

ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH

IX. God's Present And Future Plans For Israel

(Romans 11:1-36)

I. Introduction

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is that God's righteousness is available to man by faith from start to finish (Romans 1:16-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 441).
- B. This belief is often not accepted in Christendom: Some claim that one must have faith plus works to be justified, and others say that though we are justified by faith, we cannot righteously live a godly life by faith.
- C. Having explained in Romans 10:1-21 how the nation Israel was ignorant of God's salvation by faith, the question arises as to whether God is finished dealing with Israel or whether He has future plans for the nation!
- D. Romans 11:1-36 answers this question, so we view the passage for our insight, application and edification:

II. God's Present And Future Plans For Israel, Romans 11:1-36.

- A. Having revealed how the nation Israel was ignorant of God's salvation by faith as she was seeking it by works, Paul opened Romans chapter 11 with the rhetorical question that expects a negative answer, "God did not reject His people, did He?" (Ibid., p. 482), to which Paul answered, "By no means!" (Ibid.), Romans 11:1a.
- B. Paul supported his reply by testifying that he himself was an Israelite of the seed of Abraham and of the tribe of Benjamin, an example of a Hebrew who had accepted Christ as Savior in the Church era! (Romans 11:1b)
- C. In fact, recalling the experience of Old Testament prophet Elijah who at one time believed he was the only Hebrew left who believed in Israel's God, Paul noted that God had not cast away His people whom He foreknew as future believers in Him, be it in Elijah's era or in Paul's day, Romans 11:2-5.
- D. God has decided by His grace to save all Hebrews in Israel's history who trust in Him by faith (Romans 11:6-7a) where the rest of the nation is blinded to the truth due to their unbelief, Romans 11:7b-10.
- E. However, even the partial blindness of Israel was never meant by God to end in Israel's spiritual annihilation, for God has decided to respond to Israel's hardness by blessing Gentile believers in order to make unsaved Hebrews jealous of God's blessing Gentile believers all to entice Hebrews to believe in Christ, Romans 11:11.
- F. Accordingly, if the temporary fall of Israel brings spiritual blessings to the world of Gentile believers, how much more will Israel's repentance and faith in Christ beget rich spiritual blessings, Romans 11:12.
- G. Paul built on this theme by picturing Israel as a natural branch that was broken off from the place of blessing in the Abrahamic Covenant that the wild branch of Gentile believers might be grafted in, Romans 11:13-17.
- H. The apostle then warned believing Gentiles not to boast because they were now blessed of the Lord, for if God had removed Israel from the place of blessing in order to graft in believing Gentiles, He was even more disposed to remove unbelieving Gentiles from blessing to re-graft a repentant Israel into the place of blessing, Romans 11:18-24. [This illustration of God's breaking off one branch and grafting in another does not teach that one can lose his salvation, for it does not refer to salvation, but to God's blessing either Israel as a nation or Gentiles as a whole by the Abrahamic Covenant! (Ryrie St. Bible KJV, 1978, fn. to Romans 11:17-24)]
- I. Indeed, Paul clarified that Israel will one day be saved and restored to the place of blessing, Romans 11:25-32:
 1. Paul informed Gentile believers that they should not be proud that are blessed while Israel is now outside that blessing, for Israel's blindness will end when the total number of Gentile believers are saved, v. 25.
 2. Thus, the nation Israel will eventually be saved [in the Great Tribulation trials to come], Rom. 11:26-28.
 3. Israel is now an enemy of Christ's Gospel, but since God's gifts and calling are without repentance and God foreknows Israel's repentant people to come, they are beloved who are yet to believe, Romans 11:29.
 4. Paul reminded Gentile readers that just as they were once disobedient but now had obtained mercy in Israel's disobedience, so Israel now is disobedient that by God's mercy she might also be saved, for God has relegated all – Hebrew and Gentile alike – to disobedience that He might have mercy on all, v. 30-32.
- J. In considering the grace and wisdom of God in His dealings with Hebrews and Gentiles alike, Paul burst into a doxology of praise to God for His matchless grace and wisdom to the glory of the Lord, Romans 11:33-36.

Lesson: *God has responded to Israel's rejection of Christ by directing that a partial blinding of the nation to the truth occur while some Hebrews will believe that He might bless believing Gentiles and incite unsaved Hebrews to believe in Christ. In the end, God will save Israel when she repents in the Great Tribulation, all to His great glory.*

Application: *(1) May we praise God for His great wisdom and grace to Hebrews and Gentiles in Christ. (2) May we hold to the premillennial view of prophecy that holds that God will yet fulfill His Abrahamic Covenant to Israel.*