

The Book of Romans - Part 36

We continue our study in the book of Romans today by picking up where we left off the last time. We're going to start with chapter 11 of the book of Romans.

Now, Paul concluded chapter 10 with a quotation from Isaiah 65:1-2. He described the nation of Israel as a disobedient and contrary people. He says they are rebellious. And then Paul begins chapter 11 by giving several examples to show that despite this rebellion of the people God has not totally rejected the people of Israel.

As we look into this, we see in the first part of verse 1 that Paul says, *I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.* Paul is actually making a statement here rather than asking a question, that God has not cast away His people, and Paul identifies Himself as an Israelite by pointing to His lineage. He was from the seed of Abraham from the tribe of Benjamin. The rest of verse 1 of chapter 11 says, *For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*

And then we see in verses 2-6, Paul says there is still a remnant of Israel, just as in the day of Elijah, and it is by God's grace that they are a remnant. Romans 11:2-6 says, *²God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias [or Elijah]? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, ³Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. ⁴But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. ⁵Even so then at this present time... Paul is speaking now... also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works,*

then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Now, in these verses, Paul gives the application of Elijah's experience to the doctrine of Israel's remnant of believers during the age of the church. We read that in I Kings 19:8-19. True Israel continues even while Jewish and Gentile Christians serve together in the church. True Israel are those people who trusted Jesus. The Bible says that Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. In other words, he was saved because he believed God. How do you believe God? It's about trusting Jesus. You say, "Well, how did Abraham trust Jesus?" He foresaw His coming. And we look back to the coming of Jesus. He came. We know that by studying His Word, that He came into this world. Abraham looked forward to Jesus coming. We look back, and we trust Jesus by faith just like Abraham did. And just like true Israel does today. Everyone is saved the same way and that is by trusting God... to receive His Son as Savior.

Now, many have been blinded, according to the next section of our Scripture here in verses 7-10, and it talks about an elect. In verse 7 it says, *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.* An elect saved by grace. These were the Israelites saved by grace, and this elect, they've been saved. The rest were blinded, unwilling to see. God does not force anyone to be blind. God has given all of us the sight. We've studied that up to this point, how that people are without excuse who say that God has blinded them purposely. God does not blind people. He allows them to choose the way they want to go. God does not force anyone to receive His Son as Savior. God does not force anyone to see things the way He sees them, and, of course, He sees the right way. He does not force any human being to be saved. The person must

choose whether or not they want Jesus as Savior.

Well, as we look on now in Romans 11:8-10, it says, ⁸*(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.* ⁹*And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:* ¹⁰*Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.*

Keep in mind that God is speaking to the nation of Israel, not to individual Israelites, not to individual Jews. Remember, we're all saved the same way. Paul is trying to get across the fact that everyone can be saved, even the individual Jew who will receive Jesus. And as we look at these verses 8-10, we see Israel's unwillingness to submit to God is foretold by Scripture. You can read that in Isaiah 29:10-13 and Deuteronomy 29:3-4. God wants everyone to be saved, but remember, He's speaking to the nation here. God speaks to the nation, and He also speaks to the individual Jew. He says you can be saved the same way everybody else is saved, the same way that father Abraham was saved, and that was by believing God.

Looking on now, we see that the stubbornness of Israel benefits the Gentiles. This is seen in Romans 11:11-32. Paul seems to be saying in the first part of verse 1 that, because of Israel's stubbornness, have they stumbled to a point of no return to God. Listen to what the verse says. The first part of verse 11 says, *I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?* In the rest of that verse, Paul answers the question. He says, no, because of Israel's failure to trust God, the Gentiles can be saved, and as a result of the salvation of the Gentiles, Israel can be stimulated or provoked to envy. In other words, "I want what they have." This is the way a Jewish person needs to approach God. "I want what God has given to everyone." And that is

Jesus Christ.

Now, the rest of that verse says, *God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.* God wants to use every means possible to help the Israelite people to understand that they need Jesus Christ as Savior.

Well, we look on and we see, if Israel's failure is of great value to all humans and may Israel become less important, then, this is of great value to the Gentiles, but how much greater value will be the result of the Israelites' obeying God? In verse 12, it says, *Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?* How much greater it will be for them, realizing that God wants them. The nation is still His chosen people, but God wants individual Jewish people to be saved now.

In verses 13-16, we see this in verse 13, *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.* Paul says, "I'm speaking to you Gentiles with authority, because I am an apostle." And he goes on to say, "My office of an apostle to you Gentiles is important not only to you but that I might also be able to cause my people to do as you have done, and that is to be obedient to God to receive what you have received, and that is salvation."

In verse 14, it says, *If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.* Paul says, "If the result of my people being set aside means that the world can be placed in right relationship with God, how much greater would it be for my people who were set aside to be reconciled placed in right relationship with God? It would be like the dead brought back to life." Notice verse 15: *For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the*

dead? It's like bringing a dead person back.

In verse 16, it says, *For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.* The "firstfruit" and the "root" refer to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob here. And you can compare Romans 11:28 with Romans 9:5 and it talks about the fathers. The fathers, the patriarchs, were holy because they were chosen by God. In other words, once again, God does not force anyone to be saved, but they obeyed God. The patriarchs were separated and chosen by God for a unique purpose. It's like today God allows people to have different gifts within the local church, within His body. Jesus Christ, within His body, we see that He's given some preachers, evangelists, pastors, and so forth, and that's the way it was in the Old Testament, as well. He chose these people. He gave them certain responsibilities, and we see that, out of this responsibility and out of these patriarchs, out of them would come God's special and holy nation, and that is Israel.

And notice now, there are warnings against Gentile conceit here in verses 17-24. Gentiles are, let me say, but wild branches grafted into the root of the cultivated olive tree. Romans 11:17 says, *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partakes of the root and fatness of the olive tree.* That means the Gentiles are partaking of what God has offered the Jewish people. The cultivated olive tree here refers to the place of God's blessing, and we see the wild olive tree is not the place of God's blessing. But the

branches of the wild olive tree are blessed when they are grafted into the cultivated olive tree. The Gentiles are not to brag that they are better than the natural branches—Israel. But remember, it is not of their doing that they have been given the blessing of being grafted in. Romans 11:18 says, *Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.*

Now, God has said we're all saved the same way, and that is by trusting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. That includes the Jewish people. If you are a Jew today, you can be saved the same as I am, and that is by trusting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Ask Him to come into your heart. Read the book of Romans. Let God speak to your heart, and realize that you are lost without Jesus. I'll be praying for you.

Look at our Website today, www.LRWM.org. On the Website, you'll be able to look at a transcript of this program, and you'll also be able to hear this program once again and other programs of "It's a Good Life." Leave me an email there and let me know some of the prayer requests that you have that I will be able to pray with you about. Write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. Share with me your prayer requests and I'll be glad to remember those requests as I go to the Lord in prayer.

Until the next time when you hear me say, "It's a good life," I'll be praying for you. May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.