

GOD'S WORD IS LIFE

Key Greek Terms

Romans 11

1. Χάρις (Charis) – Grace

Romans 11:5-6: "So too, at the present time, there is a remnant, chosen by grace (χάρις). But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace."

- **Meaning:** The Greek word "χάρις" means grace, favor, or kindness. I've often found that the gospel begins and ends with grace—God's unearned favor toward us. In Romans 11, Paul emphasizes that God's choice of a remnant is entirely based on His grace, not on human merit or works. This is something I reflect on frequently, especially as it speaks to the profound truth that salvation is never about what we can do, but entirely about what God has done for us in Christ.

2. Λείμμα (Leimma) – Remnant

Romans 11:5: "So too at the present time there is a remnant (λείμμα), chosen by grace."

- **Meaning:** "Λείμμα" refers to a small remaining group or a remnant. The term helps us understand how God preserves His people, even in the midst of widespread unbelief. The focus on the remnant highlights God's faithfulness, an important recurring theme especially when the visible church seems small. God is still working, keeping His promises to those He has chosen.

3. Σκλήρυνσις (Sklerunsis) – Hardening

Romans 11:25: "Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening (σκλήρυνσις) has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."

- **Meaning:** "Σκλήρυνσις" means hardness or obstinacy, often used to describe a spiritual resistance. This hardening is not final but serves a larger purpose in God's plan. There's always an undercurrent of hope, a reminder that God's mercy is still at work, even when rejection seems evident.

4. Ζήλος (Zēlos) – Zeal

Romans 11:11: "So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous (ζήλος)."

- **Meaning:** "Ζήλος" can mean jealousy or zeal. Here, Paul uses it to describe God's plan to provoke Israel to jealousy through the salvation of the Gentiles. The idea of zeal brings to mind the kind of fervent longing God has for His people to return to Him. God's heart is always set on restoration, a deep and passionate desire for His people to be reconciled to Him.

5. Πτώμα (Ptōma) – Fall

Romans 11:12: "Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure (πτῶμα) means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!"

- **Meaning:** "Πτώμα" refers to a fall or failure. Paul describes Israel's stumble as something that ultimately leads to the salvation of the Gentiles. This fall is never viewed as final. God redeems even our missteps, using them to accomplish His greater purposes. The image of falling and rising is a vivid reminder that no failure is beyond God's power to redeem.

6. Πλήρωμα (Plērōma) – Fullness

Romans 11:12: "Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion (πλήρωμα) mean!"

- **Meaning:** "Πλήρωμα" refers to fullness or completion. Paul envisions a future where Israel will be fully included in God's plan. God's purposes will come to complete fulfillment, bringing the whole of His redemptive work to its intended end. It's a reminder that God is at work in ways that we cannot fully see or understand yet.

7. Ἐκλογή (Ekloge) – Election

Romans 11:7: "What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect (ἐκλογή) obtained it, but the rest were hardened."

- **Meaning:** "Ἐκλογή" means election or choice. This term draws my attention to God's sovereignty in salvation, reminding me that His purposes are grounded in His decision and not in anything we can offer. I find comfort in this truth, knowing that election rests in God's grace, not in my ability or works. It emphasizes the point that God's election is a gift that flows from His gracious character, not from anything earned or deserved.

8. Παράπτωμα (Paraptōma) – Trespass

Romans 11:11: "So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass (παράπτωμα), salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous."

- **Meaning:** "Παράπτωμα" refers to a misstep or sin. Paul shows how Israel's trespass led to the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's salvation plan. God works even through human sin and failure to accomplish His purposes. Even our trespasses are woven into His redemptive plan, bringing about grace where we least expect it.

9. Μυστήριον (Mystērion) – Mystery

Romans 11:25: "Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery (μυστήριον), brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."

- **Meaning:** "Μυστήριον" means mystery, referring to a divine secret that has now been revealed. God's redemptive plan, especially in the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles, is something that surpasses human understanding—a profound reminder that we are part of something far greater than ourselves.

10. Ἔλεος (Eleos) – Mercy

Romans 11:30-32: "Just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy (ἔλεος) because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy (ἔλεος) shown to you they also may now receive mercy."

- **Meaning:** "Ἔλεος" means mercy or compassion. This word strikes me every time I read it because it reveals the very heart of God—His deep compassion toward all, whether Jew or Gentile. I've come to see mercy as central to how God interacts with us. It's not about what we deserve, but about His loving-kindness. I'm constantly reminded that it is God's mercy that brings us into salvation, and this mercy is proclaimed in the Gospel to all people, without distinction.