



24 Hours Through the Bible*

*Primarily sourced from 'Learn the Bible in 24 Hours', by Dr. Chuck Missler, and 'The Analyzed Bible', by G. Campbell Morgan

Hour 16: Messiah's Rejection by Israel⁺

⁺ Many contributions for this hour from Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum

Prologue

- Matthew is the Messiah's Proof Gospel above all.
- The Unique phrase 'The Kingdom of Heaven' and 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand' is only in Matthew
- Matthew establishes for us and the Jewish people that in the fulfillment of the prophetic Word of God,
- In His Words spoken and His Deeds, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of Israel
- All they need do is receive Him as their King

Introduction

- To fully understand the basis of His first coming and what set in motion a predominantly gentile church
- One must first understand what occurred when the Messiahship of Jesus was rejected.
- In the layout of the Gospel of Matthew, He began His ministry in chapter 4.
- From chapter 4 until chapter 12, He is seen going around Israel proclaiming the Kingdom
- Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of the Jewish prophets and performing many miracles.
- The purpose of all His miracles, (besides His compassion) between chapters 4 and 12
- Is to authenticate His Person and His message.
- Many signs in words and deeds to force the nation of Israel to come to a decision regarding two things:
- First:** His Person, that He is the Messiah
- Second:** His message, the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

In Matthew 11 a change occurs. John is in prison having suffered violence

- For his message and is accused of demon possession
- Jesus rebukes the fickleness of this generation with the rejection of John and Himself
- He then rebukes and judges the cities where He did most of His miracles
- He then points out the essential issue: the proud reject, the humble receive
- He called individuals to come who are heavy laden under Phariseeism

Then in Matthew 12, the whole purpose of His miracles and His ministry underwent a radical change.

- The people looked to their leadership to pass judgment: **Is He or is He not the Messiah?**
- The leadership rejection of His Messiahship occurred in Matthew 12:22-37.

The Basic Flow of this study is from Matthew as the Baseline (Since Matthews is presenting the Messiah to Israel)

We have 13 Major Markers

We Start at the Beginning of Their Ministries

#1-John and Jesus preaching repentance for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand

Matt. 3:2, 3:8, 3:11, 4:17

-The word 'Repent' and its various forms are not used in Matthew after chapter 12

-Matt. 11:20 tells that the cities saw His miracles and heard His words, but they mostly did not repent!

#2-John in the South and Jesus primarily in the Galilee

-All in the South heard John, they came out to hear him

-So stated in Mark 1:5 and **Matt. 3:5**

5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him

6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

-Jesus in the Galilee:

Matt. 4:12-17 12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt (*and made His headquarters*) in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, (*North Galilee*)

14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles: (*where many gentiles dwelt and where gentile invaders came thru*)

16 The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,

And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**"

#3 People from all around followed Him in Galilee after John's imprisonment

Matt. 4:25 Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

-Why wasn't Jesus arrested? In a word it wasn't His time

-But He did not test God in this area.

-While in the Galilee He proclaimed that He was the bread of life

-And His broad base of disciples were to eat His flesh and drink His blood (John 6)

-Many did not follow Him anymore after He said this

-Then we read this John 7:1

John 7:1 After these things (*the hard sayings of ch.6*) Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

-You shall not test the Lord your God!

-Yet He did not live in fear and His time was not yet!

#4-First, John was rejected, led by the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Matt. 11:12

-He was cast into prison.

-While in prison Jesus said this about John and John's days up to his imprisonment

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

Dr. Arnold: From the time John was proclaiming the kingdom, his preaching received violent opposition.

-The opposition primarily came from the Pharisees, and secondarily from the Sadducees

-Both groups tried to block the way into the kingdom.

-Luke makes it clear that John fulfilled his actual calling with great success

Lk. 7:29 And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

-The common people who believed John's message and were baptized by him

-They had no problem accepting Jesus as their Messiah.

-However, the opposite was true of the Jewish leadership:

Lk. 7:30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him.

#5-Jesus, after the arrest of John, characterized this generation

Matt. 11:16-19

16 "But to what shall I liken **this generation**? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,

17 and saying:

'We played the flute or dancing music for you,

And you did not dance;

We mourned to or in your presence you,

And you did not lament.'

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, '**He has a demon.**'

19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! But wisdom is justified by her children."

Dr. Arnold:

-He characterized the rejecting Pharisees as children, always insisting on their own way

-He revealed that the real reason John was rejected was because he would not do it their way.

-He would not dance to the Pharisees' tune, and he would not support Pharisaic Judaism. (see Matt. 3:7)

-While that was the real reason John was rejected, the reason given by the Pharisees was different:

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He has a demon.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! (Mt. 11:18-19; Lk. 7:33-34).

-John fasted and abstained from alcohol because he was a Nazirite from birth

-The religious leaders used that as a basis for rejecting him, claiming he was demon possessed.

-In contrast, Jesus' life was not characterized by fasting, and He did not abstain from wine

-But now they used this as their initial grounds for rejecting Him.

-That He was unclean and hung around with sinners!

-Either way, one could not win unless he was a Pharisee.

To summarize, although the given reason for rejecting John was that he was demon possessed

-The real reason was that he would not uphold Pharisaism or the Pharisees themselves!

-Again, what happened to the herald would happen to the king.

-With John's rejection and incarceration, the seeds are sown and a transition to the rejection of Jesus begins.

-There is an emphasis on the rejection by the leaders, an emphasis on '**this generation**'.

-'**This generation**' is a phrase that Jesus uses a lot from the rejection of John B. on, in the Gospels

-14 of 16 times Jesus speaks of 'this generation' in Israel, during His earthly life and never in a good way

-Matt. 23:36-39 says this:

36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things (the blood guiltiness of 29-35) will come upon **this generation**.

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

-**Pillar:** 'All these things' of v.36 sums up all the crimes of which Jesus has been speaking.

-They all involve blood guiltiness, and it is this that will be laid at the door of the people he is addressing.

-All this guilt will be laid on 'this generation'. And the price to pay is

38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; (meaning: a 'wilderness', or a 'desert')

39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"

-In **Matt. 11:20-24** Jesus rebukes three cities in Galilee: Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum

20 Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:

21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon (*gentiles*), they would have repented long ago (*implying that these cities did not repent or bring forth fruit of repentance*) in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon (*gentiles*) in the day of judgment than for you.

23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom (*gentiles*), it would have remained until this day. (*implying they would have repented of their evil*)

24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you (*by way of comparison of light received*)."

Why these three?

-Jesus rebukes these three key Galilean cities because the majority of the miracles

-He performed in His public ministry were performed in those cities.

-They were Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, all on the north side of the Sea of Galilee

-No miracles of Jesus at Chorazin are recorded, yet many of His miracles were performed there!

#6-Jesus Explains Their Unbelief

Matt. 11:25-27

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden (*veiled*) these things from the wise and prudent (*Pharisees, Scribes and those receiving their influence*) and have revealed (*αποκαλύπτω, unveiled*) them to babes (*humbled sinners, tax collectors, the destitute and hurting*).

-Paul says something similar in **1Cor. 1:26-29**

26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

-Then Paul explains why?

29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Matt. 11 cont. 26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good *or pleasing* in Your sight.

27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one *fully* knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone *fully* know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

To whom is He willing to reveal Himself?....

#7-The Invitation to Belief and Discipleship

Matt. 11:28-30

28 Come to Me (*an act of 'faithing'*), all you who labor and are heavy laden,

-laboring and heavy under the yoke of Phariseeism (for us perhaps the religions of Christendom)

v.28 cont. ... and I will give you rest (or I will rest you)

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me (*obedient discipleship*),

And unlike the Pharisees

v. 29 cont. for I am gentle (meek: strength under control) and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

-**Dr. Arnold:** This was a call by the Messiah for those who labor and are heavy laden to come to Him.

-They were heavy laden because they were wearing the heavy yoke of Pharisaism and Mishnaic Judaism
(*oral traditions of Rabbis of the past; revered as the Word of God*).

-Jesus admonished them: **Take my yoke (Mt. 11:29).**

-A. T. Robertson notes this is a rabbinic figure for going to school.

-The young ox being schooled by the older mature ox

-They should take Jesus's yoke (go to school) and learn of Him because He is meek and lowly in heart

-Only through Him would they find rest for their souls (Mt. 11:29).

-**In contrast to Pharisaism**, His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Mt. 11:30, see also 23:4).

#8-The Rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish Leaders

Dr. Arnold

-**Context:** **Matthew 12:14-45** records the national rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus on the grounds of demon possession.

14 Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

15 But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.

16 Yet He warned them not to make Him known,

-Why? A shift in ministry emphasis was coming

-He quotes Isaiah to note this coming shift:

17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

18 “Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,

My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!

I will put My Spirit upon Him,

And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

His ministry to the gentiles would not be very public

19 He will not quarrel nor cry out,

Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

-He will not finish a judgment or nor stop one that is occurring...

20 A bruised reed He will not break,

And smoking flax He will not quench,

Until He sends forth justice to victory;

21 And in His name Gentiles will trust.”

Setting the stage for His Messianic Acceptance or Rejection by the Jewish Leadership

- The circumstances of the second messianic miracle are recorded in two Gospels: Matthew 12:22–37 and Mark 3:19–30.
- Mark 3:21 states: **And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.**
- At this stage in the Gospel accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus
- There seems to be a general recognition that a high point was about to be reached.
- Even His friends considered the fact that Jesus needed protection from Himself (Mark 3:21)
- Because they felt His zeal was bordering on insanity.

Matt. 12:22 cont. Then one was brought to Him (by whom, friend or foe?) who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.

-Luke's account reads in **11:14** **And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute man spoke; and the multitudes marveled.**

- Among the many miracles Jesus performed was the casting out of demons.
- According to verse 27, Judaism also had exorcists: ... **by whom do your sons cast them out?**, asks Jesus
- Even the Pharisees, rabbis, and their followers had the ability to cast out demons.
- The act of casting out demons was not all that unusual in the Jewish world of that day.
- But casting out demons within the framework of Pharisaic Judaism
- Required one to use a specific ritual, which included three stages.

First, the exorcist would have to establish communication with the demon

-For when a demon speaks, he uses the vocal cords of the person he indwells.

Second, after establishing communication with the demon

-The exorcist would then have to find out the demon's name.

Third, after finding out the demon's name, he could, by the use of that name, cast out the demon.

- There are occasions that Jesus used the Jewish methodology, as with Legion in Luke 8:30 or Mark 5
- However, there was one kind of demon against which Judaism's methodology was powerless
- That was the kind of demon who caused the controlled person to be dumb or mute.
- Because he could not speak, there was no way of establishing communication with this kind of a demon
- No way of finding out this demon's name.
- So, within the framework of Judaism, it was impossible to cast out a dumb demon.

-On other occasions Jesus used the Jewish method, as in **Luke 8:30** **Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him.**

- When demons speak, they use the vocal cords of the person under their control.
- However, in the case of the dumb demon, Jewish exorcism was to no avail
- For communication with that kind of demon was impossible.
- Jewish theology taught that the Messiah, when He came, would be able to cast out even that kind of demon.
- The Jewish observation that dumb demons were different was validated by the Messiah in Mark 9:17–29, particularly in verses 17, 25, and 29.

-Mark 9:28-29 28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" 29 So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

- This was the second of the three messianic miracles*: the casting out of a dumb or mute demon.
- In verse 22, that is exactly the kind of demon Jesus casts out.

* (The first Messianic miracle was the healing of a leper as recorded in Matthew 8:2–4, Mark 1:40–45 and Luke 5:12–16. The third Messianic miracle was the healing of a man born blind in John 9:1–41)

Was this not the Jewish Messiah?

- This caused the people to begin asking a question in **Matt. 12:23** *And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David (a title of the Messiah, see Matt. 22:42)?"*
- The multitudes are looking for an answer-is Jesus the Messiah?
- How are their leaders going to respond?
- 12:24** *Now when the Pharisees (who came down from Jerusalem, Mk. 3:22) heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*
- Mark 3:22** reads: And the scribes that came down from Jerusalem (*sent from headquarters*) said, He has **Beelzebub**, and, by the prince of the demons cast he out the demons.
- Although this incident occurs in Galilee, it was instigated by an official delegation from Jerusalem.
- A decision was finally reached by the Sanhedrin regarding His messianic claims, and made public.
- They refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah because He did not fit the pharisaic mold
- Or the idea of what the Messiah was supposed to say and do.
- Their alternative explanation as to how He was performing His miracles
- Was to say that He Himself was possessed by Beelzebub the prince of demons.
- So John B. was possessed and now Jesus is possessed according to the Jewish leadership

'Astounded' versus 'Is this the Son of David?'

- Before this event in these verses, Jesus had cast out many demons, and the people were astounded
- For with authority and power he commanded the unclean spirits, and they come out (Lk. 4:36).**
- They wondered by what authority He was able to do this.
- When Jesus cast out this particular mute demon, the multitudes reacted differently.
- The question at its heart was, **"Can Jesus really be the Messiah?"**
- This was one of the key purposes of this miracle, to get them to see that He was indeed the Son of David.
- While the multitudes were willing to raise the question, they were not willing to answer it for themselves.
- They were waiting for the Pharisees to conclude either that He was or wasn't the Messiah
- Could this be the 'Son of David' 12:23...** 'Son of David' is a messianic title
- Something about this sign was so unique that they recognized that only Messiah could have performed it.
- Their conclusion was correct; Jesus had just performed the second messianic miracle.
- He was doing the very things they had been taught that only the Messiah would be able to do.
- They never asked this question when Jesus casts out other types of demons.
- However, when He casts out a deaf and dumb demon, they raised the question of His Messiahship
- Because they recognized from the teachings of the rabbis that this was a Messianic miracle.

Sheep and Their Leadership Complex

- However, the Jewish masses have always tended to labor under what is called the "leadership complex."
- Whichever way the leaders went, the people were sure to follow.
- Consistently throughout the Old Testament
- When the king did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, the people followed.
- But when the king did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, the people also followed.
- Even in this day, when Jewish believers witness to their Jewish contacts
- They consistently hear this same objection:
- "If Jesus really is the Messiah, then why is it that our rabbis do not believe in Him?"
- In New Testament times, because of the stranglehold that Pharisaic Judaism had upon the masses
- This Leadership Complex was extremely strong.
- So, while the Jewish masses were willing to raise the question, **"Is this not the Jewish Messiah?"**
- The masses were not willing to make that decision for themselves.
- Instead, they looked to their leadership to make that decision for them.

Two Options, Two Choices

- The question by the multitudes concerning Jesus's Messiahship, gave the Pharisees only two options:
- First:** To officially recognize Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah
- This they did not want to do because He rejected Pharisaic Judaism and the authority of the Oral Law.
- Second** option was to reject His messianic claims.
- If they took that route, they would have to explain how Jesus
- Was able to perform the miracles that had never before been done.
- In the end, the Pharisees took the second option and rejected Jesus's Messianic claims.

How do the Pharisees explain His Miracles?

- To explain His special abilities, they came up with a rather radical solution.
- They declared that Jesus was able to cast out the mute causing demon
- Because He Himself was possessed and controlled by the prince of all of the demons (Mt. 12:24), Beelzebub.

Who was Beelzebub?

- The original form of the name 'Beelzebub' was 'Beelzebul', meaning, "the lord of the royal palace."
- He was the god of the Philistine city of Ekron.
- After the Jews had finally been cured of idolatry by the Babylonian Captivity
- The rabbis liked to poke fun at various pagan gods and apply some of their names to different demons.
- Here, they changed the last letter 'l' to 'b' so that the name became 'Beelzebub', not 'Beelzebul'
- Meaning "the lord of the flies" or "the lord of the dung," the demon in charge of diseases.
- This explanation became the official basis for the rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus:
- Because He was demon possessed, Jesus could not be the Messiah.
- Being under the control of a demon gave Him the power to perform signs and wonders never seen before.
- This explanation is not only reflected in the Gospels, but also in rabbinic literature.
- One passage in the Talmud elaborates on why Jesus was executed on Passover.
- Executions were not permitted on feast days.
- However, in the case of Jesus, an exception could be made because of the nature of His crime:
- He had seduced Israel by the practice of sorcery, which is closely connected with demonism.

But there is no denying the miracle occurred

- If He was not the Messiah, then the Pharisees must offer some kind of alternative explanation
- As to how He was able to perform these many miracles
- Especially the miracles that were supposed to be unique to the Messiah alone.
- Neither in the Gospels nor in rabbinic literature did the religious leaders ever deny the fact of His miracles.
- There were too many eyewitnesses to those signs.
- However, they ascribed the power of the miracles to a demonic source.
- Therefore**, the official basis for rejecting the Messiahship of Jesus was that He was demon possessed.
- This is the given reason, but the real reason was that He did not do it their way and He was a threat to them

The Leaven of the Pharisees

- This is the leaven of the Pharisees (Lk. 12:1)
- The false teaching about which the Messiah would warn His disciples.
- They were to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees: their claim that Jesus was not the Messiah
- And that He was demon possessed.
- It was on these grounds that the Pharisees rejected the Messiahship of Jesus.
- A definite statement not a question to Jesus.

#9 Jesus' Defense

Jesus answers with reason first ...

25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

26 If Satan casts out satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.

Based on Reason the only other source of power to cast out demons is.....

28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

-I have proven thru Messianic miracles that I am the Messiah

And that the Stronger King of the Kingdom has come upon you....

29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man?

And then he will plunder his house.

-The Messiah responded to this accusation by telling them that their statement is unreasonable

-And could not be true because it would mean that Satan's kingdom was divided against itself.

Dr. Arnold

Jesus defended Himself against the charge of being demon possessed by declaring four things:

1-This accusation could not be true because it would mean a division thru self-infliction in Satan's kingdom (Mt. 12:25-26; Mk. 3:23-26).

2-The religious leaders themselves had long recognized that the gift of exorcism was a gift of God,

-so to accuse Him of demonic powers to exorcise was inconsistent with their own theology (Mt. 12:27).

3-This miracle authenticated the claims and the message of the Messiah (Mt. 12:28).

4-This miracle showed that He was stronger than, not subservient to, Satan (Mt. 12:29; Mk. 3:27).

#10 The Judgment

Judgment was pronounced on the generation of that day in verses 30-37:

30 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

-When the leadership of Israel officially rejected Jesus, they became guilty of the unpardonable sin.

-From that point on, they were under the judgment that would come in A.D. 70

-The year in which Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the Romans.

Scattering versus Sowing

-In Acts 8 they were 'sown' by persecution out of Jerusalem and Judea

-Here in Matthew 'scattered', emphasizes that those who are against Him would scatter His people

-In Acts 8 a different word for 'scattered' is used emphasizing the sower who would sow His seed

-Ultimately sown as seed to the uttermost parts of the earth to grow, be rooted and bear fruit.

-The devils scattering is used by God to accomplish His sowing into the world!

31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

-In verse 31, that generation had committed the unpardonable sin: blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

-It should be clearly comprehended exactly what the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is

-In the only context in Scripture in which it is found, and it must be interpreted accordingly.

-This 'unpardonable sin' is not an individual sin, but a national sin.

-It was committed by 'this generation' of Israel in Jesus' day

-And cannot be applied to subsequent Jewish generations.

-The content of the unpardonable sin was the national rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus

- While He was physically present on the grounds that He was demon possessed.
- This sin was unpardonable, and judgment was set.
- The judgment came forty years later in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem
- The Temple and the worldwide dispersion of the Jewish people.
- This does not mean that individual members of that generation could not be saved, for many were.
- It did mean, however, that nothing they could do would avert the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age (*Mosaic*) or in the age (*Kingdom Age*) to come.

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

Which are they, good or bad?

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Dr. Arnold:

- After having defended Himself against the accusation of being demon possessed
- Jesus pronounced a special judgment upon 'this generation' of Israel for being guilty of a very unique sin
- Which has become known as the 'unpardonable sin' or the 'blasphemy of the Holy Spirit' (Mt. 12:31).
- Because it was unpardonable, this judgment could not be withdrawn and was set against 'this generation'.
- That judgment came forty years later, in the year A.D. 70, when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed.
- It is very important to understand the unpardonable sin in its exact context
- Because this is the only context in which this sin is found.
- Therefore, it must be interpreted accordingly.
- By 'context definition', the unpardonable sin was: **The national rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus**
- On the grounds of demon possession while He was physically present on earth.

Let's further expound upon this definition

First: this was a national sin, not an individual sin.

- Individuals of 'this generation', like the Apostle Paul, did escape the judgment thru individual repentance
- Therefore, this sin cannot be committed today.

The Bible makes one point very clear

- The individual who will come to God through Jesus' blood will be forgiven any sin he has committed.
- The nature of the sin is irrelevant, due to the total relevancy of the Cross toward sin and sins and sinning
- The Messiah did not die on the cross only for certain kinds of sins.

Second: this sin is unique to the Jewish generation of Jesus's day

- It cannot be applied to later Jewish generations, a fallacy the Catholic Church, for example, has taught.
- It was to this particular generation that the Messiah came both physically and visibly.
- He offered to establish the Messianic kingdom for them, and He offered Himself as their Messianic King.
- It was also this specific generation that rejected Him.
- Thru studying the Gospel accounts, from this point on, the phrase "this generation" is frequently used.
- 'This generation' alone was guilty of the blasphemy against the Spirit (Mt. 12:31).

- The miracle work of the Holy Spirit was the final testimony of the Messiahship of Jesus.
- It was possible to reject Jesus's messianic claims and still be convinced by the work of the Holy Spirit.
- However, to reject the witness of the Holy Spirit also meant rejecting the person of the Messiah.
- The sin, then, was the willful rejection of the person of the Messiah
- Who had been authenticated by the signs of the Holy Spirit.
- To ascribe those signs to Satan was to blaspheme the Holy Spirit
- Which, in turn, led to the rejection of Jesus's Messiahship.
- The Messiah needed to be present to perform these signs
- Which is why this sin was limited to that generation and cannot be committed today.

Third, no other nation could commit this sin.

- Jesus was never visibly and physically present with any other nation
- Offering Himself as that nation's Messiah.
- This was a unique relationship He had with Israel.
- There is only one covenant nation, Israel.
- 'Anyone' in **Matthew 12:32** can have an individual or a corporate meaning, depending on the context.
32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.
- In this context, it is defined by the term 'this generation' of verses 41 and 42, which state: **41 The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with 'this generation', and shall condemn it . . . The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with 'this generation', and shall condemn it . . . (Mt. 12:41-42).**
- This means that the word 'anyone' is corporate: 'this Generation'.

Summary: The individual could be forgiven, but for the nation, it is now unpardonable.

There were two consequences for this generation that committed the unpardonable sin

First, it meant that the offer of the messianic kingdom was rescinded

- That generation lost the opportunity, privilege, and benefit of seeing the kingdom established in their day.
- It is now destined to be reoffered to the future Jewish generation of the Great Tribulation
- Who will accept it, as detailed in Matthew 24-25.
- In v.32 Jesus used the phrases 'this age' and that 'which is to come' (Mt. 12:32).
- In the Judaism of His day, the age to come was the Messianic age (the church age is a mystery gap).
- In other words, 'this generation' was not going to see the kingdom established in their time

Second, it meant that this generation was under a special divine judgment

- A judgment of physical destruction, a judgment that was experienced forty years later, in 70 A.D.
- When Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed.
- In rejecting Jesus, 'this generation' had reached the point of no return.
- In God's dealings with His covenant nation, once a generation reached the point of no return
- Nothing could be done to change the coming physical judgment.

This was the third time a specific covenant generation had reached such a point

- The first time** was when Israel committed the sin of Kadesh-Barnea, as recorded in Numbers 13-14.
- After marching through the wilderness, the Israelites finally arrived at Kadesh-Barnea
- Located on the border of the Promised Land.
- From there, Moses sent out twelve spies, who came back forty days later.
- They all agreed that the land was everything God had said it was
- A land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 33:3).
- Then came a sharp point of disagreement.
- Only two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, had faith in God and believed the Israelites could conquer the land.

- The other ten men gave a discouraging report, that due to their numerical & physical superiority
- And military strength of the inhabitants: Therefore they could not take the land.
- The people made the faulty assumption that the majority must always be right.
- There was a massive rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron
- And the two men almost lost their lives in a mob scene, until God intervened and rescued them.
- At that point, the Exodus generation had reached the point of no return

God decreed the judgment of forty years of wandering and death in the wilderness outside of Israel.

- The people could do nothing thereafter to change the judgment, though they tried.
- Numbers 14 does say that they repented and that God forgave their sins (Num. 14:20).
- The sin did not affect anyone's individual salvation.
- However, the older generation still had to pay the physical consequences of their unbelief
- Going beyond the point of no return, which was death outside of the land of Israel.

The offer of the land was rescinded from the Exodus generation

- And it was reoffered to the wilderness or 2nd generation, who accepted it and entered Israel under Joshua.
- Even Moses died outside the land because of a sin he had committed
- But that did not affect his individual, personal salvation.
- The issue here is the physical death, not the eternal spiritual consequences of sin.

The second time the nation reached the point of no return was in the days of Manasseh

- One of the cruelest kings of Jerusalem, who practiced extreme forms of idolatry, including human sacrifice.
- Much innocent blood was shed throughout his lengthy reign (II Kgs. 21:16).
- He turned the Temple into a major center of idolatry (II Kgs. 21:1-9; II Chron. 33:1-9).
- Finally, he reached the point of no return, and God decreed judgment.
- Jerusalem and the first Temple were destroyed by the Babylonians
- The people were led into captivity (II Kgs. 21:10-15).
- Nothing they did thereafter could change the course of judgment.
- Manasseh repented at the end of his life (II Chron. 33:10-13); as an individual, he was a saved man.
- He was even followed by a good king, Josiah, who brought revival to Israel.
- The only thing God promised was that He would not bring the set judgment during Josiah's life
- But the judgment was still inevitable (II Chron. 34:22-28); the people had reached the point of no return.

Now, for the third time, with the willful rejection of the person of the Messiah

- Israel had reached the point of no return.
- Nothing they did thereafter could change the coming national judgment.
- A study of the triumphal entry will show that a great number of people proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah
- When He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (Mt. 21:1-17; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:29-40; Jn. 12:12-19).
- But even in the midst of their messianic acclamations, the words of Jesus remained words of judgment
- Clearly stating that Jerusalem would be destroyed as He wept over the City
- This is the nature of the unpardonable sin: Physical consequences must be paid.
- It meant that no matter how many Jews came to believe—and many did come to believe
- It would not change the fact of the coming physical judgment of A.D. 70.

#11-The New Policy Concerning Signs

Their response

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

His answer: The Sign of the Resurrection....

39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

And what is the sign of Jonah?

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Dr. Arnold: After hearing Jesus's words of rebuke and judgment

- The Pharisees tried to retake the offensive by demanding yet another sign.
- The Pharisaic implication was that Jesus had not done enough to authenticate His messianic claims.
- The fact is that He had performed numerous miracles since He first went public with His ministry
- Including those that had never been done before and which the people viewed as Messianic.
- In spite of this, the religious leaders based their rejection of Jesus's Messiahship on demon possession.
- As a result, Jesus announced His new policy concerning the purpose of His signs.

Miracles as Signs

- When He began His ministry, His miracles were to serve as signs to Israel
- In order to persuade the people to make a decision regarding His person and His Messiahship.
- Since they had irrevocably rejected Him, He announced His new policy:
- No more signs for the nation except one sign, the sign of Jonah**
- Which is the sign of resurrection (Mt. 12:39).
- The purpose of performing miracles from that point on would be to train the twelve disciples
- For the new kind of work they would have to conduct because of this rejection
- A work that is described in detail in the book of Acts.

The sign of Jonah will come to Israel on three occasions

- 1-The resurrection (technically the resuscitation) of Lazarus (after 3 days)
- 2-The resurrection of Jesus Himself (after 3 days)
- 3-The resurrection of the two witnesses in the tribulation (Rev. 11:11-12). (after 3 days)

-That is the only sign Jesus will still give to the nation, moving forward.

#12 The Judgment of 'this Generation'

12:41 The men of Nineveh (*gentiles*) will rise up in the judgment with **this generation** and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

42 The queen of the South (*a gentile*) will rise up in the judgment with **this generation** and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

Dr. Arnold: After announcing the new policy concerning the purpose of His signs

- Jesus returned to the theme of judgment
- Which the Pharisees had interrupted by their demand for another sign (Mt. 12:38).
- But now, notice the special emphasis on this generation:
- 41 The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it; The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it (Mt. 12:41-42).**
- Jesus gave two examples from the Old Testament: the men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba.
- Gentiles who had received a lot less light, a lot less divine revelation
- Than 'this generation' of the Jewish people, yet they responded positively to the light they were given.
- Therefore, at the judgment before the great white throne of Revelation 20:11

- These Gentiles will stand and condemn this particular Jewish generation
- For being guilty of the unpardonable sin, a sin unique to them, because they rejected the greater light.

Jesus concluded His words of judgment

- With the story of a demon that indwelled a person, residing in him, but then chose to leave him (Mt. 12:43).
- 43** "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.
- 44** Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.
- 45** Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."
- The demon was not cast out, but left of his own free will, looking for a better place to live.
- But he when he could find no vacancies, he decided to go back to the person he had indwelt previously.
- When the demon returned, he found the man swept and garnished, but still empty (Mt. 12:44).
- During the interim, the man was not indwelt by some other spirit
- Therefore, because he remained empty, the returning demon was able to reenter him.
- This time, the demon did not want to again live by himself
- He invited seven of his demon friends to join him (Mt. 12:45a).
- Jesus concluded that **the last state of that man becomes worse than the first** (Mt. 12:45b, by a factor of 8).
- He started out with only one demon; but because he stayed empty, he ended up with eight demons.

The point of this story is often missed

- Although Jesus clearly gave the application: **Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation** (Mt. 12:45c).
- He again emphasized this particular generation which had begun with the preaching of John the Baptizer.
- John's calling was to prepare them to accept the Messiahship of Jesus.
- This generation was swept and garnished by John's preaching and baptism, ready for the Messiah.
- Because they rejected Jesus's Messiahship, they also remained empty,
- And their last state will be worse than the first.

The Application to This Generation

- At the time when John started preaching, the Jews were under Roman domination
- And had to pay annual tribute to the emperor
- But Rome still allowed them to retain their national identity.
- Jerusalem was standing, the Temple was functioning in all its Herodian glory
- Thus the Jews had a semi-autonomous government in the Sanhedrin.
- However, forty years after Jesus spoke these words, the Roman legions invaded the land.
- After a four-year war and a two-year siege, they destroyed the city, tore down the Temple
- There was not one stone standing on top of the other (Mt. 24:2, Mark 13:2, Luke 19:44)
- The Jewish people were killed or scattered and dispersed throughout the world.

Summary: The last state of that generation was, indeed, worse than the first.

13 Jesus and Revelation after the Rejection

- After the religious leaders officially rejected Jesus on the basis of a false claim
- His ministry changed radically in the following four areas: signs, miracles, message, and teaching method.
- Signs.** Jesus no longer performed signs to provoke the nation to make a decision.
- They had already irrevocably decided to reject His Messiahship.
- The purpose of His signs from this point forward was to train the apostles
- To prepare them for their ministry, as described in the book of Acts.
- The only sign He would do publicly was the sign of Jonah, or the sign of resurrection (Lazarus).
- In summary:** the signs went from being for the nation to being for the apostles.

Miracles. The second area of change concerned the people for whom Jesus performed miracles.

-There were two facets to this change.

First is that up until this event, Jesus had performed miracles for the benefit of the masses

-And did not require them to have faith first (though some had faith).

-An example was when Jesus, on His own initiative, healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda (Jn. 5:1-15).

-The man did not even know who Jesus was or what He claimed to be.

-At that time, faith was not essential for Jesus to perform miracles

-Because He was performing them to convince people to believe in him as Messiah.

-However, all of that changed.

-Now, He performed miracles in response to the needs of individuals, requiring that they have faith.

To summarize: His miracles went from masses without faith to individuals with faith.

Second He often would tell the people He had healed to go and proclaim what God had done for them.

-An example of this is Luke 17:14, where He sent the Jewish lepers He had healed to the priesthood.

-Now, He healed someone, He forbade them to tell anyone what God had done.

-As will be seen, He did not apply that rule to the Gentiles, but only to Jews.

To summarize, He went from “tell all” to “tell no one.”

Message. Until the events described in Matthew 12, both Jesus and the apostles traveled all over Israel

-From city to city and synagogue to synagogue, proclaiming Him to be the Messiah.

-Now, He forbade His disciples to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.

-When Peter made his statement of confession: **You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God**

-Jesus told him and the other disciples not to tell anyone (Mt. 16:16-20).

-This policy of silence was rescinded in Matthew 28 with the Great Commission.

To summarize: the policy changed from proclaiming His Messiahship to concealing it.

Method of teaching. Prior to His rejection, whenever Jesus taught the people publicly

-He spoke in terms they could and did understand, as per their response to the Sermon on the Mount.

-At the end of the sermon, Matthew stated that the people clearly understood what He had said

-And, more importantly, they knew exactly where He differed from the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 7:28-29).

-Now, whenever He taught the people publicly, He spoke to them only in parables.

To summarize, His teaching went from being very clear to being parabolic.

This fourth change set the stage for the next section

-Now, parables are designed either to answer a question or to solve a problem.

-In Matthew 13, Jesus began teaching a series of parables, ‘The Mystery Kingdom Parables’

-Which were spoken on the very day that the national rejection of His Messiahship occurred.

-The question being answered in parables is: “In light of Israel’s rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus

-What is the course of God’s Kingdom Program in the period between His two comings?”

-The problem being solved is, “Why was the Messianic Kingdom not set up?”

Summary

-To understand why His ministry changed so radically in these four areas

-We must understand the unpardonable sin of rejecting Jesus as their Messiah.

-It was a critical and pivotal event that set the stage for the second half of Jesus’s ministry

-Plus for the events described in the book of Acts, even for a new entity that would come into existence

-The *ecclesia* (Greek), the church, the body of Christ.

-Finally, the unpardonable sin set the stage for the course of Jewish history

-For the next two thousand years, it was a crucial turning point.

- When the leadership of Israel officially rejected Jesus, they became guilty of the unpardonable sin.
- From that point on, they were under the judgment of A.D. 70 (though the date was not given by Jesus),
- The year in which Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the Romans.

Focusing

The Mystery of Israel's Hardening

Rom. 11:25

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

When did this hardening happen?

Dr. Arnold

The Mystery of Israel's Hardening

a. Romans 9:1–11:36

The seventh mystery is the Mystery of Israel's Hardening. To fully understand this mystery, it will be necessary to survey all of Romans 9–11.

(1) The Theology of Israel's Rejection—Romans 9:1–29

In Romans 9:1–5, Paul discusses two things: his sorrow and Israel's privileges. He writes of his sorrow (vv. 1–3), saying that his conscience and the Holy Spirit bear witness to it; this method of using two witnesses to establish something (his sorrow) is a concept from the Law. Paul's great sorrow, in turn, has caused him physical pain (v. 2). The content of Paul's sorrow is that he was willing to be lost for eternity if it meant Israel's salvation (v. 3). But he knew that could not be, that he could not die on Israel's behalf. He then describes Israel's privileges (vv. 4–5), listing eight: first, the adoption, referring to Israel's national adoption as the national son of God (Ex. 4:22–23); second, the glory, the Shekinah Glory, the visible evidence of God's presence; third, the covenants, the four unconditional covenants God made with Israel (Abrahamic Covenant, Palestinian or Land Covenant, Davidic Covenant, New Covenant); fourth, Law-giving, i.e., the Mosaic Covenant and the Mosaic Law; fifth, the service of God, which is the entire Levitical system; sixth, the promises, specifically, the messianic promises; seventh, the fathers, the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and eighth, Israel was given the Messiah Himself. Of the Messiah, Paul says three things: As to His nationality, He is a Jew; as to His sovereignty, He is over all; as to His deity, He is God blessed forever.

In 9:6–13, Paul discusses to Israel's rejection of the Messiah in light of biblical history. He begins by pointing out that there are two Israels (v. 6): There is Israel the whole, including all Jews, all the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; then there is the Remnant of Israel, that minority segment of the Jewish population who are believers. In 9:7–13, he presents two illustrations: Ishmael and Isaac (vv. 7–9), and Esau and Jacob (vv. 10–13). Through these two illustrations, he makes four points: first, although Israel has failed, God's Word has not and, in fact, all is going according to God's plan; second, spiritual blessings do not come on the basis of physical descent or personal merit, but only to those physical descendants who believe—and only those physical descendants who believe are Abraham's real spiritual children; third, the spiritual blessings come by the grace of God solely through the will of God; and fourth, physical descent alone will not obtain these promises, only physical descent and its spiritual appropriation will obtain them, meaning one must be both physically and spiritually Jewish. To conclude this section, Paul is not saying that the Church has replaced Israel. Rather, his point is that the Remnant of Israel has obtained these promises, while the rest of Israel has not.

In 9:14–29, Paul deals with Israel's rejection in light of specific biblical principles. He raises two questions and answers them individually. The first question, in 9:14–18 is: Is there unrighteousness with God? Is God unrighteous because He grants mercy only on that part of Israel that believes and not on all Israel? His response is fourfold: first, God forbid (v. 14), may it never be, perish the thought; second, God can show mercy to whomsoever He wills; third, he emphasizes God's sovereignty (v. 17), God is absolutely free in His dealings with men; and fourth, he draws his conclusion (v. 18), saying God will have mercy on whom He will.

Therefore, God has the absolute sovereign right to extend His mercy to whom He chooses, and He has chosen to extend it only to those of Israel who believe. Verses 19–29 contain the second question and answer. The question, in verse 19, is: Why does God find fault? He answers, giving the illustration of the potter and the clay (vv. 20–21); his point is that if God did not elect, none would be saved because none seek God. He also states that men are not hardened so that they can be lost; they are hardened because they already are lost. In verses 22–23, he makes the application of the illustration.... He states that vessels of wrath fit themselves for destruction (v. 22). Then, using the Greek passive voice in verse 23, vessels of mercy are made fit for salvation. In other words, unbelievers make themselves fit for judgment, while God makes believers fit for salvation. In verse 24, the writer introduces the principle that God has called both Jews and Gentiles. Heretofore, he has been dealing with two groups of Jews, the Remnant and the non-Remnant, or Jews who believe and Jews who do not believe. Now he states that among the Gentiles, God has also fitted some for salvation. Once again, the mystery concerns the Gentiles. Paul draws his conclusion in 9:25–29. Vessels of mercy are also found among the Gentiles (25–26); on the other hand, a great portion of Israel has become vessels of wrath, although there is still a remnant within Israel (27–29).

Three points serve to summarize this section: first, Israel's rejection of the Messiah did not catch God by surprise, for it was part of God's divine plan; second, because of Israel's rejection, mercy was extended to the Gentiles; and third, this was not to the exclusion of the Jews, for there is still a remnant.

(2) The Explanation of Israel's Rejection—Romans 9:30–10:21

The second main division gives the explanation for Israel's rejection. This section comprises four subdivisions. The first discusses Israel's stumbling and the remaining give three reasons why Israel stumbled, based on three lines of ignorance.

In the first subdivision, he describes the stumbling of the people (9:30–33). In verse 30, the Gentiles have attained righteousness because they came on the basis of faith. In verses 31–32a, Israel failed to attain righteousness because they tried to obtain it by the works of the Law. Finally, the cause of their stumbling is the Messianic Stone which means salvation is by grace through faith in Him apart from the works of the Law (vv. 32b–33).

The second subdivision discusses Israel's ignorance of the channel of salvation (10:1–11). He begins by describing his own desire (v. 1): that Israel might be saved. The reason (v. 2) is that he knows that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They failed to distinguish between legal righteousness and faith righteousness. In verses 3–5, he describes legal righteousness: trying to attain righteousness by the works of the Law. They ended up being ignorant of two things. First: they had misconstrued the purpose of the Law and so they were ignorant of God's righteousness, which was salvation by grace through faith. Second: they were ignorant that the Messiah was the end of the Law, since the Law ended with the Messiah's death. The result was that they tried to establish their own righteousness by the works of the Law. In verses 6–11, he describes faith righteousness, noting that it is not attainable by human effort (vv. 6–7). Rather, the means is faith (v. 8), and the one essential is belief (vv. 9–11): one must believe the confession that Jesus is the Messiah (vv. 9–10). He then draws the conclusion: faith is the only way of attaining God's righteousness

and salvation (v. 11). The ignorance here was that the purpose of the Law was never a means of salvation, but a rule of life for those Jews already saved.

The third subdivision discusses Israel's ignorance of the universal character of salvation (vv. 12–13). He points out that God is the Lord of all, both Jews and Gentiles (v. 12). If salvation is free, it must be universal to both Jews and Gentiles; so all may be saved, meaning both Jews and Gentiles. Then, whosoever [meaning Jew or Gentile] calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (v. 13). The ignorance here was based on the previous ignorance. Believing the Law was a means of salvation, and knowing that God gave the Law only to Israel and not to the Gentiles, they concluded that God intended only to save Jews and not Gentiles.

In the fourth subdivision, Paul discusses Israel's ignorance of the universal preaching of the gospel (10:14–21). He begins by spelling out the chain of preaching (vv. 14–15). As salvation is universal, without distinction, it should have been preached without distinction. He developed a logical progression as follows: there is no calling upon the name of the Lord without faith; furthermore, there is no faith without hearing, meaning one must know what the content of faith is, i.e., what to believe; moreover, there is no hearing without preaching; and finally, there is no preaching without sending. He then points out that the message was heard, though Israel failed to submit to the gospel message (v. 16). He reaffirms that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (v. 17). Continuing this thought (v. 18), he notes that the Jewish people had the Word of God and, thus, the message; they heard the message, but failed to respond to the message. In addition, he states that the Old Testament anticipated that a message would go out to the Gentiles, and that many Gentiles would believe (vv. 19–20). He concludes that even though Israel rejected the Messiah, God loves her still and keeps His arms open, waiting to receive Israel still (v. 21). This third ignorance resulted from the second one and the second resulted from the first. Assuming God only intended to save Jews, they did not send missionaries to the Gentiles.

(3) The Consolation of Israel's Rejection—Romans 11:1–36

Romans 11:1–32 contains the third main division, the consolation of Israel's rejection. Here, Paul begins moving toward this mystery.

His first point, in verses 1–10, is that Israel's rejection of the Messiah is not total. He begins with a question (v. 1): Did God cast off His people? The answer is threefold: first, God forbid, may it never be, perish the thought; second, Paul's own salvation shows that God did not cast off the Jews; and third, God's foreknowledge of His people, the fact that He foreknew His people and then chose His people, shows that God did not cast off His people (v. 2a). As further evidence (vv. 2b–6), he cites the Remnant of Israel doctrine, dealing with both the past and the present. The past (vv. 2b–4) shows that God has always had a remnant which was a minority. The fact of only a minority in the Old Testament did not mean, then, that God had cast off Israel. Regarding the present (vv. 5–6), he makes the application (v. 5): Today, also there is a Remnant according to the election of grace. True, only a minority are believing today, but this shows that God did not cast off His people. On the contrary, it is evidence that He has retained His people. The basis (v. 6) is by grace and not by works. He then draws the logical conclusion (v. 7): What then? That which Israel the whole sought, which was righteousness, it did not obtain. However, the elect, the Remnant of Israel, did obtain it. The rest, the non-Remnant, were hardened. This is the first hint of the mystery: that it in some way concerns the hardening of Israel. He provides the evidence of the present hardening of Israel by quoting from the Old Testament (vv. 8–10), which shows that the present hardening of Israel itself was not the mystery.

In verses 11–15, he describes the purpose of Israel's stumbling. The question (v. 11) is: Did they stumble that they might fall? Paul did say earlier (9:30–33) that Israel stumbled. But now he asks the question: Was this stumbling for an irrevocable fall from which Israel could not rise again? The answer (v. 11) is: God

forbid, "may it never be!" "Perish the thought!" The fact is that by their fall, salvation has come to the Gentiles. The purpose of this Gentile salvation is to provoke the Jews to jealousy. In 11:1-10, Paul stated there was still a remnant of Israel today. Now he points out that the Remnant today came to faith principally by means of being provoked to jealousy by Gentile believers.

In verse 12, Paul draws a contrast between the partial and the fullness. The partial is that there is today a reduction of the nation to a remnant of believers. The fullness is that in the future, there will be a national salvation of Israel as a whole. This is the second hint of the mystery: that there is a connection between the fullness of Israel and the fullness of the Gentiles. Note, however, that the national salvation of Israel was not itself the mystery. In verses 13-14, Paul then reiterates the purpose of Gentile salvation. Israel's stumbling was for Gentile salvation, but the purpose of Gentile salvation is Jewish salvation. Therefore, Paul glorifies at being the Apostle of the Gentiles; the more Gentiles who come to faith, the more there will be to provoke the Jews to jealousy and, therefore, that many more Jews will come to believe. In verse 15, he discusses the casting away and the receiving: The casting away brought about direct reconciliation of the Gentile world; the receiving of the Jewish people will mean life from the dead. It is a typical rabbinic argument, i.e., from the lesser to the greater. In other words, by Israel's fall, salvation has gone out to the Gentiles, so the Gentiles have received a great measure of blessing because of Israel's stumbling; but if Israel's stumbling brought so much blessing to the Gentiles, how much more, then, will the Gentiles be blessed by Israel's return, Israel's fullness. It will mean life from the dead; it will mean the Second Coming; and it will mean the Messianic Kingdom. Here is the third hint of the mystery: there is some kind of a correlation between Gentile salvation and Jewish salvation.

Just before actually revealing the mystery, Paul gives his famous illustration of the Olive Tree (11:16-24). He begins in verse 16 with the illustration and the principle. The twofold illustration compares the firstfruits to the lump, and also the root to the branches. The firstfruit and the root are the Patriarchs and the Abrahamic Covenant. The lump and the branches refer to Israel as a nation. The principle behind Romans 11:16 is that of Numbers 15:17-21: The holiness of the root is passed on to the branches, and the consecration of the firstfruits is passed on to the lump. Just as the firstfruits sanctify the whole harvest (lump), even so, some day all Israel will be sanctified. The Abrahamic Covenant made with the Patriarchs is the basis for the future national salvation of Israel. Moving from the firstfruits/lump and root/branches, he then deals with the Olive Tree itself (vv. 17-24). The Olive Tree represents the place of spiritual blessings (v. 17). The Olive Tree does not represent Israel; the Jewish people are represented by the natural branches. The Olive Tree does not represent the Gentiles; the Gentiles are represented by the wild olive branches. The Olive Tree represents the place of spiritual blessing, and the Gentiles have become partakers with the Jewish believers of Jewish spiritual blessings. This is the mystery of the Book of Ephesians. The point of verse 17, then, is that Jewish and Gentile believers are partaking of the spiritual blessings of the Jewish covenants. That leads to his warning in verses 18-22. The Gentile blessing is on the basis of faith, not merit. The Gentiles can also be removed from the place of blessing. These verses deal with the nationality of Jews and Gentiles, not individual salvation; he is not discussing individual loss of salvation, but that Jews and Gentiles can be removed from the place of blessing. In verses 23-24, Paul prophesies Israel's eventual restoration. He points out that God has the ability to graft natural branches back into the tree (v. 23). The reason this should be anticipated is (v. 24): That it is Israel's Olive Tree. He states that if God grafted wild olive branches contrary to nature into a good olive tree, He can certainly do the more natural thing of grafting natural branches back into the tree. The reason for this is that this tree belongs to Israel; it is their own olive tree, the covenantal blessings that belong to the Jewish people. Furthermore, the regrafting is the expectation. It should be anticipated that there will be a regrafting of Israel back into the tree. Now, the mystery will show how this will happen.

Finally, in Romans 11:25–32, Paul comes to the mystery itself. Verse 25 contains the content of the mystery, beginning with why they need to know: first, he does not want them to be ignorant; and second, he does not want them to be conceited. What they need to know is twofold: first, the hardening of Israel is partial, as he has already shown that there is still a remnant; second, this hardening is temporary. It is temporary up until—this is the key word—until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. The content of this mystery, then, is that a hardening in part has befallen Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. The mystery is not the fact of Israel's national salvation; this is already known from the Old Testament. The mystery is not the fact of Israel's unbelief or hardening; this is also known from the Old Testament. The mystery is that of a partial, temporary hardening of Israel until a full, set number of Gentiles is reached, and this is something that was not revealed anywhere in the Old Testament. The Greek word for fullness means a "set number," and Paul's point is that God has a set number of Gentiles He intends to bring into the Body.

Again, this was the mystery of Ephesians: Jews and Gentiles. Once the set number is reached, then that facet of the mystery is complete; this will complete the purpose of Gentile salvation, the purpose of Acts 15:14, to call out from among the Gentiles a people for His name. Then, in verses 26–27, the Apostle notes the future national salvation of Israel. He clearly states, and so all Israel shall be saved (26a). This is Israel's fullness of verse 12. However, all Israel does not mean "all Israel of all time," but all Israel following the fullness of the Gentiles. This itself is not the mystery, but it will follow the mystery. Paul proves this from the Old Testament (vv. 26b–27). Again, the mystery is not Israel's national salvation, but, rather, the temporary hardening that has taken place until the fullness of the Gentiles. Upon the fullness of the Gentiles, and following this mystery, then all Israel will be saved. In verses 28–29, Israel's present status during the mystery is described, starting with a contrast in verse 28: As touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sake, meaning for the sake of Gentile salvation, the hardened element has become the enemies of the gospel, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake—the election refers to Israel's national election, and the fathers to the Patriarchs and the Abrahamic Covenant. For these reasons, Israel's election and covenantal promises, there must someday be a national salvation. The basis, in verse 29, is that the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. The calling is Israel's national election; the gifts are the covenantal promises, one of which is the national salvation of Israel. In verses 30–32, he spells out the principle of the calling out of the Gentiles and Israel's national salvation, in that unbelief has given God the opportunity to reveal His mercy, not on the deserving but on the undeserving. In the past, the Gentiles were disobedient, but now have obtained mercy because of Jewish disobedience (v. 30). Now Israel is in disobedience, and can also obtain mercy by the mercy shown to the Gentiles, in that the Gentiles can provoke Jews to jealousy (v. 31). Finally, (v. 32), God has shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all, both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul concludes this section with his famous doxology in verses 33–36.

b. Romans 16:25–27

Later, in Romans 16:25–27, Paul continues with the mystery of Israel's hardening, dealing initially with the foundation of spiritual growth (vv. 25–26a): **Now unto Him who is able to establish you.** Paul says God will establish them in three ways: first, **according to my gospel**, Paul's gospel (good news) being the mystery that was revealed to him—the gospel of growth; second, **the preaching of Jesus Christ**, i.e., the gospel of salvation; and third, **according to the revelation of the mystery**, which in the past has been kept in silence through times eternal but now is manifested by the Scriptures of the prophets, meaning the New Testament Apostles and prophets. Paul was commanded by God to reveal the mystery: **according to the commandment of the eternal God.** Finally (vs. 26b–27), he deals with the content of the mystery. He says it is **made known unto all the Gentiles unto the obedience of faith (v. 26)**; in other words, the mystery of 11:25, which was unrevealed in eternity past, has now come to the Gentiles, and Gentile salvation is taking place until the fullness comes. The object of this faith is **the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever (v. 27)**. In this passage, Paul is simply summarizing the seventh mystery spoken of earlier in the same Epistle.

Their Partial Hardness is First Indicated by our Lord After they Rejected Him

-Matt. 13:9-15 and a quote from Isaiah is the key to our understanding:

9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

In v.14 their partial hardness is described:

14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,

And seeing you will see and not perceive;

15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull.

Their ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed,

Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,

Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should heal them.'

Near the time of the Judgment of the Nation for Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit this Isaiah passage is quoted again by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles

Acts 28:24 And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.

25 So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers,

26 saying,

'Go to this people and say:

"Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand;

And seeing you will see, and not perceive;

27 For the hearts of this people have grown dull.

Their ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed,

Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,

Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should heal them."

28 "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"

When did the Apostles turn predominantly to the Gentiles?

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.

30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him,

31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.