

# ROMANS

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## Lesson 11

## Romans Chapter 11

In our last lesson, we examined further the differences that Paul called out between the believing Gentiles and the Law-focused Jews, his own people. He wanted them to see that the Law doesn't save anyone, and that there is nothing that anyone can do to earn their salvation. Only through God's great grace and the shed blood of Christ can we hope to find salvation—and yet he also wanted the Gentiles to know that indeed the Jews are God's chosen people, and he offered several things as evidence.

In this lesson, Paul continues that dialogue, as he speaks to the restoring of God's Chosen People and the role of the Gentiles. Just as salvation is available for the Gentiles, so it is as well for the people of Israel, even though they rejected him.

Read Romans Chapter 11 from the Contemporary English Version (CEV) below, or from your favorite version.

### *Romans 11*

#### **God Has Not Rejected His People**

<sup>1</sup>Am I saying that God has turned his back on his people? Certainly not! I am one of the people of Israel, and I myself am a descendant of Abraham from the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God did not turn his back on his chosen people. Don't you remember reading in the Scriptures how Elijah complained to God about the people of Israel? <sup>3</sup>He said, "Lord, they killed your prophets and destroyed your altars. I am the only one left, and now they want to kill me."

<sup>4</sup>But the Lord told Elijah, "I still have seven thousand followers who have not worshiped Baal." <sup>5</sup>It is the same way now. God was kind to the people of Israel, and so a few of them are still his followers. <sup>6</sup>This happened because of God's undeserved kindness and not because of anything they have done. It could not have happened except for God's kindness. <sup>7</sup>This means that only a chosen few of the people of Israel found what all of them were searching for. And the rest of them were stubborn, <sup>8</sup>just as the Scriptures say,

"God made them so stupid  
that their eyes are blind,  
and their ears  
are still deaf."

<sup>9</sup>Then David said,

"Turn their meals  
into bait for a trap,  
so that they will stumble  
and be given  
what they deserve.

<sup>10</sup>Blindfold their eyes!

Don't let them see.  
Bend their backs  
beneath a burden  
that will never be lifted."

#### **Gentiles Will Be Saved**

<sup>11</sup>Do I mean that the people of Israel fell, never to get up again? Certainly not! Their failure made it possible for the Gentiles to be saved, and this will make the people of Israel jealous. <sup>12</sup>But if the rest of the world's people were helped so much by Israel's sin and loss, they will be helped even more by their full return.

<sup>13</sup>I am now speaking to you Gentiles, and as long as I am an apostle to you, I will take pride in my work. <sup>14</sup>I hope in this way to make some of my own people jealous enough to be saved. <sup>15</sup>When Israel rejected God, the rest of the people in the

world were able to turn to him. So when God makes friends with Israel, it will be like bringing the dead back to life. <sup>16</sup>If part of a batch of dough is made holy by being offered to God, then all of the dough is holy. If the roots of a tree are holy, the rest of the tree is holy too.

<sup>17</sup>You Gentiles are like branches of a wild olive tree that were made to be part of a cultivated olive tree. You have taken the place of some branches that were cut away from it. And because of this, you enjoy the blessings that come from being part of that cultivated tree. <sup>18</sup>But don't think you are better than the branches that were cut away. Just remember that you are not supporting the roots of that tree. Its roots are supporting you.

<sup>19</sup>Maybe you think those branches were cut away, so that you could be put in their place. <sup>20</sup>That's true enough. But they were cut away because they did not have faith, and you are where you are because you do have faith. So don't be proud, but be afraid. <sup>21</sup>If God cut away those natural branches, couldn't he do the same to you?

<sup>22</sup>Now you see both how kind and how hard God can be. He was hard on those who fell, but he was kind to you. And he will keep on being kind to you, if you keep on trusting in his kindness. Otherwise, you will be cut away too.

<sup>23</sup>If those other branches will start having faith, they will be made a part of that tree again. God has the power to put them back. <sup>24</sup>After all, it wasn't natural for branches to be cut from a wild olive tree and to be made part of a cultivated olive tree. So it is much more likely that God will join the natural branches back to the cultivated olive tree.

## **The People of Israel Will Be Brought Back**

<sup>25</sup>My friends, I don't want you Gentiles to be too proud of yourselves. So I will explain the mystery of what has happened to the people of Israel. Some of them have become stubborn, and they will stay like that until the complete number of you Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup>In this way all of Israel will be saved, as the Scriptures say,

"From Zion someone will come  
to rescue us.

Then Jacob's descendants  
will stop being evil.

<sup>27</sup>This is what the Lord  
has promised to do  
when he forgives their sins."

<sup>28</sup>The people of Israel are treated as God's enemies, so that the good news can come to you Gentiles. But they are still the chosen ones, and God loves them because of their famous ancestors. <sup>29</sup>God doesn't take back the gifts he has given or forget about the people he has chosen.

<sup>30</sup>At one time you Gentiles rejected God. But now Israel has rejected God, and you have been shown mercy. <sup>31</sup>And because of the mercy shown to you, they will also be shown mercy. <sup>32</sup>All people have disobeyed God, and that's why he treats them as prisoners. But he does this, so that he can have mercy on all of them.

<sup>33</sup>Who can measure the wealth and wisdom and knowledge of God? Who can understand his decisions or explain what he does?

<sup>34</sup>"Has anyone known  
the thoughts of the Lord  
or given him advice?

<sup>35</sup>Has anyone loaned  
something to the Lord  
that must be repaid?"

<sup>36</sup>Everything comes from the Lord. All things were made because of him and will return to him. Praise the Lord forever!  
Amen.

Consider the questions below regarding Paul's comments in Romans Chapter 11:

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1. In Romans 11:1-6, Paul poses the question, "Has God turned His back on His people?" What is Paul's answer to this question, and what did he offer as proof?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. In Romans 11:7-10, what is Paul saying about the people of Israel? How many will be saved, and how many will be lost thinking that they are saved by following the Law?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Did Paul mean that the people of Israel have no hope, i.e., that their fall from grace was permanent? What does he tell us in Romans 11:11-12?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What does Paul express hope for in Romans 11:13-16?

In Romans 11:17-21, Paul discusses the olive tree and its branches. In relation to John 4:22, what is Paul trying to tell

6. Paul then points out that, while as Gentile believers we've been grafted, a commensurate warning exists. What is it? (See Romans 11:22-24)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Paul tells us next that he will explain a "mystery." See Romans 11:25-28. What does the word mystery mean in this context, and what is the mystery that Paul is explaining to us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. In the closing verses of Romans Chapter 11, verses 29-36, Paul speaks about God's sovereign will, in regard to how he treats his chosen people. Read these verses, as well as Isaiah 55:7-9 and Isaiah 59:20-21. What do they tell us about God's great plan?

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Thus Paul concludes this three-chapter section about the Jews and his desire for them to be saved. We see that it is because of the people of Israel that many of us as Gentiles have received the gospel, and we are not to boast about it. We also learned that, at the appointed time, God will restore His relationship with His Chosen People; and the world once again will be better off for it.

Let's continue to thank Jesus for saving us and continue to pray for the "peace of Israel" and the return of Jesus as the Messiah, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!

May He richly bless you as you study with us this week.

In Christ,

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