

ROMANS 11 | Israel Not Rejected

Remnant Chosen by Grace

1 I ask, then, has God rejected¹ his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite,² a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected³ his people whom he foreknew.⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶

¹ **1 Sa 12:22** 22 Yahweh will not forsake his people [Israel], for his great name's sake, because it has pleased Yahweh to make you a people for himself. **Jer 31:37** 37 If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, declares Yahweh. **Jer 33:25-26** 25 If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, 26 then I will reject the seed of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his seed to rule over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.

² **2 Co 11:22** 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they seed of Abraham? So am I. **Php 3:5** 5 ...Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews....

³ **Ps 94:14-15** 14 Yahweh will not forsake his people. He will not abandon his inheritance. 15 For justice will return to the righteous, and all the upright in heart will follow it. **Dt 32:9** 9 Yahweh's portion is his people [Israel], Jacob his allotted inheritance.

⁴ **Ro 8:29** 29 Those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

⁵ **1 Ki 19:12-14** 12 ...After the fire the sound of a low whisper. 13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak, went out, and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, What are you doing here, Elijah? 14 He said, I have been very jealous for Yahweh, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.

⁶ **1 Ki 19:18** 18 I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.

5 So too at the present time there is a remnant,⁷ chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works.⁸ Otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

The Rest Hardened

7 What then? Israel failed to obtain⁹ what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,¹⁰ 8 as it is written,

God gave them a spirit of stupor,¹¹ eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.¹²

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.¹³

Riches for the Gentiles

11 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation [Romans 1-8] 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!

⁷ **Ro 9:27** 27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved. **Zec 13:8** 8 In the whole land, declares Yahweh, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive.

⁸ **Ro 4:4** 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. **Dt 9:4-5** 4 Do not say in your heart, after Yahweh your God has thrust them out before you, It is because of my righteousness that Yahweh has brought me in to possess this land, whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that Yahweh is driving them out before you. 5 Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations Yahweh your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

⁹ **Ro 9:31-32** 31 Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works.

¹⁰ **Ro 11:25** 25 ...A partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

¹¹ **Is 29:9-11** 9 Astonish yourselves and be astonished. Blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine. Stagger, but not with strong drink! 10 For Yahweh has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes (the prophets) and covered your heads (the seers). 11 And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed.

¹² **Dt 29:4** 4 To this day Yahweh has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.

¹³ **Ps 69:22-23** 22 Let their own table before them become a snare. And when they are at peace, let it become a trap. 23 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually.

Making the Jews Jealous

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?

The Cultivated Olive Tree

16 If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the 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 fear. 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.

All Israel Will Be Saved

25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of 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.

28 As regards the gospel, they are enemies 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 For 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.

Glory to God Forever

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 counsellor?

35 Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?

36 For from him, through him, and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. Romans at a Glance.

- a. Author? Recipients? Date?
- b. What problems was Paul dealing with in this letter?
- c. Main theme of Romans?
- d. What are the two main segment themes of Romans?
- e. What are the sub-segment themes of Romans?

2. Romans 9-10

- a. Why are chapters 9-11 included by Paul? What is his objective?
- b. How do Romans 9-11 relate to the overall theme of the book (p. 71, 1)?

3. Romans 11.

- a. What are your paragraph themes?
- b. How do the paragraphs relate to one another?
- c. What questions of interpretation did you list (p. 72, 3)?

4. Romans 11:1-6.

- a. What question does Paul ask, and what is his answer (p. 73, 3a)?
- b. Why does Paul reference Elijah (v. 2)?
- c. What is the remnant (v. 5), and on what basis is the remnant chosen?
- d. What is grace, and what is its relationship to works (v. 6)?

5. Romans 11:7-10.

- a. What is Israel's present relationship to God (p. 73, 1a)?
- b. How does Israel's hardening (v. 7) relate to Pharaoh's hardening (Ro 9:18)?
- c. What do we learn about God's choice and election (p. 74, 2)?
- d. How are we to interpret vv. 8-10? Why does Paul quote Isaiah and David?

6. Romans 11:11-12.

- a. What question does Paul ask, and what is his answer (p. 73, 3b)?
- b. Is there a difference between stumbling (vv. 9, 11) and falling (vv. 11, 22)?
- c. What riches have the Gentiles received (v. 12)?
- d. When and how will Israel's full inclusion/acceptance happen (vv. 12, 15)?

7. Romans 11:13-15.

- a. What does Paul say about himself personally?
- b. Is it right for Paul to want to make Jews jealous (vv. 11, 14)?
- c. Should we make Jews jealous today? How might we do that?
- d. Verse 1 says Israel is not rejected, but v. 15 says she is. Which is it?

8. Romans 11:16-24.

- a. To what does the holy dough/holy tree refer (v. 16)?
- b. Does anyone have experience cultivating/grafting olive trees?
- c. Explain the parable of the cultivated and wild olive trees.

- d. Verse 22 implies Israel has fallen, but v. 11 says she hasn't. Which is it?
- e. What will happen to Gentile believers who become arrogant/proud/wise in their own sight toward the broken off branches (vv. 18, 20, 25)? What would motivate Gentile believers to become so?
- f. What will happen to Gentile believers who do not continue in God's kindness (v. 22)?
- g. Should Gentiles share the gospel with Jews today? Is there one way of salvation for Jews and another way of salvation for Gentiles?

9. Romans 11:25-32.

- a. When will the fullness of the Gentiles come in (v. 25)?
- b. What does Paul mean by "mystery" (v. 25; p. 75, 1)?
- c. What is the relationship between Israel and the Church?
- d. Are Israel and the Church the one people of God?
- e. What did you learn from reading the cross references:
 - (1) Is 59?
 - (2) Eze 37?
 - (3) Zec 13-14 (p. 75, 2)?
- f. What is Israel's future relationship to God to be (p. 74, 1b)?
- g. What are the irrevocable gifts and calling (v. 29; p. 75, 3)?

10. Romans 11:33-36.

- a. What do we learn about God from these verses?
- b. What is the context for Paul's doxology in vv. 33-36? What is the purpose for this doxology (p. 76, 4)?
- c. What have we learned about riches in Romans?
 - (1) **Ro 2:4** 4 Do you presume on the riches of [God's] kindness, forbearance, and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?
 - (2) **Ro 9:23** 23 ...In order to make known the riches of [God's] glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory....
 - (3) **Ro 10:12** 12 There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.
 - (4) **Ro 11:12** 12 If [the Jews'] trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!
 - (5) **Ro 11:33** 33 Oh, the depth of the riches, wisdom, and knowledge of God!

11. Interpretation.

- a. Did commentaries help you answer your questions of interpretation (p. 76, 1)?

12. Summarisation.

- a. How would you summarise the main message of Romans 9-11? The main message of Romans?

13. Application.

- a. What has God taught you personally through this study (p. 77, 2)?
- b. How should what you have learned affect your life (p. 77, 2)?
- c. How would you like to go forward in your study of God's word?

Biblical Worldview

1. Romans at a Glance.

- a. The question continues to be, what about Israel?
- b. This chapter is crucial in understanding the relationship between Israel and the Church.
- c. This chapter helps us to understand the end times.

2. God has not rejected national Israel!

- a. Paul is living proof God has not rejected Israel (Ro 11:1).
 - (1) **Ro 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.

3. Not all Israel is Israel.

- a. There is physical Israel.
- b. There is a national Israel.
- c. There is a spiritual Israel.
 - (1) There is a remnant within Israel who are the people of God.
 - (2) Faith in Messiah Jesus makes a physical Jew part of the remnant of Israel.

4. Israel's rejection of Jesus has meant riches for the Gentiles.

- a. God uses Israel to help the Gentiles and the Gentiles to help Israel.

5. It's okay to make people jealous for the riches we have in Messiah.

- a. **Ro 11:14** 14 ...In order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.

6. Israel's full inclusion/acceptance is coming.

- a. God will keep his promises to national Israel.

Bibliography

Hallie, Phillip P. *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*. 1994.

Notes