

Riverview Baptist Church Wednesday Night Class: A Study in the Book of Romans – Lesson 11

Here in chapters 9-11, we see God's sovereignty played out in light of Israel, God's chosen nation. Paul has commented on God's dealings with his people in the past (Rom. 9) and His dealings with them in the present (Rom. 10). Now Paul turns to God's plan for Israel in the future – that is the restoration of the nation to its place of promise! See Deut. 28.

Romans 11:1-10 – The extent of Israel's rejection – partial.

Paul asks the obvious question in light of the previous two chapters. Has God rejected Israel? The answer is _____! Paul makes a clear statement that Israel has not been completely rejected in the fact that Paul himself is an Israelite! Was Paul a believer?

Notice the response that Paul uses in 11:2-4. What is always true of Israel as seen in the example of Elijah? There is always a _____. Elijah thought that he was all alone in standing against the sin and wickedness demonstrated by Baal worshippers. God was quick to point out that Elijah was not the only believer in Israel.

Paul points out that even now there is a remnant of those saved by grace. There is irony here! Paul writes in 10:2-3 that unsaved Israel tried to appease God through zealous works! The only problem, they did not avail themselves to the true knowledge of God's salvation. Works does not save, then or now!

Paul states that Israel was searching for a righteousness of their own and _____ not obtain it! Only those who were chosen obtained righteousness through faith. The rest were hardened in their unbelief.

McGee comments on the reality of the order here. “It is important to notice that they were hardened because they failed; they did not fail because they were hardened.”¹

What does “hardened” mean? Paul uses Old Testament quotations to explain. Hardness involves “spiritual drowsiness, blindness, and deafness.” Consider 11:8. Stupor is a “state of not being able to think.” Blindness is not being willing to see. Deafness is not being willing to hear. Is there any of that going on in our world today?

Remember what Paul wrote in chapter 1? God gave them over... God allows sinful man to remain in their sin as long as they desire. God even allows sinful man to have an abundance in order to give them something to cause them to stumble. This is what happened to sinful Israel (11:8-10).

Romans 11:11-24 – The purpose of Israel’s rejection – Gentile salvation.

In Romans 11:11, Paul asks another question about his people. Has Israel fallen to the point they cannot get up? The answer is _____! Here the “they” refers back to the ones who have been hardened. Can anyone be saved?

This time of stumbling has had two distinct purposes: 1. To bring salvation to the _____. 2. To cause unsaved Israel to be _____. God always intended the Gentiles to be saved. In times past, it was more through proselyting. Gentiles, by faith in God, would become part of the Jewish system. That is not so today.

¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Through the Bible with J. Vernon McGee: Vol. IV Matthew-Romans* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 722.

The idea of jealousy is simple. The Jewish mindset was that of privilege. The Jews were God's "chosen people." This led to pride. The Jews could not fathom Gentiles being in a place of blessing. Thus, salvation of the Gentiles was something special.

By the time of writing Romans, Paul had twice already turned away from the Jews and turned to the Gentiles with the Gospel (Acts 13:46; 18:6). He will do the same a third time (Acts 28:25-28).

Romans 11:12 can be confusing. Think of it this way. By Israel stumbling and temporary failure, the world has become enriched through Gentile salvation. If this is true, then how much greater will the world be enriched when Israel is restored to its place of promise as the head nation.

Romans 11:13-15 – Paul saw his ministry to the Gentiles as part of God's purposes. In taking the Gospel to the Gentiles, Paul hopes that the Jews would be moved to jealousy, thus moving them closer to accepting Christ.

Romans 11:12 and 15 go together. The temporary rejection of Israel will bring greater blessings to the world _____ Israel repents. Think about all that will transpire in conjunction with the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ:

Romans 11:16 – Paul was convinced that Israel’s rejection was temporary. This is seen in the two illustrations in this verse. The first illustration is the offering of the first fruits of Numbers 15. The first of the bread made was to be offered as holy or set apart. The first part represents the whole. The same is true of a tree. If the root is set apart, then the rest of the tree is as well.

The thought is this: if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – the fathers of Israel – are set apart, then the nation is also set apart. God made _____ promises to the fathers. Thus, the promises are also eternal for the descendants. In this way, the rejection of Israel has to be temporary.

Romans 11:17-24 – Here the olive tree is a place of _____ and blessing. Salvation is not necessarily the main view here, although it is in part. This thought goes back to Genesis 12

In the dispensation of Grace, God set aside the people of Israel as a whole. This is seen as “some of the branches were broken off.” Paul spoke directly to the Gentile believers (11:13, 17, 19). Gentiles are partakers of the blessings that God promised to Abraham and his descendants.

This is seen primarily in salvation. Salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22; Romans 1:16). Gentile Christians should recognize that we are indebted to Israel. The Bible was primarily written by Jews. The Savior came through Jewish ancestry. The Gospel first came to the Jews and was first presented by Jews.

Paul gives a warning in Romans 11:19-21. If God was willing to remove His blessings from His chosen nation, then He will certainly remove them from the Gentiles.

Romans 11:22-24 – Paul summarizes his points of this section in these verses. Because of Israel’s unbelief (11:20, 22) God chose to temporarily set Israel aside. He chose to open up His kindness to all. In this dispensation, that would be primarily the Gentiles along with a remnant of Jews.

This continued kindness is dependent on the Gentiles continuance in that kindness. If the Gentiles do not continue living in that kindness, then they will be cut off from the place of blessing much as Israel was when they rejected the Lord (11:22).

Romans 11:23-24 refers to the Israel’s repentance. If Israel turns from unbelief, then God can choose to graft them back into the “natural” place of blessing that was intended for them.

Romans 11:25-32 – The duration of Israel’s rejection – Temporary.

A “mystery” in the New Testament is something that was previously unrevealed. The mystery here is that Israel has been set aside in two ways, partially (some Jews become saved) and temporary (until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in...). God revealed this mystery so that the Gentiles would not become conceited as the Jews were.

The fact that God did this is not to elevate Gentiles, but rather show God’s _____. Paul reminds the reader that God always intended Israel as a _____ would be saved. Romans 11:26 does not mean that every individual Jew will be saved. Other Scriptures teach otherwise (Zech. 13).

For the present time (especially in Paul’s time), the Jews were an _____ of the Gospel. However, they are still God’s chosen people.

This promise goes back to the promises made to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Those promises (gifts) are irrevocable (11:28-29).

Notice that God has been merciful to all, Jews and Gentiles, both of which were disobedient to God (11:30-31). God has clearly shown through Paul's writings in this book that all are guilty in sin, but mercy is open to all as well (11:32).

Romans 11:33-36 – Discourse on God's Wisdom – A Doxology!

This is a fitting end to Paul's _____ chapter argument! Paul has taken us from the guilt and sin of all humanity to the salvation that is available to all! Paul has demonstrated dispensational truth in discussing his people, Israel! Both Jew and Gentile alike are sinners in need of the Savior! Paul demonstrated that God's promises for Israel will come to pass!

In light of God's sovereignty, who can possibly comprehend to wisdom and knowledge of God! The obvious answer is no one! One thing that we can know for sure is