

ROMANS: CHARTER OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH
"Part XVI: God's Wake Up Call For The AMERICAN People"
(Romans 11:11-36)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) The day after tomorrow is our national elections. Besides a host of proposals that will be decided at the local levels throughout our land, we will be selecting our national leaders for the next four years.

Question: IF the elections do NOT turn out the way a given believer feels they SHOULD turn out, making one wonder if righteousness for America's future is an elusive dream, can we still trust our past HERITAGE to hold us over so we can enjoy what we might perceive to be God's inherent blessing for America?

(2) This question has merit in view of popular thinking. In the beloved hymn which we have in our hymnals, "America the Beautiful," Katharine Lee Bates wrote of our country these heartwarming words: "America! America! God shed His grace on thee, And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea." When we sing this moving anthem, it's easy to conclude that God has specially favored us in this country, that perhaps it is our **right** to **expect** God's national blessing for us!

If our national heritage is so Biblically SOUND, should we expect God to continue to bless us just because of our HERITAGE even if the elections don't turn out well?

If NOT, what would God have us DO REGARDLESS of HOW the elections go, and HOW we perceive them to affect us?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Since childhood, I was led to view America as God's nation because it was founded on Christian principles, and was thus blessed with world domination and security. Can I rest in this during next week's national elections? If NOT, what should I then DO?!"

I. Paul's letter to the Romans addressed a people who, like we Americans, enjoyed and trusted its government's world power:

- A. The letter's recipients were believers in the city of Rome, Rom. 1:7a.
- B. We know Paul wrote both to Jews and to Gentiles there according to Romans 2:17 and 11:13 respectively.
- C. These Gentile believers, like we Americans today, **enjoyed** their national government's **world domination** and its subsequent **security**:
 - 1. As Romans was written in A. D. 57 or 58, its recipients lived during the Augustan Empire, Bible Knowledge Com., N. T., p. 436; The Cambridge Ancient History: Volume X, Preface.
 - 2. Rome's military might was so great in this era that the other Mediterranean nations feared to confront Rome, making for a forced, stable peace. This status left Rome's people feeling its government had the right to dominate their own lives as well as dominate the rest of their world, Ibid.
 - 3. Rome's "peace" has so appealed to us **Americans**, esp. during Teddy Roosevelt's era, that we came to see our mission to be the "trustee of the civilization of the world," E. M. Burns, West. Civ., p. 244-245 in citing Burns, Am. Idea of Mission, p. 206-210.
- D. So, in keeping with their **government's** power, Rome's **believers** could have assumed their **spiritual** blessings were equally a national **divine right** that God **owed** them like any **American** might assume!

II. In this address, Paul WARNED his Roman, and hence American readers against resting in their spiritual heritage as a GROUP:

- A. Having taught Israel was prepared for discipline due to spiritual hardness, Paul said she had not been removed from hope, 11:11a.
- B. Rather, God had chosen to bless pockets of Gentiles who believed while not blessing national Israel to provoke the Hebrews to jealousy that they may come to Christ in a "back door" approach, Rom. 11:11b.
- C. Accordingly, Paul anticipated Israel's future repentance and restoration to be a great blessing for Israel, Romans 11:12.

- D. With this in mind, Paul addressed **Gentiles** in Rome as a **people group** (and Americans by application) with a **wake up** call as follows:
1. Paul said he magnified his office to reaching Gentiles in causing fellow Jews to be jealous of God's blessing so as to encourage them to trust in Christ, Romans 11:13-15.
 2. He illustrated this with the Jewish teaching on firstfruits: as the firstfruits sanctified the later harvest, so God's blessing the Jewish "firstfruits" of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob hinted at the final spiritual harvest of the nation Israel in the latter days, Rom. 11:16.
 3. Similarly, God had only temporarily broken off the nation Israel from her "native olive tree," the Abrahamic Covenant, to graft in the Gentile "wild branch" of peoples who believed in Christ so they could enjoy the blessings of Abraham's covenant, Rom. 11:17
 4. **However, as God's SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS of GENTILES in Rome (or America) to much greater degrees than Israel is intended to be a condition used by God to reach Israel who is NATIVE to Abraham's Covenant, NO GENTILE GROUP CAN REST IN ITS SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF GOD'S FAVOR, Romans 11:19-20a. God can REMOVE GENTILE groups from spiritual blessing like He removed ISRAEL if they do not as a GROUP believe Christ's gospel, Romans 11:20b-24.**
- III. **In fact, Paul predicted God would RESTORE Israel as His favored nation when her people came to Christ during the Tribulation Period, Romans 11:25-27 with Isaiah 59:20-21; 27:9.**
- IV. **Then, dwelling on the wisdom of God in alternating His special blessings among groups of different peoples to motivate men to trust in Christ (Romans 11:28-32), Paul praised God for this INGENIOUS plan of "back door" evangelism, Romans 11:33-36.**

Application: *Since God's program CENTERS on calling people to BELIEVE in CHRIST, (1) if we have not yet done so, we must believe on Christ to be saved, John 3:16; Romans 10:1. (2) If we ARE believers, we must NOT "rest" on God's spiritual blessings of our nation's PAST, but stay involved in God's work to disciple ALL lost men, Jew AND Gentile alike, to come to faith in Christ!*

Lesson: *What SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ANY people group enjoys is only a matter of God's UNMERITED favor to GODLY PEOPLE in that group, and that MAINLY to get unbelievers to trust in Christ. Hence, we CANNOT see America's spiritual blessings as a RIGHT God OWES us!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

On Monday Night's ABC "20/20 Downtown" television show, there was a moving story about a Tennessee legislator who died not long ago.

He was a farmer, and kept at his farming work even though he never missed a session in his state senate's assemblies. Senator Brown was so popular that he had been elected to five terms and was running again for a sixth term.

However, since he was an ethical man, never running a negative ad campaign against his opposition, his latest opponent had no way of winning against him by running a smear campaign; the district's constituents would have voted against the opponent for smearing a man many of them considered their personal friend. Accordingly, the Senator's opponent gunned down Senator Brown in his pickup truck on his own property. He couldn't beat Senator Brown fairly in an election, so he killed him!

The guilty politician was caught, convicted and sentenced to prison. But, at the funeral for Senator Brown, 5,000 of his countrymen attended to pay homage to their friend. No one knew until his death of the enormity of the impact this farmer-senator had until he was gone. His "goodness" as an **individual** was so pervasive, that many who attended his funeral have since given of their efforts to contribute to their communities to make them better, more law-abiding, and safe.