jews or Gentiles who are part of the Church of God ever referred to still as Jews or Gentiles?" Yes. You can look at the section in Galatians 2:12-15 where Paul is calling Peter a Jew and talking about the believers he was eating with as Gentiles. Look at Ephesians 3:6. The mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs. Now, I know that Galatians says there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male or female but all are one in Christ Jesus. This is speaking figuratively about oneness in Christ. There are still biological men and women and there are still genetically Jews and Gentiles, there were still slaves and masters.

### The Olive Tree Analogy (Romans 11:17–24)

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:17 — The olive tree and the "root"

The root seems to be God's covenant relations and promises to the forefathers like Abraham, Moses, David and others.

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:18–19 — "You" (Gentile believers) and the warning against boasting

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:20 — Who is broken off / grafted in? (belief)

**SLIDE:** Romans 10:9–10 — The believing God requires

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:21–22 — The "cut off" question

**SLIDE:** Ephesians 2:11–14 — Gentiles brought near to the covenants of promise

By the way, a certain respected teacher from a similar theological background to mine posted on social media that we in the body of Christ are not in the New Covenant because that is for Israel and Judah. It is correct that Jeremiah 31 says it was for Israel and Judah, but we just read in Ephesians that we Gentiles are brought into Israel's covenants. In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul says we are able ministers of the New Covenant. Hebrews 8-10 is telling those Jewish believers that they are in the New Covenant and we know there is no difference between the salvation of Jewish and Gentile believers. So, if Jewish believers are

in the NC now, then so are Gentile believers. This is an example of the ultra-dispensationalism of Bullinger and other being carried too far. It is saying that the Church is completely separate from the unfolding of God's redemptive plan through His previous covenants with His people. The church is the next step in this series of covenants and that is how we should view Romans 11. If we don't get this, at the end of the age and we may be subject to the antichrist's deception.

The olive tree is the people of God who are flourishing because they are nourished by the root, because they have faith in the Word of God and are participating in covenant relationship with God. The people who are part of that are the ones actively believing. Being cut off would mean not being part of that. Is it talking about eternal life? Not necessarily. Those who are not connecting to the nourishment and blessing are not flourishing, but they are still part of the tree. They can be grafted back in by faith.

**SLIDE:** Jeremiah 31:35–36

**SLIDE:** Genesis 12:2–3 — A warning against antisemitism

**SLIDE:** Zechariah 12:1–3, 9

One big problem with the church not feeling its connection with Israel is that at the end of this age, the antichrist will successfully lead a coalition of nations that will invade Israel. He will be the greatest deceiver of all times. He will turn all nations against Israel. The growing antisemitism we see in the US and all over the world will feed right into this. Many in the church will be sucked into his deception. We Christians do not need to condone sinfulness in Israel or everything its leaders do, but we need to be watching for God's plan for them to unfold. By the way, one of the pillars of the pre-trib rapture teaching, is that the Church will be raptured before God resumes His dealings with national Israel. If you have followed Finish Faithful, you know that it teaches the Pre-Wrath Rapture position, that the Church will still be on earth through the rise of the antichrist until the rapture, or gathering together, before the 7<sup>th</sup> seal. The belief that the Church will be raptured before the antichrist also leaves it vulnerable to his deception and a real freak out that they are still here.

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:23–24 — God can graft branches back in

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:25–27 — Don't be antisemitic; provoke to jealousy through godly lives 11:26-27. "All Israel will be saved"?? Who is included or excluded in this "all Israel". I have my guesses, but I think we must accept that we really don't know, exactly. When does this happen? It happens when Messiah returns and he is going to banish ungodliness from Jacob. In the New Covenant, God promises to take away their sins.

SLIDE 11:28-29 They are still beloved. Their national destiny is irrevocable. This chapter blows replacement theology out of the water. The church has not replaced Israel as the people of God. Israel still has a national destiny. Basically, all end-times prophesy revolves around Israel and Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus has commanded us to watch for the signs of his coming. Those in the church who believe that God is done with Israel and that prophesy was fulfilled when Israel rejected Messiah, rebelled against Rome, and was destroyed, will not be watching for its fulfillment.

Another falsehood to avoid is The Thirteenth Tribe theory that the Jews today are mostly not really the true seed. It alleges that they are descended from a gentile people that adopted Judaism. The Nazis liked that theory, because it made them not really God's Chosen People. What other group in history, other than the Jews, has been the target of genocide in various places for centuries? Egypt, Persia, Russia, Spain, Germany and now those who support the Palestinians have all wanted to drive them out or wipe them out. This can only be the devil working in people through history to hate and want to destroy the people and purposes of God! How can a nation be exiled from their homeland and disbursed all over the globe and suffer great persecution and come back to their land centuries later and flourish (in a material sense)?

It is enormously important that Israel now exists as a nation again and the Jews now control Jerusalem. Believers should all be watching Israel to see the signs that we are close to the return. This can be done biblically and responsibly and not with sensationalism and speculation.

## Conclusions

- Romans 11 pulls a major storyline of Scripture into focus: Israel's current blindness is part of God's plan *until* the fullness of the Gentiles comes in.
- Salvation is offered to individuals—Jew or Gentile—into the Body of Christ by grace through faith.
- God's dealings with Israel have always included a national dimension.
- The olive tree picture points to God's people flourishing as they are nourished by the "root" of His covenant promises.
- Gentile believers must not become proud or disdain Jews, even in seasons of conflict.
- Part of God's plan is that Gentiles would provoke Israel to jealousy—not through arrogance, but through godly, flourishing lives.

- God will give Israel His Spirit and a new heart that desires His ways.
- This reaches its ultimate fulfillment when Messiah returns to rule.

**SLIDE:** Romans 11:33–34