

Notes on Romans 11

Intro: Paul has stressed two principle points about the Jews relationship to the gospel: 1) Because one is a physical descendant of Abraham does not mean that he is an heir of the covenant with Abraham of eternal life; God has chosen that people of faith be His people. 2) Israel has not arrived at the purpose for which they were chosen and received the Law, because they pursued it by works rather than by faith. Consequently they have stumbling over the Christ sent to them. Though the gospel has been available to them, they have rejected it.

Does this mean then that God has rejected His people? Does it mean that they are no longer able to enjoy these blessings? Paul turns his attention to these questions and declares:

The fact that most Jews have rejected the gospel does not mean that God has rejected his people. For there is even now a saved remnant among the Jews according to God's gracious choice (11:1-10).

v. 1-2—God's has not rejected his people. Paul himself was a Jew and the implication is that he was not rejected by God.

v. 3-6—Just as there was a remnant of God's people in the days of Elijah when most Israelites had turned away from the Lord, so there continues to be a remnant in keeping with God's gracious choice. Here Paul applies the principle sets forth in chapter 9 of God's right to choose and how that choice is based on grace or mercy and not on works. However, Bruce contends that v. 6 is a scribal interpolation.

v. 7-10—Furthermore, the remaining Jews have experienced the "hardening" that is the alternative to being chosen. Again Paul had set forth this principle as well in chapter 9. The processes of choice and hardening continued into Paul's day. Paul does not imply that the Jews bore no responsibility for their condition; but that God had used it in the accomplishment of His purpose.

The remainder have been hardened in order that God might grant salvation to the Gentiles also (11:11-24).

v. 11-12—Is Israel's fall permanent? Not at all. Instead it has occasioned the salvation of the Gentiles to make them jealous. If then the sin of Israel in rejecting the Lord brought about the reconciliation of the whole world, what would their fulfillment be but life from the dead?

v. 17-22—Paul warns the Gentiles against arrogance in view of their being accepted while some Jews have been rejected. Instead they should fear and recognize both the goodness and severity of God. Just as Israel was cut off because of unbelief, so they will be if they are not faithful.

v. 23-24—Paul suggest here the possibility of the grafting in again of the Jewish people into their native "olive tree". That is, if they do not continue in their unbelief. This contingency makes clear that Paul's

statement in v. 25 is not a certain prediction of the wholesale conversion of the Jewish people as taught in the premillennial scheme. ***However, the promise of the redemption of Israel still has its fulfillment in all who turn from their sin and accept the covenant of forgiveness through faith in Christ (11:25-32).***

v. 25-27—Paul’s point is that there is no reason for arrogance, since this hardening of Israel was only to make possible the bringing in of the “fullness” of the Gentiles. Still the possibility of being “grafted in again” remains and thus or in this manner all Israel shall be saved. Such is not a prediction of what will happen but a suggestion of the possibility of salvation as already indicated in v. 23. This “grafting in” is based upon acceptance in faith of the covenant of forgiveness offered by God through Christ. This is just as the OT prophets had spoken.

v. 28-32—Essentially God has worked to secure the salvation of all. Though the Jews are enemies of the gospel, they are also beloved for the sake of the Fathers. Thus, because of the Jews’ disobedience the Gentiles were shown mercy; now because of the mercy shown Gentiles, the Jews may also be shown mercy. God has shut up all in disobedience that all might be shown mercy through Christ.

God is surely worthy of praise and glory for his wisdom in making the salvation of all possible (11:33-36).

v. 33—Paul’s praise centers in the wonder of God’s way in planning and bringing about the salvation of all men. Using the rejection of the Jews to make possible an offering of sin and the inclusion of Gentiles; yet using the conversion of the Gentiles to bring about the salvation of the Jews. Who among men could have foreseen and brought into existence such a plan?