

Session 2

# The Importance and Necessity of Understanding the Mystery of Israel (Rom. 11:25)

– Part 1 –

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## A. Introduction

1. In Romans 11:25, Paul was talking to a **predominantly Gentile audience** in the Church of Rome. He had a tremendous pastoral burden for them as a people.
2. Paul was going to bring them into an understanding of some **new dimensions of God's purposes**.
  - a. He was addressing the **importance** and **necessity** of **understanding the mystery of Israel**.
  - b. The very crux of Rom. 11:20–22 is that their personal faith would be put in jeopardy if they do not have an understanding of the dynamics that could happen within their lifetime.
  - c. If the people of God were ignorant of these dimensions of God's purposes, it would lead them into spiritual arrogance and ultimately resist the truth of God. Paul is warning them that their very faith could be jeopardised because of their ignorance.
3. What is a “mystery of God”? (Rom. 16:25–26)
  - a. There are mysteries in the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ. By His grace, the LORD will release and reveal these mysteries to His people, the Church of Jesus Christ.
  - b. These mysteries of the Gospel are not “new truths” but they are **truths that have been hidden**. At the right time and season, the Holy Spirit will reveal them to the people of God.

## B. “*I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant...*” (Rom. 11:25)

1. This verse speaks of Paul's **tremendous burden for the Gentile Church** to understand the mystery of Israel.
2. If it was important for the Church during Paul's generation to understand this mystery, it is even more **crucial for our generation**.
  - a. We are the generation in which the Lord will return!
  - b. We are the generation in which Israel has returned to her land!

3. We must develop a sense of urgency to understand this mystery. Many things are bearing witness to the fact that in the next several decades, things will really culminate with the coming of the Lord.
4. We need to ask the Lord for the same spirit that was on the sons of Issachar (1 Chr. 12:32) so that we may understand the times and know what to do.

**C. "...lest you should be wise in your own opinion..." (Rom. 11:25)**

1. Paul's concern for the Roman Church in Romans 11:20–22 was that this **ignorance would eventually grow into arrogance** if left unaddressed. It would end in apostasy before it was over. That was what burdened his heart.
2. Two general attitudes began to develop in the hearts of Gentile believers then (Rom. 11:18–22):
  - a. A presumed superiority over the Jewish people due to their rejection of the Gospel;
  - b. A subtle dishonouring of the Jewish believers of Jesus (i.e. Messianic believers) in their midst.
3. Paul warned of the progression of being ignorant of the mystery of Israel.
  - a. **Ignorance** or the lack of understanding will give rise to **arrogance**.
  - b. Arrogance will lead to **passive resistance** against the truth of God.
  - c. Passive resistance eventually becomes **active resistance** against God (i.e. lawlessness).
  - d. The result will be **apostasy** and, in this context, **antisemitism**.
4. While not everyone's ignorance results in arrogance, as we face increasing pressure at the End of the Age, being ignorant can have serious consequences.
  - a. We cannot afford to be ignorant when the pressure comes. If this ignorance is undealt with, it will continue to grow unperceived under the surface.
  - b. Eventually, we will have a root system of arrogance that we are not even aware of.
  - c. A lack of understanding will lead to arrogance, compromise and eventually result in the possibility of Gentile believers denying our faith and thus being cut off by God. This was the chief concern and burden of Paul.
5. Most Gentile believers are significantly unaware of the plan of God as revealed in Romans 11:18–20. Many are unaware of the jeopardy they will be in if they do not understand and will be unable to cooperate fully with the grace of God.

6. The Lord is going to help us comprehend the mystery of Israel in a complete way. We are going to receive the full weight of Paul's revelation in Romans 11.
7. It is critical for the Gentile Church to **reconnect to the purposes of God for Israel**. Only by understanding and contending for God's purposes for Israel will we be entering into God's larger purpose.
8. It is God's plan to unite the two groups in deep, affectionate partnership, humility and agreement. The Jews, according to Paul, had served the Gentiles richly even in their failure (Rom. 11:12).
9. When we come into agreement with God regarding His plan and purposes for Israel:
  - a. We must not give in to unsanctified sympathy and affection for the Jewish people apart from God's desire and plan.
  - b. We must recognise that God desires to bring her into her fullness through great fire and testing (Zech. 13:9).
  - c. We are called to be bold in proclaiming God's plan for Israel and to stand with her in prayer for her salvation and destiny, while she undergoes testing as part of God's plan for her.

#### **D. Conclusion**

1. Romans 11:25 is a crucial verse for Gentile believers to begin our journey of understanding the mystery of Israel.
2. It is a verse that we need to seriously take heed of and pray for God to grant us greater understanding of His heart for Israel.