

37:26

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Israel, Rom, God, gentiles, Paul, Jews, verse, grafted, remnant, saved, rejected, Abraham, salvation, promises, Isaiah, believed, Christ, grace, Jew, branches

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Introduction

So often we look at life through the lens of our own eyes, from man's perspective. And we'll come up with all kinds of conclusions about life based upon our own understanding and our own experiences. And by doing that, oftentimes it leads us down the wrong path. By the time we get down the road, we're way off because we've been focusing upon our own understanding and our own experiences. But God has given us His Word, so that we might be able to see and understand life through the lens of God's eyes, of God's mind. Now, not that we will ever get to a complete and full understanding of God and all that that is going on. But we are able to have a more godly and biblical understanding on life, because He has revealed it to us in His Word.

But if we were to look at what is going on in our world, and specifically what has happened with the nation, Israel, we would think and conclude with our own minds that God has turned his back on Israel. And He's done with them. There's no hope left for them. But because we have God's Word, **we know that God is not done with Israel, God still has a future for them.** This is contrary to what some Christians believe today. Some believe that the Church has replaced Israel, and because of Israel's disobedience, God is through with them, and has replaced them with the church. This is what is called replacement theology. However, this is not true.

It's not true that the Church has replaced Israel for two reasons.

1. First, because there are promises that God gave to Israel, specifically that have not been fulfilled yet. There's no fulfillment of them. Remember, back to Genesis 15, God made a covenant with Abraham, He made a covenant. And He told him that he would have many descendants, the number of the stars of the sky -- meaning he couldn't count them all, multitudes and multitudes. And He promised Abraham that he would possess the land that God

had given to him. However, although Israel is a nation today, they don't possess the full land that God had promised to them.

We know that since God promised this to Israel -- God cannot break His promises --that this will be fulfilled with Israel. This was a covenant that God gave to them. And this was -- listen to this -- an unconditional covenant, an unconditional promise. Meaning it did not depend on Israel to fulfill this, but it depended upon God. And therefore, we know that God will fulfill this unconditional covenant that He has made with Abraham.

2. But the second reason that we know that God still has a future for Israel, is because of what we read in Romans chapter 9-11. And specifically, here in chapter 11, that we've studied for tonight. In fact, just looking at a few of the titles that the translators have put into our Bibles at the beginning of chapter 11, it helps us to understand this. Now, these are not inspired, those titles are not in the original. They're not inspired, but they are helpful for us. The title of chapter 11 in the NASB reads this, "Israel is not cast away"; and the New King James, it says "Israel's rejection not total"; the ESV says, "The Remnant of Israel"; and the LSB says "God has not rejected Israel." So you can see how even the translators have helped us to see that Romans 11 is telling us that God still has a future plan for Israel.

He made a promise to them, and God always keeps His promises. And so tonight, we're going to take a look at verses 1 through 24. And we're going to break it down into two sections based upon Paul's two questions. First, look at verse 1. Look at verse 1 and what Paul says there, he says, "I say then God has not rejected His people. Has he? May it never be." (Rom 11:1) And then he gives a second question. Look at verse 11. in verse 11 he says, "I say then they did not stumble as to fall, did they?" (Rom 11:11) What's his answer? "May it never be."

And so in verses 1-10, we're gonna call this section, "God's faithfulness to His people." And then in verses 11-24, we'll call that "God's faithfulness to His plan." God's Faithfulness to His People and God's Faithfulness to His Plan.

1. God's Faithfulness to His People

God keeps His promises and His Covenants

So let's look at our first point here tonight, God's Faithfulness to His People. Paul begins with this rhetorical question. And he says, "**I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!**" (Rom 11:1) This rhetorical question here is the thrust of the whole chapter. From man's perspective, it looks as if God has completely thrown Israel away, as if He is done with them, because of their disobedience to Him. Paul says, "May it never be!" It's impossible for that to happen for God to be done with Israel. Why? Because God made a promise to them. He made a covenant with them. He made a promise to His chosen people, Israel, and God never goes back on His promises.

And if you have any doubts about that, well, Paul gives us a few examples of God's faithfulness to His chosen people, Israel. First, Paul uses notice himself as an example. He uses himself as an example, continuing in verse 1, he says, "[For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.](#)" (Rom 11:1) If there ever was a Jew, it was the apostle Paul, a Jew of Jews, the Hebrew of Hebrews. We could say that this guy was an elite Israelite. He was a Jew, a descendant of Abraham, even of the tribe of Benjamin.

Think about the early church, as the early church began, how many of those early church members were Jews? A lot of them were, there were Jews who were converted. And although national Israel has rejected their Messiah, there were still Jews that God was saving, and God has been saving all along. And Paul, think about Paul -- who is antagonistic toward Christ, and toward Christianity. He's a perfect example of God's faithfulness to His people, right? Being a Jew himself. God has not turned his back on the Jews, because He continues to save them. Which is what Paul says in the beginning of verse 2. Notice what he says there, "[God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.](#)" (Rom 11:2) And Paul is an example of that.

[God has always had a remnant](#)

The second example that shows God's faithfulness to His people, is that God has always had a remnant throughout the history of Israel. There has always been a remnant. Paul continues on in verse 2. Look at what he says there, "[God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 'Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE.' 4 But what is the divine response to him? 'I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.'](#)" (Rom 11:2-4)

If you remember the story of Elijah, in 1 Kings 19, Jezebel had killed the prophets, and then she was after Elijah. She wanted to get him. And Elijah thought, "am I the only one left?" I'm it? I'm the only one that's left who believes in God. Jezebel has killed all the prophets. And I'm it...now she's after me. But God told Elijah that He had 7000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. (1 Kings 19:18) 7000 of them. God had a people, a remnant that He had chosen, and that He had saved from among the Jews. And He's done this throughout all of history. Although national Israel has rejected God, by rejecting the Messiah, there has always been a remnant who has believed in Him.

They've also rejected Him by disobeying Him. They were continually disobedient to Him. They married outside of the nation. They've been began worshipping idols that God told them not to worship. They rejected Him. Which is what Paul goes on to say in verse 5. He says that there is always a remnant who believes -- in verse 5 "[in the same way, then there has also come to be at the present time, a remnant according to God's gracious choice.](#)" (Rom 11:5) At the time that Paul was writing this, there were believing Jews, as he's writing this letter to the church in Rome.

And think about the history of Israel. What did God tell Isaiah in Isaiah chapter 6? He said, Go and speak to Israel and call them to repentance. (Isaiah 6:8-13) That was his job, that was his duty. But He says this to Isaiah, most of them will not listen to you. But go and preach repentance to them. They're not going to listen to you. But He says, a small portion will. In Isaiah 6:13, it says, "Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, and it will again be subject to burning like a terebinth or an oak who stumped remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump." (Isaiah 6:13). That stump there -- a tenth -- the faithful remnant will believe. Yes, your job is going to be really hard Isaiah, as you go and preach repentance to the nation of Israel, and most of them are not going to believe you. They're not going to listen to you. They don't want to hear what you have to say. But don't worry, I have a remnant. They will believe.

Then you had in Israel's captivity, a remnant of men like David, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Those men who would not bow the knee.

Then during the time of Christ birth, there were people like Zechariah, and Elizabeth, and Joseph and Mary, and John the Baptist. Then you had 11 disciples who believed. 11 Jewish boys, who believed in Jesus -- and from them, those 11 men, the church, then is birthed.

But God has always had a remnant throughout history. And so God's faithfulness to His people. Israel is shown by the example of Paul and by the history of Israel.

Israel is shown by God's Electing Grace

Third, God's faithfulness to His people, Israel is shown by God's electing grace, by God's electing grace. Look at the end of verse 5. "At this time, there is a remnant according to God's gracious choice." (Rom 11:5) According to God's gracious choice. These Jews are not saved because of some good works that they have done. The remnant, they're not saved because of anything that they have done. But because of God's gracious choice of them. God has elected them and chosen them. And God has always been choosing by His grace, right? It's always by His grace, because if it was based upon their works, then it's no longer grace. And so, it's always by grace, which is what Paul says in verse 6. "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise, grace is no longer grace." (Rom 11:6) It's pretty simple. If anyone's salvation was based upon works, none of us could be saved, right? We would all fail, every one of us. And no Jew would be saved either. No one is good enough. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Rom 3:23) And the moment that you think that you have earned salvation is the moment that you lose out on grace. And therefore, you cannot be saved. It's impossible.

That's what happened with Israel. They began a system in Israel in which they thought that salvation could be earned because they were Jews. And because they upheld the law. Do. Do. Do. Do. Do... and you will get into heaven. That was their whole system. It was all about the law. Just do this; be good people; uphold the law; and you will get in. They tried to earn their own righteousness instead of trusting in God's righteousness to save them, because they couldn't do it on their own.

And that's what Paul says in verse 7. "What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;" (Rom 11:7) Israel was seeking self their

own way to Paul says back in chapter 10 in verse 2, "For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God." (Rom 10:2) -- Remember this? We started this last week, "they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge." (Rom 10:2) They have a zeal, but it means nothing, because they're trying to work their way into heaven. They're trying to do it on their own. Works-righteousness. Not in accordance with knowledge, true knowledge of the gospel. They tried to seek their own righteousness, instead of relying upon God's grace, which is what we must always do. Every day we should be walking dependent upon God's grace. It's all by His grace.

There was a remnant of chosen ones who were saved by God's grace. They had placed their faith in God. They were Jews, who were saved because of God's grace. But the rest, what did they do? They hardened their hearts. They hardened their hearts. And Paul then quotes from Deuteronomy and Isaiah. And he shows us this in verse 8. Look, when it says there, just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY." (Romans 11:8)

Paul quotes here from Deuteronomy, which represents the law. And he also quotes from Isaiah, which represents who? The prophets. Notice he shows from the Law and the prophets, you have hardened your heart. You have refused to believe in God and hardened your hearts toward Him. And so, God has hardened your heart. He hardened their hearts.

And then Paul quotes David to show again, how hard the Jews were -- in verse 9. "And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM. 10 "LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER." (Rom 11:9-10)

Essentially, like blind men who were bent, over hunched over, that have no clue where they're going, walking right off of a cliff. They can't see where they're going. And even though this was the state of national Israel, God's still graciously saved a remnant for His namesake. Because He's a faithful God who always keeps His promises to His people, right? So that's God's faithfulness to His people.

2. God's Faithfulness to His Plan

Let's look at our second point tonight. God's Faithfulness to His Plan. God's Faithfulness to His Plan. Although Israel was not faithful to God, God was still faithfully working out His perfect plan in them. Notice Paul's rhetorical question verse 11. "I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they?" (Rom 11:11) What's the answer? "May it never be!" (Rom 11:11). Notice the two words there, stumble and fall. You can stumble, and yet not fall, right? You stumble, you tripped over your shoelace, and you stumble and yet you don't fall down. And that's how Paul describes Israel here. They have stumbled, but they have not fallen. They have not fallen away completely. They have stumbled over Christ, which is what Paul says back in chapter 9 verse 32, they stumbled over the stumbling stone. (Rom 9:32) But national Israel has not fallen from God's grace. Remember, He made a promise to them, and He will not allow them to fall completely away, because He is faithful. However, this stumbling is all a part of God's sovereign plan. God is working out His sovereign plan, even through a stumbling Israel.

What does that plan look like? Continuing on in verse 11, he says, "[but by their transgression, salvation has come to the gentiles to make them jealous.](#)" (Rom 11:11) God has allowed Israel for a time to be in disbelief and disobedience so that the gospel would go out to the gentiles.

Think about Paul's missionary journeys. Where did Paul go first when he arrived into town? What was the first place that he went? To the synagogue. He went to the Jews first. And there were cases where there were Jews that did believe him. But there were also cases where the Jews rejected him. And what happened when they rejected? Paul went to go preach to the gentiles. Fine, you don't want to hear the gospel. I'm going to go preach it to the gentiles. In fact, listen to Acts 13:44 Paul goes to the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch and he says this, "[The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. 46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, 'It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold,'](#)" (listen to what Paul says,) "[we are turning to the Gentiles.](#)" (Acts 13:44-xx)

We're going to them now. You Jews rejected the gospel! And Paul says we're going to go preach it to the gentiles. When he preached it to the gentiles, what did they do? They received it with gladness. They were joyful, to receive it. Now, let's be clear that Israel's rejection wasn't what caused the gentiles to be saved. Israel's rejection wasn't what caused the gentiles to be saved. But it gave greater opportunity for the gospel to go out to the gentiles, because the Jews had rejected it, they didn't want it. But this is all a part of God's sovereign plan.

As the salvation of gentiles was used by God, to make the Jews jealous to draw them back to Him. So, he says, Fine, you don't want the gospel, I'm going to go save gentiles. And when gentiles get saved, the Jews are going to look at the gentiles and they're going to see the blessing, then that comes upon the gentiles for believing in God, and that should make them jealous so that they will then turn back to God, in faith, just like the gentiles do. That's the jealousy there. That's what God's plan was all along.

Paul then turns to the gentiles in the church, and he's got a word for them, so that they can understand God's plan. Look at what it says in verse 12, "[Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! 13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.](#)" (Rom 11:12-14) Think about it. If their rejection Israel's rejection means riches for the world, that the gospel would go out to gentiles, and gentiles would repent of their sin and put their faith in Jesus, how much more riches will there be, when Israel actually receives their Messiah?

This world is going to be way better. It's going to be way greater, because Israel will finally come to see He is the Messiah. They'll believe in Him. And the world will be richer when national Israel become saved, and then what happens right after that? The Millennial Kingdom is ushered in. The kingdom where Christ will rule and reign. How much richer can you get? Where He is ruling and reigning on the throne of David. That's what we await for.

Now when Paul is saying this, he is not turning his back on the gentiles here. This is why he reiterates to them. "I am an apostle of gentiles." (Rom 11:13) He took the gospel out to the gentiles. Clearly, he has a heart for gentiles, right? He preached the gospel to them. So, he's not turning his back on the gentiles here. But his heart longs for the salvation of the Jews, so that they would be saved too!

He goes on to help the gentiles see God's plan in verse 15. Notice what it says there. "If their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their acceptance be, but life from the dead?*" (Rom 11:15) If their rejection (their spiritual death) has caused the world -- that is both gentiles and Jews -- to be saved, because the gospel has gone forth into all of the world. Then when they do receive Christ, they're going to receive spiritual life. And that excites Paul! Because when that happens, God's promises are going to be fulfilled! Right? And that's what he's longing for, and he's been waiting for... God's promises to be fulfilled.

He goes on in verse 16. "If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also if the root is holy. The branches are too" (Rom 11:16) Simply put, if God set apart the patriarchs, that is to be holy, that word *holy* means to "set apart". If God set apart the patriarchs, the first piece of dough and the root. (And who would that be?) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God set them apart and made a promise to them. Then He will set apart the whole lump and the branches. That is the rest of Israel! He's going to save them. And how amazing will it be when that happens? When Israel comes to believe in their promised Messiah! When that happens, God's plan and His promises will be fulfilled.

But what has happened at this time? Notice when he says, "*some of the branches have been broken off,*" Look at what he says in verse 17. "*But if some of the branches were broken off, and you being a wild olive, are grafted in among them, and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. But if you're arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.*" (Rom 11:17-18)

Now notice, Paul warns us against our attitude against a toward the Jews here. He's warning us against our attitude toward them. Have they rejected their Messiah? Yes, they have. Nationally, Israel has rejected their Messiah. But does God still have a heart for them and a plan for them? Yes, He does. He has a future for them. Just like He had a plan for us, right? What was that plan? We were the olive branches that have been grafted in. We were not (Unless you're here and you're a Jew tonight) you are not part of "national Israel." You are not a Jew, like Paul was a Jew. But we have, as gentiles, have been grafted in. God has grafted us back into that root. And now we stand (because of faith in Christ) we stand with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -- as those who believe. They believed in God, and God's promises were fulfilled through them, because they believed in Him. And then we stand with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, not as national Jews, but as believers in Christ. Those who believe just as they believe.

Look at what he says there. "*We don't support the root. But the root supports the branches.*" (Rom 11:18) That means that we cannot become arrogant toward unbelieving Jews and think that we're better than they are. We're not better. We are the branches, but only because we've been grafted in. Because God has done the work to graft us in, so that we would believe just as they believed. But

remember the promise is made through who? The promise is made through Abraham. It's made through Abraham, and all of those who believe in Christ are now in the spiritual line of Abraham.

Romans 4:11 says that "[Abraham is the father of all who believe.](#)" (Rom 4:11) Spiritually, we are connected with Abraham, because we believe, but sadly, there are Christian groups that are out there who think that they are better than the Jews. They shun the Jews; they think down upon the Jews for not receiving their Messiah. They're even Gentile believers who look down upon believing Jews, as if somehow, we are more superior to the Jews. But Paul warns us against having this kind of attitude. We're not to have an arrogant attitude toward the Jews. Why? Because this kind of attitude is a denial of the gospel.

What we're essentially saying is, God saved me because I'm a gentile. God saved me because I'm not a Jew, like you are. Remember, you guys rejected Him. Or God saved me because "fill in the blank, whatever it is" and what's that called? Works-righteousness. God saved me because of something that I am, or something that I have done. That's works-righteousness. And no one is saved by works-righteousness, but we are saved by God's what? Grace. By God's grace.

And listen, God still has a plan for Israel. And believing gentiles are not to be arrogant toward them. But Paul anticipated that some of the gentiles might argue with him. Look what he says in verse 19. "[You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.'](#)" 20 [Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;](#) 21 [for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.](#)" (Rom 11:19-21)

Don't think you're high and mighty, and somehow, you're better than the Jews. No, you're not. Look, if God didn't spare the natural branches, He won't spare you either, if you have that kind of attitude? Yes, God did break off national Israel for a time. And why did He do it? Because of their what? Their unbelief. Because of their unbelief. But he says, "[Don't be conceited, but fear,](#)" (Rom 11:20) meaning don't think that you're better than Israel, but fear God and recognize that He can turn you over to just as He did with Israel, because of their unbelief.

It's not about some racial or ethnic or even being part of some morally good group of people. You're not saved because you were born into a Christian home. You're not saved because you had some ritual happen to you when you were a kid. It's all about faith. We are saved by God's grace through faith. That's how one is saved. Not because you're better than anyone. And if God cut off unbelieving Israelites, don't think that He also won't cut off unbelieving gentiles, because He will.

One commentator says, "*The visible church today is mostly Gentile, and that church encompasses a large percentage of apostates, heretics, and others who reject the absolute and inerrant authority of Scripture and deny its Cardinal truths, including the deity of Christ, and the Lord's judgment will fall on the apostate Gentile church just as surely and swiftly as it did on apostate Israel.*"

Don't think that just because you belong to a church, or you grew up in a Christian family that somehow, you're in, because God will cut you off, just as He did with Israel. Don't be arrogant. Don't be

conceited. Remember, salvation is always because of God's sovereign grace through faith, not because you are better than anyone else.

Paul then highlights both God's kindness in salvation and his severity and judgment on unbelievers in verse 22. Look what he says there. [“Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.” \(Rom 11:22-23\)](#) Paul continues to show God's faithfulness to His plan. It's only by the kindness of God, that Gentile believers have been grafted in and become spiritual children of Abraham. It's only because of God's kindness. Why are you saved today? Because of God's kindness, not because of anything that you have done. Only because of God's kindness, and His grace.

But notice, he says, you will be saved -- if you continue in His kindness. If you continue living in faith. Not that you can lose your salvation -- you can't. But if you fall away from God's grace and think that somehow you have done it, it just goes to show that you were not saved in the first place. You just played church. You played the Christian game.

But it's only by God's kindness that we are saved. And it's only because of faith in Him. And if gentiles become spiritual children by faith in Christ, don't you think that God will be able to graft back in the Jewish nation? The Israelites, in whom He has chosen and made a promise with? He'll graft them back in. It's even prophesied that this apostate nation of Israel will believe again.

Listen to Zechariah 12:10, it says this, [“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will”](#) --listen to this – [“look on Me whom they have pierced;” \(Zech 12:10\)](#) Who's the one that they pierced? Christ. They pierced Him. But they'll look upon Him again. What will they do? They will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son. And they will weep bitterly over Him like a bitter weeping over a firstborn. Israel is going to be grafted back in when they believe in the only One that they have pierced. That is Christ.

The natural descendants of Abraham will also become the spiritual descendants of Abraham, when they believe in Him. And the full plan of God for Israel will then be complete. The natural descendants will be grafted in. And how will that happen? How will they be grafted back in? By faith alone, in Christ alone. That's how they'll be grafted in. Again, it's not because of something that they will do. But it's because of what God will do. As He is faithful to fulfill His promise to His people, and faithful to fulfill His plan. It's all because of God's faithfulness. And as we'll see next time, it's all for God's glory.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your amazing promises. And Lord, we see Your promises continually fulfilled throughout Scripture. You made a promise to Abraham. And even though the nation of Israel has rejected You, You have always kept a remnant for Yourself. Father, we do pray for the salvation of Israel, we pray that they would come to look upon the one that they have pierced, that they would repent of their sin and believe in Christ alone, for salvation. And Father, if there's anyone here tonight, who does not know You, who has not been born again, Father, I pray that they would repent of their sin and put their faith in Jesus Christ alone, for the salvation of their soul, so that they can have eternal life with You. Father I pray that You would be with us in our small group time now -- that we would

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remember Your faithfulness. And that all things are done for Your glory, and Your glory alone. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.