

Romans 11 - What about the Jews (part 1)?

The theme of the book of Romans is the relationship of the Law and grace. The first section of Romans, in chapters 1-8, deals with salvation by grace and not by the works of the Law. This leads to the next question that is covered in chapters 9-11. If the Law has no place in effecting salvation, then does that make the Law irrelevant? Paul partially answered that when he pointed out that the Law brings about conviction for sin and judgment so that people will turn to Christ as the remedy for their sin. But there is another question about the irrelevance of the Law that was pressing during that time. In that day, God's people were adjusting to the new dispensation where the Gentiles were being brought in without having to perform Jewish legal rituals to become Jews. The question in the early church was not only what to do with the Gentiles, but then also, what do you do with the Jews? The Jews, as a religious *group* rejected Christ. There were many Jews who moved on to the church which was the next step in the progression of God's plan. But, the bulk of the nation retained a cultural identity and rejected God's plan for them in the church.

1. I will bless them that bless thee... -

In chapters 9-11, Paul covers the hot topic of Israel, God's people according to the Law, and their place in God's plan. The world is aghast at the recent attack by the Iranian funded and backed Hamas terrorists. The topic of Israel is very relevant not just because of this attack. This is just more blatant and out in the open. God had a covenant with Abraham that extends throughout the Dispensation of the Patriarchs, the Dispensation of the Law, the Dispensation of Grace, and will continue throughout the Tribulation and on into the Millennium when the nations join in perfect harmony. This is why these chapters are not just about God's people of the Law for *that* day. It is eschatological in scope, it extends to the

End Times.

Gen 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The blessing that God gave to Abraham would be for the preservation of his descendants all through to the End Times. In all times since Abraham, God has kept *at least* a remnant of His chosen people. All through the book of Judges, God raised up men and women to deliver Israel from the hands of their enemies. When the Assyrians and Babylonians carried the Jews off captive, their identity was preserved in the lands where they were dispersed. When the Iranians sought to destroy them at the instigation of jealous Haman, Esther had been placed by God to defeat Haman and turn the slaughter back onto their enemies. The Greeks and the Romans failed to obliterate the Jews. On into modern history the Jews have survived expulsion from countries, the Spanish Inquisition, the Russian pogroms, and Hitler's Holocaust. God's preservation of the Jews has been so constant that when Tsar Nicholas I asked the philosopher and statesman Marquis de Custine for proof of the existence of God, Custine replied that the continued existence of the Jewish people, despite centuries of persecution and adversity, was evidence of God's existence. What other people have maintained their original identity for 4000 years, let alone without continual efforts to exterminate them?

Paul had a great compassion for Israel. He was willing to bring a curse upon himself if there was some way that is kinsman, *according to the flesh*, could

be saved. As blessed as *all* Israel was in general, not everyone in Israel was blessed in particular.

Rom 9:1-6 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my **kinsmen according to the flesh:**

4Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises;

5Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

6Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. **For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:**

Just because they were kinsman in the flesh did not make them true Israel.

2. Blessing is not approval -

There is a warning for Israel. The fact of God's blessing is not to be confused with God's approval. That is why grace is grace. By God's grace Israel has remained. In spite of times of unfaithfulness, God has stood by Israel. The entire book of Hosea is a story of God's faithfulness while at the same time calling for their repentance.

Paul proceeded to recount their history...which was a pretty typical in the Bible. Stephen did it before he entered into martyrdom, Paul will do it in a number of ways in the book of Acts, Jesus would remind Israel of their history, David did it often in the Psalms, and you can see the same thing in the Prophets.

Rom 9:7-17 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham,

are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. [**Even with the very calling of Abraham, the blessing was to not all his progeny. The blessing was to be passed through Isaac, not Ishmael**]

8That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

10And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac;

11(For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. [**The promised blessing was then to be passed on through Jacob**]

14What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

17For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Just as Pharaoh was subjected to a judicial hardening of the heart, the same thing could, and *has*, happened to Israel. By the judgments that Pharaoh brought on himself, he hardened his heart. With

each plague he would appear to relent and give in to God, but instead he chose to rebel against his judgment. With each rebellion he became harder and harder spiritually.

Paul explained to Israel that the fact that God still worked with them was only by His grace, otherwise, He could just leave them to their hardness the way Pharaoh was hardened.

Also, it was not just a case that God chose Israel over the Edomites who were descended from Esau. The Scripture Paul quoted in Malachi about Jacob and Esau have to do with the nations that came from them. If you dig a little deeper, you find that there were times when God expressed "hatred" for Israel, too, which simply refers to God judging them for their sin at specific times.

Jer 12:6-8 [Just before God allowed the Babylonian captivity for the great sin of Manasseh] For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.
7I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.

8Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it.

Amos 5:21 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. **[This was because of their abuse of the feast days]**

Amos 6:8 The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

Just because God blessed Israel does not mean that everything they did was automatically approved. This was the warning to Israel. There is no *absolute* approval for merely being Jewish. They are subject to God's righteous judgment as anyone else is.

God's promise to provide a deliverer, Jesus Christ, Who would save us from our sin, was given to Abraham, carried on through Isaac and then Jacob. But, God is free to use anyone, even the wicked, like Pharaoh, for His purposes.

Rom 9:22 *What* if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

That is – what if God chose to be longsuffering and not just destroy the wicked if He wanted to use them to make His power known? He is God. He can do that if He wants. The objective was that God was going to make the Gospel available to all.

Rom 9:23-29 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24Even us, whom he hath called, **not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?**

25As he saith also in Osee, **I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.**

26And it shall come to pass, *that* **in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.**

27Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, **Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:**

28For he will finish the work, and

cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

3. We must not presume -

This is Paul's warning to Israel: just because you are a vessel for God's glory, so was Pharaoh. Don't presume that your position exempts you from needing to be saved by faith.

Rom 9:30-33 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

33As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The Gentiles obtained salvation the way the Jews *were also required* to obtain salvation: by faith. The problem is that the Jews stumbled over the works of the Law.

Israel should not presume that they have *carte blanche* just because they were born Jewish. Israel has a place in God's plan yet to fulfill, which will come out by ch. 11, but it is for true Israel. The warning to the Jews is that they should not be stiffnecked and harden their heart as Pharaoh who got judicially hardened.

There is a warning for us too. Paul will bring it out later in chapter 11, but don't be so high minded over Israel's

judgment. The message of chapter 9 is that you should not presume any privileged status. The same complacency that led to the hardening of the Jewish and Gentile heart can happen to you. Paul warned Israel to not be presumptuous just because they were God's people, but there are other ways people are presume that they have standing with God.

- Just because you a member of the privileged family of Abraham does not make you a child of God.

Rom 9:6 ...For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

- Just because you were created in the image of God does not make you a child of God.

John 1:11-13 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. **[The Jews, as a nation, did not receive Him]**

12But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: **[The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is nowhere found in the Bible. Only those who received Jesus are the Sons of God...]**

13Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. **[a blood relationship to someone who is a child of God gives you no privilege. You do not have power in the flesh to turn yourself into a saint. The decision of someone else gives you no privilege. Only God can make you His child when you come to Him for salvation by faith].**

2Thess 3:1-2 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:

2And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.

- You might be baptized into the membership of a church when you were a babe with a sponsor thinking he could answer as your proxy, but that does not make you a child of God.
- You might think that your racial heritage is impressive, but that does not give you any credit with God. Your presumption will only give you false hope and false pride that will harden you to the Gospel call.

What Israel goes through today is due to the reaction of those who have hardened their hearts against all the opportunity that God has given man to repent. The ungodly with their desire to build their kingdom of the world have made God's chosen people their target for millennia. Their true rebellion is against the Messiah who has brought true salvation. Our inspiration should be to serve that Messiah Who alone can bring peace. We need to let our disgust for their heinous acts serve to warn us to turn to Christ if we are not saved. If we are saved, it should challenge us to greater devotion and commitment. We are aghast at those who feel so bold to speak out in support for those murders. There are many more who are on their way to such hardening themselves. We need to get out on the frontlines of the Gospel battle. What is holding you back from joining in? What sin are you letting stand in your way? If you haven't been wondering at all the one world, no borders, digital currency as signs of the soon return of Christ, then the nations gathering around Israel to wipe it out should get you there. We have far less time than we think!

1. I will bless them that bless thee... - Gen 12:1-3, Rom 9:1-6
2. Blessing is not approval - Rom 9:7-17, Jer 12:6-8 , Amos 5:21, Amos 6:8, Rom 9:22-29

3. We must not presume - Rom 9:30-33