

Hope for Israel!

Romans Chapter 11

August 24, 2015

DAY 1: Paul and Elijah as Witnesses for Israel's Restoration (v. 1-10)

After spending chapter 10 talking about Israel's present rejection, Paul opens chapter 11 with a hopeful statement that God has NOT rejected "His people."

1. In verse 1, how does Paul identify himself as one of God's "not rejected" people?
2. In verse 2, Paul reiterates his premise that God has not rejected his people using Elijah as a second witness for Israel's restoration. Read verses 2-4, then compare them to the original story by reading I Kings 19:10-18. What parallels do you see between the original story and the situation during Paul's time?
3. Read verses 5-6. As you do, underline each use of the words "grace" or "gracious." What does this tell you about the method of salvation of the remnant?
4. Look at verse 7. What was Israel "seeking for" and why did they not obtain it? Refer back to Rom. 9:30-33 to see how Paul had addressed this earlier.

Read verses 8-10. Paul uses several passages from the Old Testament to help bolster his case as he draws from Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Psalms. In verse 9, the phrase, "table become a snare..." Means their blessings became burdens. The spiritual blessings they received SHOULD have led them to the Messiah. Instead, their "spiritual practices/observations became substitutes for the real experience of salvation."

5. How could "spiritual practices" become "substitutes" among Christians today?
 - a. How have you seen this in others? In yourself?

DAY 2: The Gentiles as Witnesses (v. 11-15)

1. In verse 11, how does Paul's initial question say to you about the permanence (or lack) of Israel's rejection?

2. Identify at least one benefit in verse 11 for the Gentiles and one benefit for the Jews.

Gentiles-

Jews-

3. Read verse 12 and look for another indication of Israel's future restoration.

4. As you read verses 13-14, note how Paul identifies himself as an apostle to the Gentiles. How does he note that he can expand his ministry from Gentiles to Jews?

5. Just as in verse 12, read verse 15. What is the indicator of Israel's future restoration in this verse?

6. Paul uses the Gentile story to prove Israel's future story. His logic is that the Jews rejected the Gospel. The consequences of that were that they fell (v. 11) were lost (v. 12) and were cast away (v. 15). Yet the Gentiles were saved anyway, just as God had promised. So if God kept His promise to the Gentiles, would He not also keep His promise to the Jews?

DAY 3: The Patriarchs (v. 16-24)

Paul uses two illustrations to bring Israel's patriarchs to bear witness. Read the first in the first part of verse 16.

1. What do you think Paul is referring to in this illustration?

In the Old Testament, Israel was commanded to offer the first part of the dough as an offering. The same principle applied to the Feast of First fruits. When God accepts the first part of the dough as holy, that means the entirety of the dough was sanctified. God accepted Israel's patriarchs, meaning the rest of Israel was accepted too.

Read the rest of verses 16-24. Paul uses the illustration of an olive tree, which is a symbol of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. With this in mind, re-read the illustration and plug in the names of the groups being represented.

2. In verse 16, who is the root and who do the branches represent?
3. In verse 17, who are the wild olives?

Note that in these verses, the references to "breaking off branches" are equivalent to "fall," "loss," or "rejection." This is NOT an illustration of individual salvation, but a comparison of Jews and Gentiles.

4. What do verses 18-21 say about how we should relate to "other branches?"
5. Re-read verses 22-24. Find at least 3 conditional "if/then" promises God makes.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

DAY 4: God's Promise (v. 25-32)

1. Verse 25 calls God's *timing* to witness for Israel's future restoration. What words indicate to you that there is a plan that is being followed?
2. What are two things you can say about the "hardening" or "blinding" based on the second part of this verse?

Verse 26 calls God's *promise* to witness. Read Isaiah 59:20-21 to see the promise that salvation will come from the Jews. Note that in verse 26 that the phrase "all Israel" does NOT mean that every individual Jew will be saved.

Verses 27-28 call God's *covenant* to witness. The emphasis here is on the patriarchs and the covenant God made with them; indicating the covenant will NOT be broken.

3. Why does verse 28 say Israel is beloved?
4. Verse 29 calls God's *nature* to witness. What does this verse say to you about God's nature? What does that mean to you, personally?
5. God does not change. In terms of Israel's future restoration, how does not using her gifts or fulfilling her part of the covenant affect God's end of the covenant?
6. Verses 30-32 call God's *grace* to witness. Read these verses and take note of every use of the words disobedience and mercy. What link do you see between the two?

DAY 5: God's Wisdom (v.33-36)

1. Finally, verses 33-36 call God's *wisdom* to witness. Re-read verse 33. What are the two exclamations that Paul makes about God?
 - a.
 - b.
2. Take a few minutes to meditate on these two exclamations that Paul makes about God. What do they say to you, today?
3. Take several minutes to pray for those who God has put on your heart this week, as you have read and studied Chapter 11. Be specific!

To put verse 34 into context, go back and read Isaiah 40:12-18.

4. What thoughts does this passage stir up in your heart?

Only a God as wise and merciful as our God could take the fall of Israel and turn it into salvation for the world!

Paul brought to light many witnesses, who demonstrated that there is a future for Israel!!