

# *Right in God's Sight*

## Studies from the Book of Romans

### Lesson 15

Romans 11:1–36

#### **Romans 11:1–10**      Israel's Rejection Not Total

In Romans 11, Paul concludes his three-chapter discourse on the history of Israel's salvation. He will now prove to the Christians in Rome that God has not rejected His people nor revoked His word. Israel's unbelief in the past resulted in a blinding in part of the nation so that the blessings of salvation were opened to the Gentiles. One day, when the full numbers of the Gentiles has come in, God promises that "all Israel will be saved" (11:26).

Read Romans 11:1–36.

Once again Paul returns to his use of a rhetorical question to make his point. In response to a fictional protester, Paul answers his own question to further the teaching he began in chapter 9.

1. What is Paul's question in verse 1 and how does he answer it?

Paul is himself the first proof he raises to point out that God has indeed not rejected His people. Paul was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin who received God's righteousness by responding in faith to Jesus Christ.

2. According to 1 Timothy 1:15–16, how did Paul perceive himself? How did he perceive his purpose in life?

Faith had allowed Paul to understand what others could not—that God alone grants men righteousness not on the basis of their works, but by belief in Jesus Christ. If God would save a man like Paul—someone who relentlessly persecuted Christians—then He certainly would save other Jews as well.

In raising his second point to prove that God had not rejected His people, Paul refers to the example of the prophet Elijah (vv. 2–4).

3. Read the account in 1 Kings 19:1–18. At a desperately low point in Elijah's life, what did he believe? What was the truth—who had reserved the faithful?

### *Selah . . .*

God's plan and purpose are not dependent upon the success or failure of His messengers. What is true for His people Israel is true for us today; when we try on our own and fail and can see no hope, God is actually at work behind the scenes, orchestrating all things according to His good will. How can you apply this truth to your circumstances at the present time? Please explain.

4. Following Paul's examples, he lays out the relevance to his readers. What is his conclusion? v. 5
  - a. What does the *remnant chosen by grace* understand according to Paul? v. 6  
See Romans 4:4–5 and 9:30–32 to formulate your answer.

Paul goes on to discuss what the chosen remnant out of Israel meant for the nation as a whole. The Jews who sought fervently to be accepted by God on the basis of the law and their works were not accepted; only a few responded.

5. What happened to the rest? vv. 7–10

In verses 8–10, Paul quotes from the Old Testament to support his point about what it means to be blinded or hardened. What do the following verses say?

- a. Deuteronomy 29:2–4 and Isaiah 29:9–10
- b. Psalm 69:22–23

The word *table* in the above psalm speaks of the blessings to Israel from the hand of God, which should have directed them to Christ, but instead, became a trap and a stumbling block resulting in God's judgment on them.

- c. What would be the long-lasting result for Israel? v. 10

### *Memory Verse:*

*"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33*

### *Word Wealth:*

Using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.), write a definition for the words below.

**remnant** (11:5) \_\_\_\_\_

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**grafted** (11:17) \_\_\_\_\_

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**partaker** (11:17) \_\_\_\_\_

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**irrevocable** (11:29) \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Romans 11:11–36      Israel's Story is Not Over Yet!**

In the remainder of chapter 11, Paul will reveal how the hardening of Israel has resulted in blessings for the Gentiles. He will also issue a warning to the Gentiles lest they fall into the same prideful condition that Israel did.

Read Romans 11:11–36.

Earlier addressing the issue of Israel stumbling, Paul will now answer to what extent.

1. Did Israel fall beyond recovery? What does Paul have to say? vv. 11–12

For the last time in the letter to the Romans Paul will ask a question designed to draw out a negative response. He answers it himself with a resounding, *"Certainly not!"*

- a. Israel had not permanently fallen from the grace of God; in fact, what did God plan for them by giving salvation to the Gentiles?

All along it was God's intention that the blessings presented to the Gentiles would serve to make Israel jealous and restore them to Him. Israel's fall was not permanent but a stumbling that meant the gospel was taken out to the whole world. The Gentiles gladly received the riches offered to the Jews. In the future, there will come the day when Israel herself will accept God's offer of salvation.

2. What does Paul hope will happen to some of the Jews as he continues to magnify his ministry to the Gentiles? v. 15

Any of the Jews led to Christ would become part of the remnant chosen by grace—they would have “life from the dead.” If Israel's rejection meant riches for the rest of the world, then when Israel returns to God, greater will be the fullness of those riches!

Convinced that Israel's stumbling is temporary, Paul uses an illustration taken from Numbers 15:17–21, referring to the consecration of the first batch of dough by offering it to the Lord at the beginning of each wheat harvest. Paul states, *“If part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy”* (NIV).

3. What other illustration does Paul use? v. 16

Paul makes the point that the root comes first and determines the nature of the branches that come later. If the root is holy, so are the branches; if the firstfruits of the dough are holy, then the whole batch is holy. (Note: Most commentators agree that the firstfruits and the *root* represent the patriarchs of Israel (Abraham), and the *lump* and the *branches* represent the people of Israel. In other words, God set Israel apart for Himself; her stumbling is therefore temporary.)

Desiring to let the Gentiles know they have not replaced Israel in God's plan, Paul now speaks directly to them to warn them that they too must be careful.

4. How does Paul refer to the Gentiles and what they have become? vv. 17–22

- a. What does he warn them not to do? Why? v. 18–19

- b. What should their attitude be? v. 20

- c. What could possibly happen if they don't heed his words? v. 21

Paul explains that it is because of Israel's unbelief that the Gentiles were grafted in and allowed to stand by faith (v. 20), but they should not take it for granted, lest they too be cut off. They weren't to think too highly of themselves but have a reverential fear of God.

5. What is the result for those who . . . vv. 22–23
  - a. Become hardened and fall?
  - b. Continue in God’s goodness?
  - c. Return to God?

Paul explains that if, contrary to nature, wild olive shoots can be grafted into a developed olive tree, then surely the natural branches can also be grafted back in (v. 24).

In verse 25, Paul speaks about a *mystery*, which is a long-hidden truth that has now been revealed. It is his desire that the Gentiles not be ignorant about the mystery of Israel’s hardening; why it happened and how the nation will once again turn to God and accept the gospel message.

6. Why, specifically, does Paul not want the Gentiles to be ignorant about God’s grace toward them? v. 25
  - a. How long will Israel remain blind?

Paul quotes from the prophet Isaiah in verses 26 and 27 to explain that “all Israel will be saved;” meaning, not in the literal sense, but generally pertaining to the Jews as a nation. Paul links this event to the return of Christ at the end of the age.

- b. What term does Paul assign to the Jews concerning the gospel? v. 28
  - c. What is their relationship with God and what will He be faithful to do for them? Why? vv. 28–29

The position and blessings given to Israel can never be withdrawn, God will keep His promises! If it were otherwise, God’s very nature would be brought into question.

7. Compare the mercy of God upon both Gentiles and Jews according to God’s mercy and how they have benefited from each other. vv. 30–32

### ***For group discussion:***

Before Paul goes on to explain in depth the practical issues of the Christian life, he pauses to contemplate the magnificence of God (vv. 33–36). Take a few minutes now as you close your lesson and think about what God has done for *you* based on who He is. Please record your thoughts.

# *My Romans Road*

Listen . . . Learn . . . Live . . . God's Truth!

Take a look back at this week's lesson. Briefly recap what you learned this week and how you intend to live it out.

1. What lesson in your study became real to you this week?

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2. How do you intend to apply this lesson to your daily life?

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## *Memory Verse:*

Write down what you learned about God from this week's memory verse.

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Write out the verse from memory.

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## *Prayer Request:*

Write out your most earnest prayer request and lift it to the Lord.

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## Notes

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