

Romans 11 God's Mercy on Both Jews and Gentiles

Text

¹I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ²God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³"Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." ⁴But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." ⁵In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

⁷What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; ⁸just as it is written,

"God gave them a spirit of stupor,
Eyes to see not and ears to hear not,
Down to this very day."

⁹And David says,

"Let their table become a snare and a trap,
And a stumbling block and a retribution to them.

¹⁰Let their eyes be darkened to see not,
And bend their backs forever."

¹¹I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. ¹²Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! ¹³But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. ¹⁵For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

¹⁷But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; ²¹for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. ²²Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

²⁵For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; ²⁶and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

"The Deliverer will come from Zion,
He will remove ungodliness from Jacob."

²⁷"This is My covenant with them,
When I take away their sins."

²⁸From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; ²⁹for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

³⁰For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their

disobedience, ³¹so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. ³²For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

³³Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? ³⁵Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? ³⁶For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Key Points in the text

- All people Jew and Gentile are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, as revealed in Scripture alone, all to the glory of God alone. Therefore we must preach the Word to all, Jew and Gentile.
- God's ways are beyond our understanding

Text Study

Verses 1-10, The Remnant Chosen by Grace

- Verses 1-2a, Another Question Asked and Answered
 - **'I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ²God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.**
 - 'His people whom He forenew', is important as it points back to *Romans 9:6, But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel* and signals that Paul is talking about a specific group of descendants, those whom He has a relationship with or Foreknew. As we said before, He knows us before we know Him.
- Verses 2b-6, The Answer Expanded in a Positive Way
 - **Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³"Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life."⁴But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."⁵In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.**
 - Paul uses 1 Kings 19 to show the idea of a remnant that He has chosen and kept.
 - Here Paul is explaining again that the true Israel are those who believed the promise, not all those who descend from Jacob (Israel). As Paul wrote in *Romans 9:8, It is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.*

- Verses 7-10, The Sober Truth of Hardening
 - **⁷What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; ⁸just as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day.”**
 - **⁹And David says, “Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them. ¹⁰Let their eyes be darkened to see not, And bend their backs forever.”**
 - Here Paul again says, True Israel is, those who were chosen, not those who were seeking to gain righteousness by following the Law.
 - He quotes Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 29:10 and then David’s words from Psalm 69:22-23
 - In all of these he is pointing back to what we saw in the first chapter of Romans, all men are born unable to see, hear, or understand the truth of scripture, unless the Lord opens their eyes, ears, and minds to them.
 - This is a reminder that fallen man is always trying to achieve righteousness by his own law not believing that God will fulfill His promise.

Verses 11-32, The Overflow of Grace

- Verses 11-15, Jewish Unbelief is not the End of the Story, More Jews Will Be Saved.
 - **¹¹I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. ¹²Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! ¹³But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. ¹⁵For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?**
 - God’s plan, as mapped out by this text:
 - Step 1: Israel is hardened, mercy is offered to Israel and rejected by most of them
 - Step 2: Gentiles are brought in, mercy overflows to the rest of the world.
 - Step 3: Israel is brought in, Israel is made jealous and some of them are softened to receive the offered grace.

- Verses 16-24, Christians Must Be Humbled by Remembering Their Roots.
 - **¹⁶If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.**

¹⁷But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; ²¹for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. ²²Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?
 - Paul gives a warning to gentiles that gentiles should not become like Israel thinking that salvation is guaranteed because they have been grafted in.
 - Whether Jew or Gentile it is by grace you are saved. As Paul writes in *verse 18*, *if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.*
 - Verses 25-32, Jewish Unbelief Is Not the End of the Story: More Jews Will Be Saved
 - **²⁵For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; ²⁶and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,**

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²⁸From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; ²⁹for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. ³²For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.
 - Returning to step 3 of the process, Israel is brought in. After being made jealous, God will soften the hearts of some and they will also be saved.
 - In context we see that “All Israel will be saved”, is talking about the elect of Israel. It is unlikely that God is saying there is a pathway to salvation outside of belief in Christ (the promised messiah), which is what would be required if all those descendant of Israel would be saved.

Verses 33-36, The Glory of the Overflowing Grace of God

³³Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

**³⁴For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who became His counselor? (Isaiah 40:13)**

**³⁵Or who has first given to Him
that it might be paid back to him again? (Job 41:11)**

³⁶For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

- Paul uses the Old Testament to humble those who may question God or even think they could give God a better plan. It is like we hear the echo of Paul's prior statements of who are you to question God?
- God does to His own good pleasure, for all things were created by the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit the church will give glory to Him for all things.

Application

- Praise and Glorify God for all things, whether we understand them or not.
- Speak the good news to your Jewish friends so through it they too can come to know Jesus as their savior.
- Do not become like the Jews of that time thinking that just because your family before you was saved you are as well.

Next Week's Lesson Prep/Preview

Text: Romans 12

Focus: Living a Life Shaped by Grace

Devotional: Philippians 2:1-18

Preparation: What does it mean to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God

What does it mean to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1)?

By: Harry Reeder - From the Ask Ligonier Podcast

I believe that you were, firstly, created to worship. Secondly, you were saved to worship. And thirdly, you are providentially sustained to worship. When God made humanity, He gave a creation mandate, but it was to be done for the glory of God. So, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, you do all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

When God saves you, He saves you for His glory. One of the great texts of Scripture is the doxological statement in Ephesians 1:3–14, and there are two astonishing things about it. First of all, it's one sentence—228 words—but one sentence. Secondly, it's Trinitarian: vv. 3–6 are about how the Father has predestined or authored your salvation, vv. 7–12 are about how the Son of God has accomplished your salvation, and vv. 13–14 are about how the Holy Spirit has applied that salvation. It is a Trinitarian doxology: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of those sections ends with the same phrase: "To the praise of His glorious grace." We have a Trinitarian gospel, and each person of the Trinity is to be praised because of God's saving work.

God created us for worship, He saves us for worship, and thirdly, He sustains us. We have life and breath because of Him. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. That's why our forebears in the Westminster Shorter Catechism began question one as follows: What is the end of man? What is the purpose of man? The purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Notice that those are two statements, but only one purpose. What is the purpose (singular) of man? Glorify and enjoy. That would be two purposes, wouldn't it? No, it's two sides of the same coin. The more you enjoy Him, the more you praise Him; the more you praise Him, the more you enjoy Him.

You are created, redeemed, and sustained to praise the Lord. How? Through two venues. Number one is the gathered assembly of God's people. At Briarwood, we have the large group on Sunday morning and Sunday night. We have the congregational community Sunday schools. We have small groups. Just like Jesus had the multitudes, the seventy, the Twelve, and the three, you create ways for people to assemble together to build relationships for worship, to give praise to God as you serve the Lord together.

Then, in your personal life, you are to live as an act of worship. In the book of Romans, after giving eleven chapters to explain the gospel, Paul ends with a doxology: "God, You are too much. Everything is from You to You and unto You. Who has been your counselor?" Next verse, at the beginning of Romans 12: "Therefore, I urge you—I appeal to you—to present your bodies as a living sacrifice."

In the Old Testament, the focus was on dead sacrifices. In the New Testament, it's a living sacrifice because our Sacrifice lives and He brings life to us. So, you are to be living sacrifices, sanctified by His power, His presence, and His redeeming grace, sanctified so that you are holy and without blame as you give the praise to the Lord.

Now, how do you do personal worship that feeds corporate worship? Here's how you do it: Don't be conformed to the world. Don't be pressed in the mold of the world. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may manifest that which is good and acceptable. In other words, life is worship. Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, in all things Christ is to have preeminence.

God has saved us so that, personally, we who fell short of the glory of God now have our greatest delight—to live lives to the glory of God in everything we do, think, feel, and say. We're on that trajectory of being perfected in sanctification. Then, we gather together with the redeemed to praise the Lord, and Lord's Day gathered worship becomes the template for everyday personal worship. That's the way I think the text in Romans 12 is to be embraced.