

The Faithfulness of God to the Nation He Foreknew
Romans 11:1-10
September 8, 2021

Review and Context

Theme of Romans: The gospel of God (1:16-17)

Chs 9-11 The gospel and Israel

- In 9:1-5, the apostle in a very personal way introduced the problem (from the human standpoint) of Israel's unbelief (rejection of the Messiah)

- To the nation of Israel belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises, and the patriarchs. From their race is the Christ (9:4-5).

- *Thesis:* 9:6a "But it is not as though the word of God has failed."
 - The OT's numerous promises to the nation of Israel, of spiritual salvation through the Messiah
 - Examples include Deut 30:6; Eze 36:24-28; Jer 31:31-36; Zech 12:10-13:1

- The apostle proves that the word of God has not failed, using five arguments.
 - The first argument centers on God's sovereign election of some individuals and not others (9:6b-29)
 - The second argument centers on Israel's reliance on works rather than faith (9:30-10:21).
 - Israel is responsible for their failure to believe in Christ
 - The third argument focuses on the remnant of believers within Israel 11:1-10

God's choice of a remnant testifies that God has not rejected Israel (1-6)

11:1a "I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means!"

1. God's "people" refers to the nation of Israel

2. The question is raised by Israel's stubborn unbelief (9:30-10:21; especially **10:21**)

3. The apostle raises the question in order to most emphatically deny that God has rejected the nation of Israel. It would be absolutely contrary to God's nature.

1b "For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin."

- 2 “God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew...”
1. In 8:29, we saw that the term “to foreknow” speaks of God sovereignly setting His covenantal love on His elect in eternity past, choosing them for a relationship with Him
 2. Here, speaks of God foreknowing Israel as a nation
 3. **Amos 3:1–2** “Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family that I brought up out of the land of Egypt:
 ‘You only have I **known**
 of all the families of the earth;
 therefore I will punish you
 for all your iniquities.’”
 4. God’s choice of Israel was not based on anything Israel would be or do
 - **Deut. 7:6b–8** “The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”
 - Comparable to God’s choice of Jacob (**Rom 9:10-12**)
 5. The OT teaches that it is unthinkable that God would sovereignly foreknow/choose Israel, only to later reject them
 - **1 Sam. 12:20–22** And Samuel said to the people, “Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. For **the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name’s sake**, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself.
 - **Neh. 9:30–32** “Many years you bore with them and warned them by your Spirit through your prophets. Yet they would not give ear. Therefore you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. Nevertheless, **in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God**. Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day.”
 6. The faithlessness of God’s people does not nullify His perfect faithfulness
 - **Rom. 3:1–4a** “Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. What if some were unfaithful? **Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?** By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar,”

verses 2b-3

1. "They" refers to the people of Israel
 - **1 Kings 19:10** "He said, 'I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For **the people of Israel** have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.'"
2. Elijah feels God is utterly forsaking Israel

verse 4

- God's preservation of the 7,000 was a testimony that He was not rejecting the nation

5 "So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace."

1. The remnant is not a minority who have only happened to avoid being caught up in apostasy. It is a group chosen and preserved by God that gives assurance of God's future mercy and grace.
2. *Question:* Think through the story line of the Bible, from creation through the first coming of Christ. Where do you see a remnant in addition to the remnant in Elijah's day?
3. There is a remnant within Israel at the present time, that is a witness to God's faithfulness to Israel, a declaration that God isn't finished with Israel

6 "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace."

- *Question:* What does it mean to be chosen by grace (11:5-6)?

Israel has failed to obtain righteousness, being hardened by God (7-10)**7** "What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,"

1. The Israelites as a whole failed to obtain a right standing with God (9:30-31)
2. The exception was the elect within Israel
3. The rest of Israel was hardened by God (cf. 9:18)
4. God is sovereign over Israel's current unbelieving condition and the existence of the remnant

verse 8

1. Combines Deuteronomy 29:4 which speaks of the unbelieving majority in the wilderness, and Isaiah 29:10 which speaks of judgment against Jerusalem.
2. Paul is communicating that Israel is currently under God's judgment

verses 9-10

1. Quotes largely from Psalm 69:22-23, a Messianic Psalm
2. Connects back to stumbling over the stumbling stone in 9:32-33
3. Reinforces the idea of current divine judgment upon Israel for unbelief

The apostle is preparing for verse 11

Conclusion

God has a sovereign purpose that He is fulfilling in and through Israel

We are to be reassured that God is faithful to His promise, even when we do not see the big picture

We are to recognize the believing remnant within Israel as a testimony to God's faithfulness