

Romans 11:1-10

When God seems to have failed?

- There will be times when it seems as though God has abandoned his people. How are we to respond? The lives of Job, Joseph, Moses, Paul, and even Jesus present such a dilemma.
- The theme of this chapter is - "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew."

B. The expectation of Israel's restoration. (Future) (11:1-36)

1. Israel's rejection is not total. (11:1-10)

a. The testimony of Paul (11:1-2a) Foreknown by God

¹ 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. ² God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.

1. Don't be surprised if you question God's love. Many Christians have expected to find assurance of salvation in a certain "spiritual feeling" or in special circumstances that never come.

- Paul suggests that it is unthinkable to conclude that God would abandon His people. "Just look at me" he says. "I am an important Apostle to the Gentiles and I am Jewish. God is choosing and using Jews like me."
- Paul saw himself as a Jewish Christian. He did not have to give up his Jewish heritage or culture to become a disciple of Jesus even though there would be some important differences in the way he now lived as a Jew.
- We may rightly question our relationship with God but we cannot doubt the integrity of God's plan and promises. As we read in chapter 10 "all who call on the name of the Lord in faith will be saved." This is a promise to us. It does not depend on our feelings or circumstances but on God's promise and our reception / response to God.

2. Draw your security from the fact that God's relationship with His people rests in His choice not theirs. Before we start over analyzing our response we are to remember that it is God's choice that is behind and prior to our choice.

- The "foreknowledge" of Israel by God suggests an on going relationship that began before Israel had chosen to obey or disobey God. This relationship has not ended.
- Foreknowledge has the sense of relationship, "knowing personally" more than information, "knowing what would happen."
- God's foreknowledge, relationship, or choice of His people assures them that they will not be rejected by Him.

Rom.8 ²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to {His} purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also

predestined {to become} conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰ and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

Jn.10 “¹⁴I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me, ¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.”

b. The testimony of the remnant. (11:2b-10)

1. In the past. (11:2-6) Chosen through grace

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 Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.*” ⁴ But what is the divine response to him? “*I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.*” ⁵ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to {God’s} gracious choice. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

3. Acknowledge the fruit of God's grace in spite of the failures of God's people.

- Elijah felt as though the Kingdom of God had fallen apart and had failed. We too can come to the conclusion that things are moving in the wrong direction in our lives, church, nation, world.
- Paul turns to the OT for confirmation, to the time of Elijah. If ever there was a period of flagrant apostasy, it was during the reign of Ahab, when his queen Jezebel promoted Baal worship in the court and throughout the land.
- We must be very careful when we try to assess God's work and plan in the world. His plan may include periods of discouragement and apparent failure. But there will always be a light, a remnant, a Diaspora, a narrow road that is less followed.
- When Paul looked at the outside of the church at Corinth he saw more of Corinth than heaven. But he also saw a remnant of the Spirit of Christ. He appealed to that spirit in his letter.

I Cor.3 “¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. ² I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able {to receive it.} Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³ for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”

4. Pursue faithfulness but watch out for pride. There are two types of blasphemy - One glorifies spiritual rebellion, another glorifies self-righteousness.

- We find security in being a part of the crowd (the majority) but there are times when the truth will not be popular or widely respected.

- The remnant of Paul's day were those who received Jesus as Messiah. **Jn. 1** “¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”
- When Paul says “it is no longer on the basis of works” he is suggesting that the Old Covenant (Law) was a works based system.
 - **Malachi 3:7** “‘Return to me, and I will return to you.’ says the Lord Almighty.”
 - **Ezek. 18:9** “Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord.”
 - **Rom. 10** “⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. ⁵ For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness, which is based on law shall live by that righteousness”. Gal.4:21-31).
 - **David credits his salvation from Saul to his righteousness** (II Sam.22:21 “The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness.”)

2. In the present. (11:7-10) Obtained the promise

⁷ What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; ⁸ just 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.*” ⁹ And David says, “*Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them. ¹⁰ Let their eyes be darkened to see not, And bend their backs forever.*”

5. Seek the King, not just the Kingdom.

- Those who seek the Kingdom but reject the King find nothing but superficial ethics and manmade religion. Those who receive the King also inherit the Kingdom.
- In the first quotation, he weaves together two passages (Deut.29:4 and Isa.29:10) so as to provide illustration from two periods. In Deuteronomy, it is the testimony of the eyes that is stressed; the people have seen the wonders of the Exodus time and the miracles of the nation's preservation in the wilderness, but from these experiences they did not derive a heart of loving trust in God. In Isaiah, the background is the faithful testimony of the prophets. Yet the people shut their ears to the voice of God through these spokesmen.
- The word “hardened” (porosis) of v.7, though describing the same moral fact as the to sklerynesthai of 9:18, is perhaps stronger. The metaphor implies not merely the stiffening of the existing soul and character, but the petrification of the heart. This paresis produced permanent bluntness and insensibility in the intelligence.

- **John 15:25** “But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’”
- “Forever” (*dia pantos*) in *Greek* usage may occasionally mean forever but which more commonly means “continually.” Jude 7 describes the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah as being punished with “eternal ” fire. Isa.34:10 speaks of the fire that will consume Edom and says, the fire and smoke “shall go up forever.”
- One of the great tragedies of our day is that we live in a culture, which longs (like ancient Israel) for a world of peace, fulfillment, prosperity, health, and respect for all humanity but never achieves its longings. This is because it has no appetite for the King.
- **Matt.7** “²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”