

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 29TH - 30TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

LOYALTY (ROMANS 11:1-10)

PROMISE KEPT

God's promises to Israel have not been canceled just because most of Israel is disobedient. Paul himself is proof, for he is an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham.

- God's grace towards Paul illustrates the kind of compassion God will show to Israel as a whole.

THE UNSEEN

Here again we see the idea of the "remnant," which Paul introduced in 9:6 (he didn't just use the specific word). The nation of Israel was always a mixed group, a combination of faithful and faithless people. And while those who remained faithful, like Elijah, often felt completely alone, God reminds the remnant that they are not.

- For Elijah, God had preserved 7000; for Paul, there is also a remnant chosen by grace; and for us, too, God keeps a remnant of faithful believers to remind us that we are never alone. This remnant was chosen by grace because they believed in Christ for eternal life apart from works.

DISOBEDIENCE HAS CONSEQUENCES

Just as Pharaoh's heart was hardened because he rejected God's command, Israel's heart was hardened because they rejected God's son.

- Thus God gave them eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear so that they would not find what they were looking for - namely, salvation, because they sought it by works.

A GREAT HOPE (ROMANS 11:11-22)

THERE'S HOPE AFTER THIS

Israel may have been hardened like Pharaoh, but they are not beyond recovery. They have stumbled, but not so badly as to fall away from God forever. In fact, God planned on their rejection as the vehicle for delivering salvation to the Gentiles (the world). Paul saw this when the Jews rejected his message, it led him to take his ministry to the Gentiles.

- By rejecting the gospel, the nation of Israel allowed salvation to come to the Gentiles. When Christ returns, the failure of Israel will be reversed to their fullness because they will believe in Jesus as their Messiah. Not only will this reversal lead to salvation of Israel, but it will lead to riches for the world and life from the dead.
- God's salvation has always been tied to Israel; so if their stumbling brought salvation to the rest of the world, how much more will their strengthening? To anticipate any objections to the certainty of Israel's redemption, Paul compares the remnant to the first fruits. If the first fruits of a particular crop are healthy and sweet, that's a guarantee that the rest of the crop will follow suit.
- God's promises to Abraham form the root, and that root produces the fruit: the remnant of Israel. Through this remnant, God will be able to fulfill his promises to Abraham and restore Israel as a nation.

HUMBLE YOURSELF

At this point, Paul's Gentile readers might be tempted to respond in arrogance. "After all," they might think, "Israel rejected God's message, but we didn't!" Paul warns them to avoid this attitude at all cost: do not be arrogant and do not boast that you are better than those branches – that is, the nation of Israel.

- After all, Israel was cut because of unbelief, and God may just as readily cut off Gentile branches as Israelite ones. All who remain grafted into God's tree of salvation stand by faith, and faith cannot coexist with arrogant pride.
- Many people feel like they have to choose between God's kindness and severity, as if God could only be tough or loving, strong or compassionate. But Paul knows the two go together: God is severe toward our sin, but kind enough to cover it in Christ.
- We only know the kindness of God because that kindness saves us from His severity.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE (ROMANS 11:23-32)

THIS IS NOT THE END

God will fulfill his promise to Israel. Even though a partial hardening has come upon them, they will experience future salvation. Once the fullness of the Gentiles has come, God will pick up His program with Israel again.

- All of this will happen during the end times, when Jesus returns as the Deliverer to eliminate all godlessness and all of Israel will be saved.

GRACE AND MERCY

Paul winds down his argument by summarizing what's he's been saying throughout the entire chapter: God's election of Israel makes them beloved of God.

- God can be depended on to keep His gracious gifts and callings to them, even though they've been set aside for a time.
- Because of Israel's rejection, the Gentiles have received mercy. Yet that mercy was not for the Gentiles alone, because God still desires that Israel may also now receive mercy.
- That has been God's masterful plan all along: taking the rejection of one and causing it to be a blessing to others, before returning to those who rejected and having them accept.
- Only in this way could God have mercy on all, magnifying His awesome plan and His wisdom.

THANKFULNESS (ROMANS 11:33-36)

PRAISE IS NECESSARY

After contemplating the wisdom and knowledge of God through the process of salvation, Paul is overcome with God's glory. The word glory comes from a word meaning "weighty" or "heavy."

- Paul stops here to say, in essence that God is the weightiest, heaviest, deepest being in the universe. His glory is unmatched.
- No one can even outline His actions; no one can get inside His head to know what He's thinking; no one can offer something to God that puts Him in their debt. His glory is beyond comprehension.
- Whatever you think about God, He is much more than that.

THAT'S IT

Then Paul adds an Amen. Amen means, "That's It." We don't have to add to God's glory because there's nothing to add.

- What else could there be? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things, not just now, but forever.

TAKING INVENTORY...

- How do we respond to the loyalty of God?
- Humble ourselves and acknowledge Christ.
- Accept Christ and recognize His faithfulness and loyalty towards us.
- Live our lives according to that truth.