

CLASS 11: HOW ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED (Romans 11)

2. Israel's fall, and the remnant, 9:22 - 11:10 (continued)

While Israel as a whole has not heeded the way of salvation, even though it was plain before them, Paul recognizes that a remnant of the nation does believe in the Lord, as was promised in the Scriptures (11:1-10).

A remnant of grace

11:1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? 3 "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." 4 But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

Question in v. 1 the natural result of ch. 9-10

Question still valid in view of the current situation in the Middle East

Theme of this section: God still is faithful to unfaithful Israel

Examples of God's faithfulness:

Paul himself (v. 1)

- Hard heart before salvation (Acts 26:10-11)
- Still sins after salvation (Rom 7:18)
- Yet God is faithful to Paul (1 Tim 1:12-16; 2 Tim 1:12)

Elijah and 7,000 believers in his day (vv. 2-4)

- Elijah alone (1 Kgs 18:21-22)
- Yet not alone (1 Kgs 19:1-18)

Believing Jews of their own time (v. 5)

- National rejection of Jesus (John 19:14-15; book of Acts; 1 Thess 2:14-16)
- But yet thousands believe
- 3,000 in Acts 2; 5,000 by Acts 4
- Many Jewish believers in Rome by time of Paul's Third Journey (Rom 16:3)
- "Many thousands of Jews have believed" (Acts 21:20)

Reasons for God's faithfulness

God's foreknowledge, love ahead of time (v. 2)

God's grace (vv. 5-6)

- Rom 5:20-21
- Shown in election and consequent preservation
- Cf. 2 Tim 1:9

God's faithfulness always shown to the remnant (Lam 3:22-26)

Blindness in Israel

True, there is a remnant (v. 5), but what about the rest? Paul responds that God has not recently cast off Israel. The present spiritual state of Israel is the same as it was before.

⁷ What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,⁸ as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."⁹ And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them;¹⁰ let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever."

Blindness in the days of Moses, 1400 B.C. (vv. 7, 8b)

Rom 11:8 is a combined quotation of two OT verses, Deut 29:8 and Isa 29:10

Deut 29:1-9 – renewed Mosaic covenant

Survivors of wilderness wanderings "earnestly sought" (Rom 11:7)

Did not believe in spite of signs (Deut 29:2-3)

Yet Israel was promised a future restoration (Deut 30:1-8)

Blindness in the days of Isaiah, 700 B.C. (v. 8a)

Isa 29 – prophecy against Jerusalem

Vv. 1-12, their blind condition (esp. v. 10)

Vv. 13-16, their sin's cause: their hearts far from God (cf. "hardened" in Rom 11:7)

- Note: v. 16 was quoted in Rom 9:20 (proud clay speaking against the potter)

Vv. 17-24, their restoration promised, in spite of their rebellion; God will open their eyes

Blindness in the days of the Messiah (vv. 9-10)

Already predicted in the OT

Psalm 69 – a Messianic Psalm, showing David as a type of the Messiah

V. 5, refers to David, not directly to the Messiah (this not a point of analogy)

But other parts of Ps 69 refer to the Messiah himself

- V. 4 = John 15:25
- V. 9a = John 2:17
- V. 9b = Rom 15:3
- V. 21 = John 19:28-29

Vv. 1-21 – prayer for deliverance in trouble

Vv. 22-28 – vengeance on the Messiah's enemies

Vv. 22-23 quoted here in Rom 11:9-10

Vv. 29-36 – promise of future glory for the Messiah and his kingdom

Therefore, in spite of unbelief in the days of the Messiah, Israel is promised a future restoration to faith and glory

The cause of blindness (v. 7)

The remnant are elect, "the elect obtained it"

The rest were hardened – *poroein*, "to make stubborn, without feeling"

They were "earnestly seeking" in a false and proud manner

3. God's plan for salvation for Jew and Gentile, 11:11-36

Paul shows in this section the purpose of God in the fall of the Jews, the salvation of the remnant, the salvation of many Gentiles, and the final restoration of the Jews. The purpose is to display God's wisdom and power.

The Jews have fallen from their place of privilege in order to open the way for God to bring in the Gentiles. Yet God will not leave the Jews in unbelief. His covenants with them promise that the nation will be restored, and Paul insists that this time of unbelief is temporary (vv. 11-12, 15, 23-24, 25-27, 28, 31). God has promised; he will restore the nation and bring them to repentance and salvation.

In the meantime, their unbelief has opened the way for the Gentiles to receive the promises made to the Jews (cf. Matt 21:43). Paul compares them to an olive tree. The roots and sap are the patriarchs and the promises. The natural branches are broken off for unbelief (the Jews, hardened by God), and wild branches are grafted in (the Gentiles, given faith by God). Thus the Gentile church is one body with the OT saints, and shares the same covenants. In time, God will graft in again the natural branches as well. Thus, in this manner ("And so"), "the fullness of the Gentiles" and "all Israel" will be saved (vv. 25-26).

This unforeseen path of salvation reveals the great wisdom and glory of God, as Paul indicates in the magnificent doxology which closes the section (vv. 33-36).

The recovery of the Jews

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. 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 mean! ¹³ Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry ¹⁴ in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

Two great questions:

1. Has God rejected Israel? (v. 1)
2. Is Israel's fall permanent? (v. 11)

The wrong attitude (v. 11a)

A false positive view: Israel is OK, has not stumbled

A false negative view: Israel is lost forever as a nation

Replacement theology (also called supersessionism)

The right attitude (vv. 13-14, 16)

The attitude Gentile believers should take – vv. 13a, 16

The patriarch and promises to Israel are the “firstfruits,” the “dough,” the “root” (cf. v. 28)

They are “holy,” set apart, consecrated (Rom 1:7)

The dough makes the whole lump “holy” (Num 15:17-21)

The root makes the branches “holy” (vv. 17-24)

Paul’s own attitude (vv. 13b-14)

He is the “apostle to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21; Gal 2:7-9; 2 Cor 3:1-6; 1 Tim 2:7)

And he magnifies that office

Because of his special place bringing in the Gentiles

Also because he thereby makes the Jews “envious”

Parazeloiein – “to produce envy” (Gentiles converted, vv. 11, 14; cf. 10:19; enemies of Israel had done this, Deut 32:21, quoted in Rom 11:28)

The basis of the right attitude (vv. 11b-12, 15)

Principle of v. 11b: the open way to the Gentiles will lead to the salvation of the Jews

Idea expanded in vv. 12, 15

Blessing comes from the fall of Israel:

Transgression becomes riches of the world

Failure becomes the riches of the Gentiles

These last two ideas in Matt 21:33-43, “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.”

Rejection becomes the reconciliation of the world (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-19)

Blessing will come from the restoration of Israel:

Their fullness brings greater riches of the world (Gentiles)

Their acceptance brings life from the dead

- Cf. Prodigal Son, Luke 15:24, 32
- Reference to the last days and the resurrection

The natural branches

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹ Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. ²² Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. ²³ And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

Israel forsook the covenant of Moses, and God punished them, similar to an olive tree (Jer 11:1-17, esp. 16-17)

Pretense for Gentile boasting (vv. 17, 19)

Some branches broken off ("other people sinned")

Gentiles, though wild, were grafted in among others

Gentiles share sap of the roots (covenants, promises, heritage)

Jewish branches were broken off to make room for Gentiles (forgetful of basis for election)

Prohibition of Gentile boasting (vv. 18a, 20b)

Do not boast (v. 18)

Do not be arrogant (v. 20)

Be afraid (v. 20)

Folly of Gentile boasting (vv. 18b, 20a, 21, 24)

Things to consider (v. 22, "Note")

V. 18a, root supports you, not vice-versa

V. 21, you are not even the natural branches; position precarious

"The olive, like most fruit trees, requires a graft from a cultivated tree if the fruit is to be of any value. A graft from a wild tree inserted into a cultivated stock would of course be useless, and such a process is never performed; hence the point of St. Paul's comparison." ("Grafting," *Hastings New Testament Dictionary*)

V. 20, You stand by faith, capable of unbelief as much as they are

(Generally, not individually)

V. 22, God's sternness: Jews, possibly Gentiles

Vv. 23-24, God's kindness: Gentiles, and Jews, the natural branches

The salvation of Israel

Except for the doxology in vv. 33-36, this next section is the end of the "doctrinal portion" of Romans. It started in ch. 1 - 3:20, showing all in unbelief and under condemnation, and ends here in 11:32, showing God "having mercy on all."

God's method in saving Israel (vv. 25-27)

²⁵ *Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.* ²⁶ *And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";* ²⁷ *"and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

The divine plan (vv. 25-26a)

Blindness in part for Israel (allowing for remnant)

Until complete number of the Gentiles brought in (Matt 21:33-45; 22:1-10)

Then all Israel saved

Note: in this whole section of Romans, "Israel" refers to ethnic and national Israel, the Jews

Rom 9:3-4, 31; 10:1, 19, 21; 11:1-2, 7, 25-26; cf. 11:11, 12, 15, 24

“In this way” – *houtos*, “in this manner” – process of sin, judgment, restoration

Paul’s Scriptural proof of this plan (vv. 26b-27)

V. 26b, quotation from Isa 59:20-21

Theme of Isa 59:

- Israel’s sin (vv. 2, 15)
- Judgment (v. 11)
- Restoration (vv. 16-21; 20-21 quoted)

V. 27, quotation from Isa 27:9

- Theme of Isa 27
 - God’s wrath against Israel’s sin (26:20)
 - Judgment and restoration (27:6-9; 9 quoted)

God’s mercy in saving Israel (vv. 28-32)

²⁸ As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. ³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

Israel’s peculiar position

Enemies because of the gospel (v. 28; 1 Thess 2:14-16), note oxymoron, “beloved enemies”

Beloved because of election (v. 28; Rom 9:3-5)

Israel’s election permanent (v. 29; Jer 31:35-37)

The revelation of God’s mercy

Mercy to Gentiles now (v. 30)

Mercy to Jews now (v. 31; cf. v. 11)

Mercy to both in the end (v. 32)

The glory and wisdom of God's plan

³³ *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!* ³⁴ *"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"* ³⁵ *"Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"* ³⁶ *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

The doctrinal portion of Romans ends with this magnificent doxology. The explanation can be outlined by three prepositional phrases in v. 36, "from him," "through him," and "to him."

"From him," the plan of salvation was determined by God

Vv. 33-34a

The plan of God far beyond our imagining (v. 33); he is not answerable to us

V. 34a, quotation from LXX of Isa 40:13; the mind of the Lord in Isa 40:13-14

God's election (Rom 11:28-29, 32)

- Blindness of the Jews (vv. 25, 28)
- Belief of the Gentiles (vv. 25, 30)
- Later, belief given to the Jews (vv. 26-28; even in present age, 31)

Thus all saved by grace (v. 32)

"Through him," the plan of salvation was executed by God

V. 34b, "who has been his counselor?" (from Isa 40:13)

The Messiah was promised (vv. 26-27; Isa. 27:9; 59:20-21)

The Messiah was to come after the fall and judgment of Israel (Isa 59:16-21; 27:7-13)

This position was that of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah (cf. Isa 53; Acts 8:27-35; 1 Tim 2:5)

The Messiah is the Mediator; this Mediator was desired from the earliest times (Job 9:32-35; *mokiach*, "arbitrator, umpire")

“To him,” the plan of salvation glorifies God

V 35, God greater than all

Quotation from Job 41:11

Job 41:1-11 describes Leviathan, probably similar to a Nile crocodile

Job 42:3, Job’s inability to fathom God

V. 36, all glory to God

Unfathomable in his plan of salvation (v. 33; Eph 3:18-19)

Forever we will be glorifying God for his plan of salvation

By displaying his work in us

By our own praising