

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 30

I. Exposition of Chapter Eleven.

A. Verse 1 – “I say then, has God cast away His people?...”

1. The words “cast away” mean, “to thrust away”; “to push away” and “to reject”.¹ After all that has been said in chapters 9 and 10, a valid question could be; “Has God totally given up on Israel?” Various authors state in different ways that **chapter 9** deals with Israel’s rejection of the Gospel, **chapter 10** deals with Israel’s need for the Gospel and **this chapter** deals with Israel’s rejection doesn’t mean there’s no hope for them.

B. Verse 1 (cont.) – “...Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” –

1. Evidence that God has not cast away His people: **Paul himself!**
 - a. “**For I also am an Israelite...**” - The fact that Paul has come to faith in Jesus as Messiah proves there are some Jews who have embraced the Gospel. In fact, the vast majority of the early church were Jews. (cf. Acts 2:5-10, 41; 4:4). **Also take note of Acts 10:1-45 – About 7 years after Pentecost.**
 - b. “**...of the seed of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin.**” – Of course Abraham was the most revered patriarch, the father of the Hebrew people. The Jew would boast that Abraham was their father (**John 8:39**). Paul, and every Christian (Messianic) Jew were of both the fleshly seed and spiritual seed of Abraham. God promised Abraham both a spiritual and physical seed (**Genesis 22:17**.)

C. Verses 2-6 – The Remnant Principle.

1. **Verse 2 - “God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew...”** – This states plainly that God has NOT cast away His people whom He knew before.
2. **Verse 2 (cont.) – “Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying...”** – Paul now turns to an Old Testament example of Israel rejecting God as a whole, yet there was a remnant still faithful.
 - a. Notice that Elijah prayed to God *against* Israel. Things were so bad that Elijah prayed against his own people!
3. **Verse 3 – A quote from I Kings 19:10, 14. – “LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life”?** - Elijah thought that God had cast off the nation and he was the only one left serving the Lord. But God showed him, in spite of what he thought, that there was still a faithful remnant.
4. **Verse 4 – “But what does the divine response say to him? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’”** – (A quote from I Kings 19:18).
 - a. God could have said, “Elijah, you’re right, I’m going to kill them all!” But He didn’t. Instead He mentions that He has a remnant of those who have not bowed their knee.
 - b. Sometimes we may feel like we’re all alone, but just like in one of Israel’s darkest hours, God has others who are as committed to serving Him and living for Him as we are!
5. **Verse 5 – “Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”** – Paul now openly declares what he has been alluding to in the first four verses – Any believing Jew is saved by grace and, therefore, form a faithful remnant of God’s chosen people. Therefore, God has not cast away His people. Just like anyone else, all they have to do is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!

Bob Yandian compares this to the Church in general and states: “**This is why the Church cannot go under or be destroyed today. There are always prophets of destruction saying God is through with the Church, but this is impossible. Jesus said, the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church (Matthew 16:18). So how could governments, religion or even unbelief in the Church cause it to be destroyed? Through the Dark Ages, the Church survived because there were a few who had accepted Jesus as their Savior and were trusting God for the truth to be revealed even in the midst of religious darkness.**” – A New Testament Commentary: Romans

¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

6. **Verse 6 – Again we see Paul mentioning grace versus works. (cf Romans 4:4-5).** In the previous verse, Paul notes that the remnant was chosen *“according to the election of grace.”* Now he reminds us what grace is, a free gift of God, not given because of any performance or potential in the one receiving, but only given out of the kindness of the Giver. **(Remember I Peter 1:1-2)**

D. Verses 7-10 – The Blinded Nation

1. **Verse 7 – “What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.”**

a. **“Israel”** here is referring to the majority nation. Paul acknowledges here that Israel has a desire to obtain the favor of God. They cannot obtain it because they did not seek it by faith (cf. 9:32).

“The ‘election’ referred to is ‘the election of grace’ already indicated in verses 5, 6 and discussed above. The majority of the Jews rejected this election of grace when they rejected Christ.”²

b. The word **“blinded”** means; **“hardened”** or **“calloused”**.

“Israel was not blinded until she first rejected God...Whenever God removes His special favors and presence from a nation, blindness is automatic. Man is naturally blind anyway; when God leaves him alone, his blindness cannot be remedied.”³

c. Remember also the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart as mentioned in **Part 25** of this series. **In hardening the heart of Pharaoh, God simply allowed his heart to pursue its natural inclination.**

2. **Verse 8 – Quotes from Isaiah 29:10, 6:10 and possibly Deuteronomy 29:4.** Isaiah would present God’s Word, but God’s people would not respond due to their rebellious hearts. Paul gives Old Testament references to show this is not new.

3. **Verses 9 - 10 – Quote from Psalm 69:22-23.** Picirilli states; **“The reference is especially appropriate, because Psalm 69 is messianic. Verse 21 contains, in particular, words of Jesus referring to His death at the prompting of His own people (verse 8). Therefore, it is because of that rejection of the Savior that the judgment of verses 22, 23 (Romans 11:9,10) is pronounced.”⁴** (Note Matthew 27:34).

E. Verses 11-12 – Salvation to the Gentiles.

1. **Verse 11 -** Paul presents that there is a difference between **“stumbling”** and **“falling”**. The word **“stumbled”** means; **“to err”** or **“to make a mistake”⁵**. The word **“fall”** means **“to come under judgment.”**

“So I ask, Have they stumbled so as to fall [to their utter spiritual ruin, irretrievably]? By no means! But through their false step and transgression salvation [has come] to the Gentiles, so as to arouse Israel [to see and feel what they forfeited] and so to make them jealous.” – Romans 11:11 – Amplified Bible

2. **Verse 11 (cont.) “Certainly not!”** Paul has shown that God is still working through a remnant of Israel today, but wants to make it clear that the sinning majority of Israel is not lost forever.
3. **“...through their fall to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.”** - We should not forget that in many instances the Gospel only went out to the Gentiles after the Jewish people rejected it (**Acts 13:46; Acts 18:5-6; Acts :25-28**).
4. **Verse 12 -** In this sense, the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews was **“...riches for the Gentiles.”** It wasn’t that the Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah *caused* Gentiles to be saved. It merely gave more opportunity for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles, and many Gentiles took advantage of this opportunity.

²Robert E. Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 220.

³Ibid, 221.

⁴Picirilli, 222.

⁵Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*