

## ***"Has God Cast Away Israel?"***

### **Romans 11:1-6**

INTRO:

When we left our Romans study last time, we listened as Paul told us many Gentiles are being saved, but most of Israel remains in unbelief. This all begs a question Paul asked in **Romans 11:1**, ***"I say then, has God cast away His people?"*** The word translated ***"then"*** is the Greek word ***"therefore."*** Some would conclude the Apostle Paul taught God had forever washed His hands of His responsibility toward Israel as a nation.

Because this thought was in the minds of his readers, Paul decided to bring it out into the light to deal with it. What you and I cannot see in the English translation is how Paul constructed the initial question in the Greek so the expected answer is no. Paul asked the question, did God cast away the Jewish people? Then answered it unequivocally. The very idea was ***"impossible!"*** or ***"unthinkable."*** Why was it so impossible? The Apostle gave two reasons in this paragraph.

***I. It Is Impossible Because I Was Saved (v. 1-2a)***

***II. It Is Impossible Because of God's Grace (v. 2b-6)***

***I. It Is Impossible Because I Was Saved (v. 1-2a)***

**Romans 11:1-2a** ***"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew."***

A. Our Apostle was concerned the Romans might understand his teaching that all national Israel would not be saved meant that none of Israel could be saved. Did God cast off His people totally? Paul answers the question with a resounding NO!

B. The first reason the Apostle Paul gave to support his answer was he, himself, a Jewish man, was saved through this Gospel.

v.1 ***“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.”***

1. Now why did Paul state his pedigree in such a redundant manner? First, Paul established that if being Jewish meant he was automatically saved, he had all the qualifications. He descended from Abraham, but more than that, he could trace his lineage to the promised son, Jacob or Israel, to whom the covenant had been given. Finally, he even could show he was descended from a tribe that remained faithful to the Lord when the kingdom's separated.

2. As Paul said in **Philippians 3**, he was truly, ***“a Hebrew of the Hebrews.”*** Yet, it was not his Jewishness that saved him.

**Philippians 3:3-9** ***“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: <sup>5</sup> circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. <sup>8</sup> Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”***

While Paul had all the credentials of being a Jew, his Jewishness did not save him, and his Jewishness did not keep him from being saved. God had not cast off His covenant people as a nation.

C. Having stated the premise negatively, in **Romans 11:2**, Paul expressed the case positively. ***“God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.”*** God's Word did not fail. God kept His promises. God had not cast away the nation whom He chose from the descendants of Abraham to be His covenant people.

D. The Prophet Amos wrote:

**Amos 3:1-2** ***“Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: ‘You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.’”***

God always had a special covenant relationship with Israel as a nation. When we get to the end of this chapter, we will see that God has not abandoned this relationship.

## ***II. It Is Impossible Because of God's Grace (v. 2b-6)***

**Romans 11:2-4** *“God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ‘LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life’? But what does the divine response say to him? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’”*

A. The second reason why we know that God did not cast off His people, Israel, is because He continues to save a remnant from among them. By grace, God has always kept a remnant of His people faithful to Him. This is the point Paul made by citing Elijah's encounter with God.

B. Remember Elijah? He confronted the 400 prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. Elijah cut up his sacrifice and drenched it with water. Then he prayed and the Lord sent a fire that completely devoured the sacrifice, the rocks of the altar, and licked up the water. Elijah took the prophets of Baal and killed them all. When Jezebel heard it she sent a messenger to Elijah with a threat and Elijah ran. All of this is included in Paul's account by reference.

1. When Elijah went to Mount Horeb, he saw the great demonstration of the wind, earthquake, and fire, but God was not in these phenomena. Then God talked with Elijah. Paul cited this conversation.

2. ***“Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ‘Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life’? But what does the divine response say to him? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’” (vs2b-4)***

God asked Elijah what he was doing there. Elijah responded by charging Israel with rebelling against God. In a sense, Elijah said Israel did not have a right to exist. The nation did not merit its relationship with God. God answered, “I still

have reserved for myself a remnant of seven thousand men.” You are not alone, Elijah.

C. Now Paul is very quick to point out that these seven thousand who were God’s remnant were not preserved because they deserved it. They were not smarter or better looking. They were not more righteous. It was all of God’s grace.

1. ***“Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the choosing of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.” (vs.5-6)***

As it was then, it is now. Because of grace alone there is a remnant of Israel who believe. It is also by grace alone that we are of the remnant that God has called out of the world to believe in Him!

2. We so easily forget that had not God by grace called us and saved us, we would not be saved. Had God not created and protected His church by grace, it would not exist. Except God preserve us through His grace, we would not be saved and persevere in our salvation.

D. There is one other observation I want to make here. Did you notice how those who hold the truth are frequently in the minority?

1. Elijah knew of very few who believed and served the LORD as he did. So he thought he was the only one left. The crowd did not follow the truth. They were immersed in error.

2. We learn this will also be out lot if we seek to follow the Lord and embrace the truth of His Word. Listen to what our Lord Himself said to us in **Matthew 7:13-14**.

***“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup> Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”***

Why do we think the way to God is the popular way? The Lord has shown us over and over again there will only be a remnant who believe.

Let us remember God always has a plan. This plan included a national covenant with Israel and an individual salvation with all of us who believe. Let us then be faithful in proclaiming the Gospel in order that the Lord Jesus might through us call out a people for His Name.

We also must draw comfort from knowing Our Heavenly Father has not abdicated His throne. He still runs the world and will always take care of us who are His.