

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 30TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

REJECTION (ROMANS 11:1-10)

"I ASK, THEN..."

Due to Israel's rejection of Christ, Paul starts with asking, "has God rejected his people?"

- Israel's rejection is both consistent with God's eternal plan (elect) and Israel's own choosing (free will).
- Is Israel's fate settled with no possibility of restoration? Paul answers with, "**Absolutely not!**"

PREPARED TO GIVE A DEFENSE

Paul doesn't just say what he believes but provides evidence for what he claims. (1Peter 3:15)

- "I am an Israelite," using himself as evidence that God has not cast away His People by proving that there were some Jews who embraced the gospel.
- Though they rejected Jesus as King, **God is faithful even when we are not!** (Jn 19:15).

"DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS..."

Uses the example of Elijah (1Kings), which his audience should have known – Jezebel, after learning of Ahab's slaughter of the prophets (people of God), threatens Elijah with the same fate.

- Elijah cried out to God, "I am the only one left", but God showed him that there was a remnant that God had "left for Himself."

Elijah thought that God had cast off the nation and that he was the only one serving the Lord.

- But God showed Him there was a substantial remnant.
- Seems like our nation has been cast away, and we can feel like we are the only one's serving the Lord. **Do we know what the scripture says?**

"IN THIS SAME WAY..."

Paul draws comparison, saying that there was a remnant "chosen by grace" in Elijah's time, as well as in his present time.

- He reminds us about: **free gift of God**, not given on the performance or goodness of the one receiving it, but given **only by the goodness of the Giver**. As principles, grace and works don't go together!

"THE ELECT FIND IT...REST WERE HARDENED"

The elect among Israel received and responded to the mercy of God but the rest were hardened by their rejection.

- We are "**softened**" to the idea of receiving mercy and in turn extend to others. But a rejection of mercy **hardens us to the necessity of grace and the ability to be gracious to others**.

(v 8-10) Paul quotes Isa 29 and refers to Duet 29:4 to show that like Pharaoh's heart being hardened for resisting the truth, Israel to would be given over to "a spirit of stupor, eyes that can't see, and ears that can't hear."

- Paul quotes Psalm 69 saying that Israel's "table" had become a "snare and a trap" meaning their **blessings turn into burdens and judgments**.

BENEFIT (ROMANS 11:11-24)

"I ASK, THEN..."

Paul again asks a rhetorical question based on the previous section. "Have they stumbled so as to Fall?", then answers with an emphatic denial, "**Absolutely not!**"

- This hardening of the "rest" is not permanent. They have stumbled but not fallen. **You can recover from a stumble, but if you fall you're down.**

FOCUS ON ISRAEL

Paul asserts that their stumbling "brings riches for the world".

- Israel's rejection is the starting point of a process that will eventually lead back to blessing for Israel. The middle stage of this process involves the Gentiles (us).
- Their stumbling had a purpose – **to bring salvation to everyone** and our salvation should draw the Jews to God.

FOCUS ON GENTILES (US)

We can respond to the Gospel because of their rejection of Jesus, but we are to "make...people jealous and save some of them."

- Paul's desire is that these riches would not be enjoyed by Gentiles only, but the Jews would be provoked to a good kind of jealousy and be moved to want what the Gentiles were enjoying. **Do people want what we have?**

FIRST FRUITS OF ISRAEL

Paul uses the patriarchs (father of a family), as further evidence that **God has not cast away Israel**.

- God accepted the founder of the nation, Abraham, despite his sin and set apart his descendants as well.
- God also accepted the other patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob, despite their sins.

This means that since the "root" (patriarchs) was holy (set apart) then so are the "branches" (Jewish decedents) which are **still set apart for a purpose as promised**.

- God will never break his covenant that was made with His people. **He will keep His promise** to eventually restore them back to Him!

FURTHER EXPLAINED WITH AN OLIVE TREE

Paul uses the grafting process to explain God's plan for redemption.

- When a wild olive tree did not produce very good fruit, a branch from a good tree would be grafted in.
- The branch from the good tree would then continue to produce fruit using the root system of the wild tree.

Paul's example goes against nature. Here the "wild branch" was grafted into the "good tree!" Olive tree (Israel); roots (patriarchs); wild branches (gentiles); broken off branches (unbelieving Jews).

- **How beautiful it is that we, the "wild branches" are grafted into the "good tree!"**

WARNINGS

"do not boast (v.18)" – reminding gentiles to be humble in our position because it is only by God's grace that we are grafted in. **There is no place for pride in salvation by grace!**

- "consider God's kindness towards you and severity for fallen" and "remain in His kindness".
- Same idea of "continual abiding" in **Jn 15:1-8**. Jesus is the "true vine", we are the "branches" and can do nothing apart from Him.

(v20-21) Paul warns his audience "not to be arrogant, but beware, because if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either."

- The Gentiles were obligated to Israel and should not boast of their new spiritual position since **they entered because of God's goodness, and not because of anything good they had done**.

PRAISE (ROMANS 11:25-36)

A MYSTERY REVEALED

Paul doesn't want us to be "ignorant" of this mystery. "A partial hardening has come upon Israel" and will continue "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in", then "Israel will be saved".

- Individual Jews are being saved, but in the present time God is focusing on the Gentiles and building His Church. When this time has run its course, God will turn His focus back on Israel.

What has happened to Israel is all part of God's plan.

- **God and His will are both good, and He knows what He is doing!**
- God knows what time it is and He is **never late in fulfilling His will!**
- God has promised to save His people, and **God will keep His promise!**

GOD'S LOVE AND CALLING REMAINS

Paul says that "regarding the gospel and election", even though they were hostile towards Jesus, they are still loved because the "gifts and calling" of the patriarchs are irrevocable. God will not go back on His promises and will not give up!

- This means that **God will not give up on us and gives a path to restoration!**

REMEMBER WHERE YOU CAME FROM

"You once disobeyed God,"**yet God showed you mercy!** (v.32) "For God has imprisoned all in disobedience, so that he may have mercy on all.

- We all have sinned, been found guilty, and fallen short of the glory of God, but God offers mercy to prisoners, through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

MOVED TO WORSHIP

Paul reflects on God's plan for salvation, His faithfulness, and His mercy, and he breaks out in a song of praise.

- "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" **His ways and thoughts are higher than ours!**
- "Who has given to God, that it should be repaid?" **It is impossible to out-give God!** He will never be in debt to anyone.

"It's all of Him, through Him, and to Him." **This was all God's perfect plan to bring His people back to Him, through Jesus, for His ultimate glory.**

- "Theology becomes doxology" simply means that **the study of God should lead to the worship of God!**

TAKING AN INVENTORY

- Have we become prideful and arrogant in our affluence?
- Do we understand grace and the opportunity given to us, or are we cheapening grace and playing games?
- Are we representing Christianity in a way that would attract others?
- Are we trusting God's promises?