

Romans 11:1-12
The Remnant of Israel

Introduction:

Stephen Davey, in the helpful book *Forsaking Israel*, outlines Romans 11:1-32 as follows: *God's Past Promise to Israel*—11:1-6; *Israel's Past and Present Disobedience toward God*—11:7-24; and *God's Future Plan is revealed*—11:25-32

Paul acknowledges that Israel's rejection of Christ was part of God's sovereign plan to extend salvation to the Gentiles (non-Jewish people), but he insists that God is not yet finished with Israel as His chosen people. (FSB)

Just because Israel has rejected God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ does not mean that God has permanently rejected Israel.

1) God's rejection of Israel is questioned—11:1-6

a) Asked—11:1a ¹ *I ask, then, has God rejected [avpwqe,w] his people?* (Lit. "Therefore I say, God did not reject His people, did He?")

i) Assumes a "No" answer.

b) Answered—11:1b-4

i) Emphatically: *By no means!*

ii) From Paul's own life: *For I (emphatic) myself am ...*

(1) Three-fold description

(a) *an Israelite*

(b) *a descendant of Abraham*

(c) *a member of the tribe of Benjamin.*

(2) Conclusion: ² *God has not rejected [avpwqe,w] his people whom he foreknew [proginw,skw].*

(a) If Israel was truly and permanently rejected, so was Paul himself!

(b) See 1 Sam. 12:22; Jer. 31:35-37; Amos 3:2

iii) From the OT prophets: (see 1 Kings 19)

(1) Elijah's interpretation of his experience: *Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals [evtugca,nw] to God against [kata,] Israel?* ³ *"Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I (emphatic) alone am left [u`polei,pw], and they seek my life."* (1 Kings 19:10, 14)

(2) God's revelation of reality: ⁴ *But what is God's reply [crhmatismo,j] to him? "I have kept [katalei,pw] for myself seven thousand men [avnh,r] who have not bowed the knee to Baal."* (1 Kings 19:18)

c) Principles—11:5-6

i) The reality of a Jewish remnant: ⁵ *So too at the present time there is a remnant [lei/mma], chosen by grace [ka,ta evklogh, ca,rij].*

(1) See Rom. 9:27 [u`po,leimma]

(2) In Romans, the remnant is composed of Jews who have put their faith in Christ. The existence of this remnant is proof that God has not rejected all of Israel. (FSB)

- (3) The remnant is not based on those who are saved but on God's grace.
- ii) Participation in the Jewish remnant is by grace alone: ⁶ *But if* (1st class condition) *it* (the choosing) *is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of [evk] works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.*

2) God's judgment of Israel is partial and temporary—11:7-10

- a) The principle: ⁷ *What then? Israel failed to obtain [evpitugca,nw] what it (righteousness) was seeking.*
- b) From the Law and the Prophets: *The elect obtained it [evpitugca,nw], but the rest were hardened [pwro,w], ⁸ as it is written (combining Deut. 29:4; Is. 29:10; 6:9), "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."*
- c) From the Writings: ⁹ *And David says (Ps. 69:22-23), "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; ¹⁰ let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever."*

3) Is their rejection permanent?—11:11-12

- a) Are they beyond recovery?—11:11a ¹¹ *So I ask, did they stumble [ptai,w] (temporarily) in order that [i[na] they might fall [pi,ptw] (permanent ruin and destruction)? (assume "No" answer)*
- i) Answered emphatically: *By no means!*
- ii) While their rejection has not been total, neither has it been final.
- b) Purpose stated—11:11b *Rather, through their trespass [para,ptwma] (rejecting Christ) salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as [eivj] to make Israel jealous [parazhlo,w].*
- i) See Rom. 10:19
- c) Completeness anticipated—11:12
- i) "If" clauses
- (1) ¹² *Now if* (1st class condition) *their trespass [para,ptwma] means riches [ploutoj] for the world,*
- (2) *and if* (assumed) *their failure [h[tthma] means riches [ploutoj] for the Gentiles,*
- ii) Then: *how much more will their full inclusion [plh,rwma] (completeness) mean!*
- (1) Probably referring to the full number of Jews who trust in Messiah at the end of the Tribulation.

4) Things we need to remember:

- a) There is still a future for ethnic Israel in God's program.
- b) Israel's sin and stubbornness will not defeat God's purpose.
- c) The Gentile church does not supersede national Israel, but rather is instrumental in the restoration of the Jewish people to God. (Horner)

Romans 11:13-24
The Kindness and Severity of God

Introduction:

1) Paul refers to specific groups—11:13-15

- a) Concerning Gentiles—11:13-14
 - i) His Gentile readers: ¹³ *Now I am speaking to you* (emphatic) *Gentiles*.
 - (1) Gentiles in general.
 - (a) This seems to indicate that Paul assumes unsaved Gentiles will read or hear this letter.
 - (2) He had warned the Jews earlier about pride (2:17).
 - ii) An apostle to the Gentiles himself: *Inasmuch then as I* (emphatic) *am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry* (remember 1:5)
 - Paul's twofold personal goals:
 - (1) Preparation for salvation: ¹⁴ *in* (1st class condition) *order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous* [parazhlo,w], (cf. 11:11)
 - (a) By seeing Gentiles embrace the Jewish Messiah.
 - (2) Salvation: *and thus save/rescue* [sw,zw] *some of them*.
 - b) Concerning Jews—11:15 ¹⁵ *For if* (1st class condition) *their rejection* [avpobolh,] (by God) *means the reconciliation* [katallagh,] *of the* (Gentile) *world* (to God the Father),
 - i) Guaranteed resurrection: *what will their acceptance* [pro,slhmyij] *mean but* [eiv mh,] *life from the dead?*

2) Paul illustrates and explains with a parable—11:16-24

- a) Two common illustrations/metaphors of solidarity—11:16
 - i) Baking: (cf. Numbers 15:17-21)
 - (1) Assumption: ¹⁶ *If* (1st class condition) *the dough offered as firstfruits is holy*,
 - (2) Conclusion: *so is the whole lump*,
 - ii) Horticulture or Botany:
 - (1) Assumption: *and if* (1st class condition) *the root is holy*,
 - (2) Conclusion: *so are the branches*.
- b) The application from Botany—11:17-21
 - i) Command for humility—11:17-18a
 - (1) Assumption: ¹⁷ *But if* (1st class condition) *some of the branches* (unbelieving portion of the 12 tribes) *were broken off, and you* (emphatic), *although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share* (become a participant of) *in the nourishing root* (God's covenant promises to Abraham, not Israel itself) *of the olive tree*,
 - (2) Command: ¹⁸ *do not be arrogant* [katakauca,omai] *toward the branches*.
 - ii) Reason for humility—11:18b-20a
 - (1) Assumption: *If* (1st class condition) *you are* (arrogant),

- (2) Conclusion: *remember it is not **you** (emphatic) who support the root, but the root that supports you.*
 - (3) Example of arrogance: ¹⁹ *Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that **I** (emphatic) might be grafted in.”*
 - (4) Reason for humility: ²⁰ *That is true* [kalw/j].
 - (a) Jews: *They were broken off because of their unbelief* [avpisti,a],
 - (b) Gentiles: *but **you** (emphatic) stand fast through faith* [pi,stij].
 - (i) What a merciful God!
- iii) Two cooperating commands—11:20b-21
- (1) The commands:
 - (a) *So do not become proud*, [u`yhlo,j frone,w]
 - (b) *but fear*. [fobe,w]
 - (2) The reason for the commands:
 - (a) Assumption: ²¹ *For if* (1st class condition) *God did not spare the natural branches,*
 - (b) Conclusion: *neither will he spare you.*
- c) The key principle—11:22-24
- i) Two things to perceive: ²² *Note then ...*
 - (1) Beneficence: *the kindness* [crhsto,thj] (of God)
 - (2) Strictness: *and the severity* [avpotomi,a] *of God:*
 - ii) Two aspects of God’s character:
 - (1) Toward Israel, on the one hand [me,n]: *severity* [avpotomi,a] *toward those who **have fallen** (emphatic),*
 - (2) Toward Gentiles, on the other hand [de,]: *but God’s kindness* [crhsto,thj] *to you,*
 - (a) *provided* (3rd class condition) *you continue in his kindness* [crhsto,thj].
 - (b) *Otherwise **you** (emphatic) too will be cut off.*
- iii) ²³ *And even they, if* (3rd class condition) *they do not continue in their unbelief* [avpisti,a], *will be grafted in,*
 - (1) Why? *for God has the power* [dunato,j] *to graft them in again.*
 - (2) ²⁴ *For if* (1st class condition)
 - (a) Gentiles: ***you** (emphatic) were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree,*
 - (b) Israel: *how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.*

3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Gentiles remain *wild* branches and do NOT become Jews *cultivated* branches at salvation.
- b) Be grateful to be grafted into God’s covenant with Abraham, but don’t be proud.

Romans 11:25-36
The Marvelous Mercy of God

Introduction:

1) We need to understand the hardening of Israel is partial, temporary, and purposeful—11:25-32

- a) A 3-faceted mystery—11:25 ²⁵ *Lest you be wise [fro,nimoj] in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware [avgnoe,w] of this mystery [musth,rion], brothers:*
- Approximately 20 NT uses of the word “mystery,” previously undisclosed but now these truths are revealed by God.
 - i) Partial: a **partial** [me,roj] *hardening* [pw,rwsij] (spiritual dullness or callousness) *has come upon Israel,*
 - ii) Temporary: **until** the fullness [plh,rwma] *of the Gentiles has come in.*
 - (1) Cf. Acts 15:14
 - (2) This refers to the time from Pentecost and ending at the Rapture when the Body of Christ is complete. This differs from the “times of the Gentiles” which refers to the political period from the Babylonian captivity (605 BC) (some say as far back as Egypt) until Christ’s return to earth to reign as king at the end of the Tribulation (see Luke 21:24).
 - iii) Reversible: ²⁶ *And in this way [ou-twj] all Israel (as a whole) will be saved,*
 - (1) All of the elect individual Jews (not every single Jew but some from every tribe) will come to trust Messiah at the end of the Tribulation period. See Zechariah 12:10-14; 13:7-9.
- b) An explanation—11:26b-27
- i) Revealed in the Prophets: *as it is written, (Is. 59:20-21; Jer. 31:33-34)*
 - (1) Confirmed holiness: *“The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;*
 - (2) Covenantal forgiveness: ²⁷ *“and this will be my covenant (the New Covenant) with them when I take away their sins.”*
- c) A pair of contrasts—11:28-32
- i) The first contrast/antithesis concerning GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY—11:28-29
 - (1) On the one hand [me,n]: ²⁸ *As regards [kata,] **the gospel** (emphatic), they are enemies [evcqro,j] for your sake [dia,].*
 - (2) On the other hand [de,]: *But as regards [kata,] election, they are beloved [avgaphto,j] for the sake of [dia,] their forefathers.*
 - (3) Why is this true? ²⁹ *For [ga,r] the gifts [ca,risma] and the calling of God are irrevocable [avmetame,lhtoj] (without regret).*
 - (a) This does NOT refer to miraculous or other spiritual gifts, but rather the promises of God in His covenants (cf. 9:4-5).
 - (b) If God makes an unconditional promise, it remains an unconditional promise. He will never change His promises.
 - ii) The second contrast/antithesis concerning GOD’S MERCY—11:30-32
 - (1) Gentiles:

- (a) Past: ³⁰ *For [ga,r] just as you (emphatic) were at one time [pote,] disobedient [avpeiqe,w] to God*
- (b) Present: *but now [nu/n] have received mercy [evlee,w] because of their disobedience [avpei,qeia],*
- (2) Israel:
 - (a) Present: ³¹ *so they too have now [nu/n] been disobedient [avpeiqe,w]*
 - (b) Future: *in order that by the mercy [e;leoj] shown to you **they** (emphatic) also may now [nu/n] receive mercy [evlee,w].*
- (3) Why is this true? ³² *For [ga,r] God has consigned/restricted all to disobedience [avpei,qeia], that he may have mercy [evlee,w] on all.*
 - (a) Mercy on all people groups without distinction, but not all individuals without exception.

2) We need to glorify God for His sovereign ways—11:33-36

a) Stated—11:33

- i) His infinite perfections: ³³ *Oh, the depth of the (inexhaustible) riches [plou/toj] (of His mercy) and wisdom [sofi,a] (impressive skills) and knowledge [gnw/sij] (perfect knowledge) of God!*
- ii) His incomprehensible dealings: *How unsearchable [avnexerau,nhtoj] are his judgments and how inscrutable [avnexicni,astoj] (incapable of being traced by footprints, untrackable) his ways!*
 - (1) Similar to a diver in the ocean. One can only go so deep. There are some depths we will never reach.
 - (2) To say that God is incomprehensible is not to say that we can know nothing about God but, rather, that because God is infinite, no creature can ever come to comprehend, understand, grasp, or describe God in a manner that is worthy, adequate, or all-encompassing. (Lexham)

b) Explained—11:34-36a

- i) Can we advise God? ³⁴ *“For [ga,r] who has known the mind [nou/j] of the Lord, or who has been his counselor [su,mbouloj]?” (Is. 40:13, LXX)*
- ii) Is God obligated to us? ³⁵ *“Or who has given a gift [prodi,dwmi] to him that he might be repaid [avntapodi,dwmi]?” (Job 41:11, Hebrew)*
- iii) ³⁶ *For [o[ti] from [evk] him (the Source/Cause) and through [dia,] him (the Channel/Means) and to [eivj] him (the Goal) are all things.*

c) Doxology—11:36b *To him be glory forever. Amen.*

- i) In spite of humanity’s refusal to do so (1:21).

3) Things we need to remember:

- a) “I have heard many Christians say, ‘Why are the heathen lost when they haven’t heard the gospel? God has no right to condemn them!’ My friend, God has every right imaginable. He is God. And what He is doing is right. If you don’t think it is right, your thinking is wrong. And if you don’t think He is

being smart, you are wrong. God is not stupid. You and I may be stupid, but God is not.” (J. Vernon McGee)

- b) As John Stott reminds us: On the one hand, there can be no doxology without theology. On the other hand, there should be no theology without doxology.