

GOD HATH NOT CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE

TEXT: ROMANS 11:1-10

INTRODUCTION:

1. Romans 9—11 are parenthetical and deal largely with the nation Israel (cf. 9:1-5).
2. Romans chapter 11 is a confirmation of all the Old Testament promises and prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel at the second coming of Christ (cf. 11:26).
3. There is a distinction between Israel and the New Testament church, though some preachers often confound the two. This is the principle difference between dispensationalism and Reformed theology.
4. The church has not replaced or supplanted Israel.
5. “Replacement theology” is bad theology.
6. Proponents of replacement theology teach that the Jews are no longer God’s chosen people, and that God does not have any specific future plans for the nation of Israel.
7. Replacement theology teaches that the church is the replacement for Israel and that the many promises made to Israel in the Bible have been fulfilled in the Christian church.
8. In order to come up with this scheme, most of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the blessing and restoration of Israel are “spiritualized” or “allegorized” into promises of God’s blessing for the church.
9. In Romans 11, we see that God has taken the nation Israel out of the place of blessing temporarily, but not permanently. Israel will be restored to their place of blessing when Christ returns.
10. Romans 11:2 says, “God hath not cast away his people.”
11. The very fact that God still refers to the Jews as “His people” proves that He has not cast them away.

I. ISRAEL'S PRESENT REJECTION IS NEITHER TOTAL NOR FINAL BECAUSE THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS SAVED (11:1).

1. The apostle Paul says in verse 1, "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite..."
2. That God has not given up on the Jews is evidenced by the conversion of the apostle Paul, who at one time was a bitter opponent of the Gospel.
3. H.A. Ironside said, "God rejects the nation, but grace goes out to the individual."
4. Romans 9, 10, and 11 all begin with Paul's declaration of love for Israel, and his desire to see them saved.

II. ISRAEL'S PRESENT REJECTION IS NEITHER TOTAL NOR FINAL BECAUSE THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE (11:2-5).

1. Paul refers to Elijah the prophet, who said to the LORD, "The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (I Kings 19:14).
2. The LORD answered Elijah, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (I Kings 19:18; cf. Romans 11:2-5).
3. The day in which Elijah lived was one of the darkest days in Israel's history. King Ahab was on the throne of Israel.
4. The Bible says King Ahab "did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him" (I Kings 16:30).
5. First Kings 16:33 says, "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."
6. His wife Jezebel was even more wicked than he was.
7. First Kings 21:25 says, "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up."
8. Ahab and Jezebel tried to make Baal-worship the official religion in Israel. But God reserved to Himself "seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (Romans 11:4).

9. First Kings 19:18 says these seven thousand men would not bow down their knees to Baal; nor would they “kiss the image of Baal”(I Kings 19:18).

10. The Bible teaches that God always has a faithful remnant. The *Scofield Study Bible* says:

In the history of Israel, a "remnant" may be discerned, a spiritual Israel within the national Israel. In Elijah's time 7,000 had not bowed the knee to Baal (I Kings 19:18). In Isaiah's time it was the "very small remnant" for whose sake God still forbore to destroy the nation (Isaiah 1:9). During the captivities the remnant appears in Jews like Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Esther, and Mordecai. At the end of the 70 years of Babylonian captivity it was the remnant which returned under Ezra and Nehemiah. At the advent of our Lord, John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, and "them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38) were the remnant. During the church-age the remnant is composed of believing Jews (Romans 11:4, 5). But the chief interest in the remnant is prophetic. During the great tribulation a remnant out of all Israel will turn to Jesus as Messiah, and will become His witnesses after the removal of the church (Revelation 7:3-8). Some of these will undergo martyrdom (Revelation 6:9-11), some will be spared to enter the millennial kingdom (Zechariah 12:6—13:9). Many of the Psalms express, prophetically, the joys and sorrows of the tribulation remnant.

11. Back in 1882, a Russian Jew of great learning named Joseph Rabinowitz went to Palestine to look into the possibility of a beginning a Jewish settlement there. He went to Jerusalem and one day he went up on the Mount of Olives to rest.

12. He had purchased a New Testament because someone had told him it was the best guide book about Jerusalem. He read the entire New Testament and was saved.

13. He went back to Russia and opened up a Jewish mission, with the words “Acts 2:36” written over the front door.

14. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

15. God always has a faithful remnant!

16. One biographer of Joseph Rabinowitz says, “After having ascended the Mount of Olives and viewing the Mosque of Omar over where the former Temple had stood, he began to consider the tragic history of his people and wonder about the meaning

of Israel's suffering. The answer quickly flashed in his mind: The key to the Holy Land was in the hands of Yeshua."

17. Of course, Joseph Rabinowitz is only one of many. From the apostle Paul's day up to our day, there have been a great number of Hebrew Christians: Benjamin Disraeli, the great Victorian prime minister of Great Britain; the great composer Felix Mendelssohn; August Neander, the German theologian and church historian; Alfred Edersheim, who wrote *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, considered by many to be the greatest book on the life of Christ ever written; Adolph Saphir, who wrote an excellent commentary on the Book of Hebrews; David Baron, who wrote many helpful books on Biblical subjects, such as prophecy and typology; Charles Feinberg, another great Bible commentator. The great preacher, Bible teacher, and author Lehman Strauss was the son of Jewish immigrant from Germany.
18. Many more could be mentioned – "at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5).
19. This doctrine of the remnant applies to Gentiles as well as Jews. Revelation 18:4 says, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."
20. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "In the most corrupt churches God has some true followers. Let us take care not to forget this. Let us cultivate charity. All people have not our opportunities...In many a place of which we know nothing, God has His true followers. God is never without witnesses" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
21. Romans 11:6 teaches that grace and works are mutually exclusive principles. It is illogical as well as unscriptural to mix them together.

III. ISRAEL'S PRESENT REJECTION IS NEITHER TOTAL NOR FINAL BECAUSE THEIR PRESENT NATIONAL UNBELIEF WAS FORESEEN (11:2, 7-10).

1. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (11:2). The word "foreknow" simply means "to know beforehand."
2. Paul uses the same word in Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

3. Paul uses the word in Romans 11:2 to mean God knows all about Israel's rejection of the Gospel as well as her repentance and restoration.
4. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).
5. The Old Testament contains numerous prophecies and warnings regarding Israel's rejection. Israel's apostasy, her unbelief, her stubbornness, her judicial blindness, and her rejection of the Messiah are referred to throughout the Old Testament (cf. Romans 10:16).
6. Nine times, God calls them a "stiffnecked people."
7. But nevertheless, their unbelief has not caused God to alter His eternal purpose in them. They are still "His people" (11:1, 2).
8. Hosea 2:23 says, "I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."
9. The unbelief of Israel does not abrogate God's faithfulness to them as a nation. God has been patient with them, just as He has been patient with the Gentiles (cf. Romans 10:21).
10. Israel's present rejection is neither total nor final because their present national unbelief was foreseen. To illustrate this, Paul quotes three Old Testament Scriptures (Romans 11:7-10).
 - "For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered" (Isaiah 29:10; cf. Romans 7:8).
 - "Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake" (Psalm 69:22, 23; cf. Romans 11:9, 10).
 - "Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day" (Deuteronomy 29:4; cf. Romans 11:10).
11. "What then?" (Romans 11:7). Israel sought for righteousness but failed to find it because they sought it not by faith (cf. Romans 9:31, 32).
12. A remnant sought it by faith, but "the rest were blinded" (Romans 11:7b). It is a judicial blindness.
13. The Greek word translated "blinded" means, "to grow hard, callous, become dull, lose the power of understanding."
14. It is sometimes translated "hardened."

15. “That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them” (John 12:38-40).

16. People often refer to people in the southern states (“the Bible Belt”) as “Gospel-hardened,” because many are familiar with the Bible, but it doesn’t seem to have much impact on the way they live.

CONCLUSION:

1. Judicial blindness means that first they will not believe, but then there comes a time when they cannot believe (cf. Luke 13:34, 35).
2. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, “God has never allowed rebellious men to pursue their own way without limits and restraints. This profound, even though mysterious, doctrine of the Divine hardening of the heart, is a positive proof that God limits man’s defiance of His will, and will never allow him to proceed beyond a certain point” (*St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*).