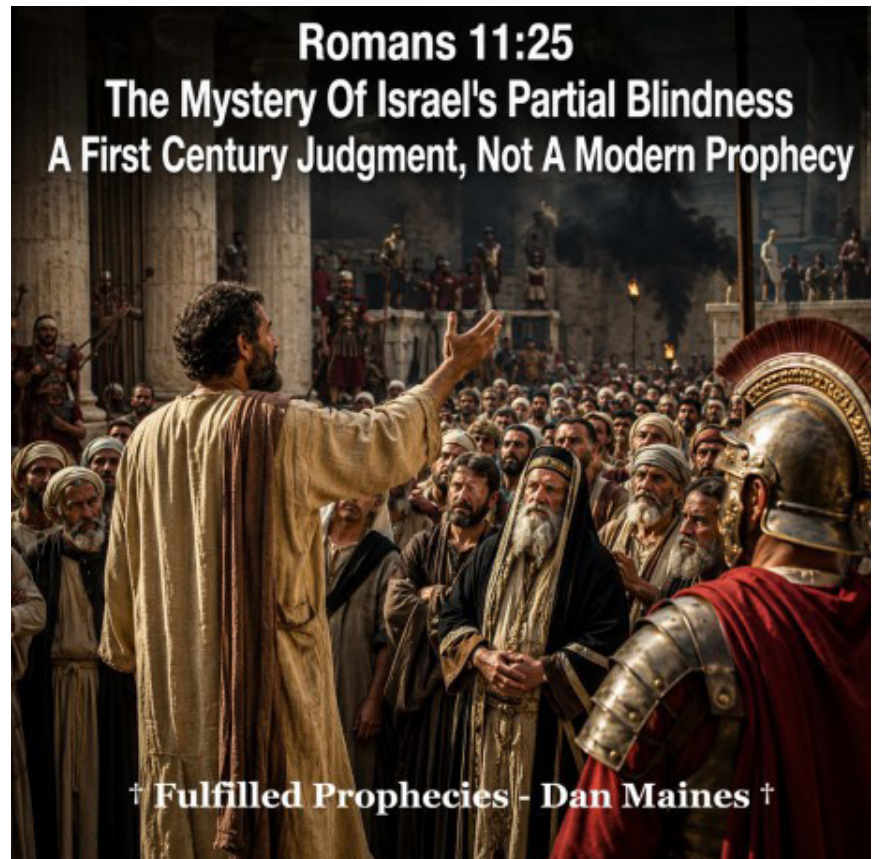


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**The Mystery Of Israel's
Partial Blindness A First
Century Judgment, Not A
Modern Prophecy**



By Dan Maines

Romans 11:25

The Mystery Of Israel's Partial Blindness

A First Century Judgment, Not A Modern Prophecy

Introduction

† Romans 11:25 is one of the most misunderstood verses in the New Testament. Many futurists teach that it describes a continuing spiritual blindness upon modern ethnic Israel that will someday be removed.

But Paul was explaining what was taking place in his own generation as the gospel went first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

† Romans 9 through 11 is one continuous discussion. Paul explained why many Jews rejected their Messiah, why Gentiles were being brought into God's covenant people, and how that transition would reach its completion. The "mystery" was God's revealed plan to unite believing Jews and Gentiles into one body in Christ.

† The partial hardening was temporary, limited, and connected to the first-century transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. Once that covenant transition reached its completion, the purpose of that hardening had been fulfilled.

Romans 11:25

For I do not want you, brothers and sisters, to be uninformed of this mystery-so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

† Paul called this a mystery because God's plan to bring Jews and Gentiles together into one covenant people had now been revealed through Christ. (Ephesians 3:3-6)

† The hardening was "in part." It never included every Jew because thousands of Jews believed in Jesus, including the apostles and many in Jerusalem. (Acts 2:41, Acts 21:20)

† The word "until" marks a period of transition, not an endless prophecy. The hardening served God's redemptive purpose until the fullness of the Gentiles entered the covenant community.

Romans 11:7-8

What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; just as it is written:

"God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day."

† This defines the hardening Paul mentions in Romans 11:25. It was already present while Paul was writing, not thousands of years later.

† Notice that the elect had already obtained salvation while only "the rest" were hardened. This proves the hardening was never upon every Jew. (Romans 11:1-5)

† Paul was describing his own generation, exactly as he had throughout Romans 9-11.

Isaiah 6:9-10

And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not understand; And keep on looking, but do not gain knowledge. ' Make the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes blind, So that they will not see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

† Israel's blindness did not begin in Romans. God foretold this judicial hardening through Isaiah centuries before Christ.

† Jesus applied this prophecy directly to the generation that rejected Him, showing Isaiah's words were being fulfilled before their eyes.

(Matthew 13:13-15, John 12:37-41)

† Paul also quoted this passage at the close of the book of Acts, proving the same hardening was still present during his ministry. (Acts 28:25-28)

Acts 28:25-28

And when they disagreed with one another, they began leaving after Paul said one parting statement: "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying, 'Go to this people and say, "You will keep on hearing, and will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, and will not perceive; For the hearts of this people have become insensitive, And with their ears they hardly hear, And they have closed their eyes; Otherwise they might see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them."' Therefore, let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen."

† Paul's final recorded appeal to unbelieving Israel ends exactly where Romans 11 pointed, the gospel was going to the Gentiles.

† This was not the beginning of another prophetic age. It was the completion of the covenant transition Paul had been explaining.

† The same blindness Isaiah described and Jesus confirmed belonged to the first century.

Matthew 23:37-38

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you

were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!

† Jesus identified the generation that refused Him as the ones whose house would become desolate.

† Their blindness was not permanent for all Jews throughout history. It was the judicial hardening of that covenant generation.

† Matthew 23 leads directly into Matthew 24, showing the coming destruction of Jerusalem would complete that judgment. (Matthew 24:1-2)

Luke 21:20-22

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are inside the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of punishment, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.

† Jesus identified the destruction of Jerusalem as the time when all covenant judgment written against that generation would reach its fulfillment.

† The nation that remained hardened rejected its Messiah and experienced the judgment Jesus repeatedly warned about.

† The Old Covenant system came to its complete end, removing the covenant distinction between Jew and Gentile. (Hebrews 8:13)

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

† While Paul wrote Romans, the Old Covenant was still passing away.

† The partial hardening belonged to this transition period while the Old Covenant was becoming obsolete.

† Once Jerusalem fell, the covenant order that distinguished Jew from Gentile had reached its end. (Luke 21:20-22)

Ephesians 2:14-16

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the hostility, which is the Law composed of commandments expressed in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two one new person, in this way establishing peace; and that He might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the hostility.

† Romans 11 does not point to another future covenant program for ethnic Israel.

† God's goal was always to create one new man in Christ where believing Jews and believing Gentiles share the same covenant blessings.

† The mystery has been revealed, the dividing wall has been removed, and God's people are now identified by faith in Christ rather than

ethnic ancestry.

Historical References

† Josephus described the stubborn refusal of Jerusalem's leaders to repent even as judgment surrounded the city, confirming the national hardness that Jesus and Paul described. (The Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Chapters 2-5)

† Eusebius recorded that the Christians obeyed Jesus' warning and fled Jerusalem before its destruction, while the unbelieving nation remained under judgment. (Ecclesiastical History, Book III, Chapter 5)

† Irenaeus testified that God's promises are fulfilled in Christ, not through continued dependence upon the Old Covenant nation. (Against Heresies, Book IV, Chapter 34)

† Tacitus also recorded the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple under Titus, confirming the catastrophic judgment that ended the Old Covenant age. (Histories, Book V, Chapters 11-13)

How It Applies To Us Today

† Romans 11:25 should not be used to teach that modern Jews remain under a unique prophetic blindness.

† The passage explains a first-century covenant transition that has already accomplished its purpose.

† Today there is no covenant distinction between Jew and Gentile. Every person comes to God through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

(Galatians 3:26-29)

† We rejoice that God's mystery has been revealed and fulfilled, and that all believers are one in Christ.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Does Romans 11:25 teach that modern Jews are still under a prophetic blindness?

A: No. Paul described a partial hardening that belonged to the first-century transition until God's purpose of bringing in the fullness of the Gentiles was accomplished. (Romans 11:25, Ephesians 3:3-6)

Q: Why did Paul say the hardening was only "in part"?

A: Because many Jews believed in Christ while many others rejected Him. The hardening never included every Jew. (Romans 11:1-5, Acts 2:41, Acts 21:20)

Q: What happened when the "until" of Romans 11:25 was fulfilled?

A: The covenant transition reached its completion, Jerusalem was judged, the Old Covenant ended, and God's one covenant people stood complete in Christ. (Luke 21:20-22, Hebrews 8:13, Ephesians 2:14-16)

Q: Does the word "until" require Israel's blindness to continue today?

A: No. "Until" simply marks the endpoint of a temporary condition. Once the fullness of the Gentiles had come in and the covenant

transition was complete, the purpose of the hardening had ended.
(Romans 11:25, Hebrews 8:13, Luke 21:20-22)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Romans 11:25; Romans 11:7-8; Isaiah 6:9-10; Acts 28:25-28; Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 21:20-22; Hebrews 8:13; Ephesians 2:14-16; Ephesians 3:3-6; Romans 11:1-5; Acts 2:41; Acts 21:20; Matthew 13:13-15; John 12:37-41; Matthew 24:1-2; Galatians 3:26-29

† Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Chapters 2-5; Tacitus, Histories, Book V, Chapters 11-13; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book III, Chapter 5; Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book IV, Chapter 34

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