

Romans Chapter 11: (1- 36)

Have Israel lost their salvation?

Today we see so few Jews are actually Christians. So if they were promised salvation what will happen to them, have they lost their salvation, therefore can God be trusted. If we think God promises work that we need to look at his people and his people have lost their salvation. Paul says that not all Israel is true Israel, salvation is based on God's sovereign choice and God has preserved the remnant left behind of Israel. Israel chose salvation by works. Israel rejected righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ (stumbling stone). Israel repeatedly rejected God's calls for repentance. Romans 10, God says my hands I have stretched out to you everyday and you have still denied me. Now we come down to the final answer. This is based on God's sovereignty. This is based on man's responsibility. So there are two sides of this coin. Always God sovereignty, man's responsibility and today we will see Israel's fall is only temporary to allow the grafting of gentiles. We know that in God's sovereignty only a minority or remnant is chosen but Israel deserve falling away because they choose salvation by works, rejected Jesus and God's call for repentance and now the fall is only temporary. Romans chapter 11 has four parts.

- ❖ God allows partial hardening
- ❖ Disallow the incorporation of gentiles
- ❖ Warning against spiritual pride
- ❖ God will redeem the rest of Israel in the future.

God allows partial hardening, so allows the gentiles to come in and then they will be saved in the end. Is their eternal security for the believer, of there was apparently none for Israel? What happens to Israel might happen to us.

Roman 11

1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel?

3 "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life."

4 But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.

So this is by grace. It is no longer by works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. So the question is, has God rejected his people. No but what is the proof that God has not rejected his people. Paul says what is the proof that the Israel was not rejected?

So in the olden days where Elijah fought with the challenged prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel he won that spiritual battle. They priests were killed and the whole of Israel at that

time had apostatized, but God kept 7000 people who have not bowed their knee to Baal. So even in the worst situation of national apostasy when the whole country turns away from God, God has always kept a remnant. That is the theology of the remnants, so therefore God has not rejected because there is a remnant and the remnant is chosen by grace.

God preservation of remnant is not only evidence of his present faithfulness but it is also a pledge of hope for the future, because he reserves a remnant, because remnant shows that he has not forgotten. The promise is still there, so because there is a remnant that means there is hope for the future. The hardening is foretold in the scripture.

6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

7 What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

8 as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."

So therefore there is an inability to hear and understand. This is taken from Isaiah and Deuteronomy because they did not believe in God, God allowed them to be hardened. We have talked about hardening in chapter 9 and 10.

9 And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them;

10 let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever."

So these are all verses that tell that they have been hardened, so therefore they all turned away.

11 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.

So what is the reason why Israel has fallen? God allowed them to fall. He is describing this in human terms. That means God has a plan. He has allowed them to be partially hardened, so they vacate their premises and the gospel goes out to the gentiles and the gentiles come in and when the gentiles come in it makes them jealous. They also want to come back in and when they come back in it all ends a nice story. That is what Paul is painting here.

12 Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

This means that if they sin temporarily and allowed so many gentiles to come in, how much more will their full inclusion mean. It means one day, a lot of them will be coming in.

Verses 11 to 12 have sin of Israel, salvation for gentiles, Israel's full inclusion

Verse 15, rejection of Israel, reconciliation of world, Israel full acceptance.

Verse 17-23, natural branches broken, wild branches grafted in, natural branches grafted back in.

Verse 25-26, hardening of Israel, fullness of the gentile coming in, all Israel saved.
verse 30-31; disobedience of Israel, mercy for the gentiles, mercy to Israel.

This entire passage it has this pattern; what happen to Israel, gentiles come in, Israel come back in again.

So it is five times Paul is saying the same thing, but coming in from different angles.

13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry

14 in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.

15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

The reason God preserves Israel in the end,

16 If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

If we go to a mall we see people giving samples to try, which means there is more to come but for more must pay. So this is the same thing, you have this idea then you go back to this passage. If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump and if the root is holy so are the branches. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are the first fruits, if the patriarchs are holy then the whole lump will eventually be holy as well. That is why God preserves them.

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,

This means that the picture is here, natural branches are the Jews, they fall off, grafted in are the gentiles, nourished by the roots which are the patriarchs. The roots of the patriarchs is source of spiritual nourishment, all the examples the Bible writes down about Abraham, Jacob, all their adventures are there and from these patriarchs you can actually have nourishment for the entire tree all the way up to the gentiles.

18 do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.

19 Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.

All of us gentiles are grafted in and some of us might be very disparaging towards Jew and all the heritage of the Jew come to me because I am grafted in, but Paul is saying, you cannot be arrogant because the root that we stand on are the root; Abraham and Jacob and David and all the patriarchs. So we cannot forget our roots, our roots are actually foreign to us. Israel fall because did not belief in prophets and they were broken. The entire Old Testament tells you of the prophets who are covenant enforcers, Israel did not believe on them.

Pride is the other aspect of unbelief. They were cast off because they didn't believe, you will be proud and if you are proud you will fall into unbelief. The Jews have all this and yet they fell off. We can make the same mistake if we think we are better than them, we are better than each other. We stop repenting, we become blind to own faults, we have to defend our own perceived stature. So pride is the one that really kills Christians.

God is an awesome God, so therefore he is asking you to fear which means be reverent, respect for his majesty and glory with healthy concern to live out in the grace of God in our lives. Now why do we fear?

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

23 And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.

24 For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

So the metaphor is they were broken off and thrown away because they have unbelief, you were put in because of belief and if you are proud and have unbelief you will be thrown off too. So it is the same thing. God's righteousness is like the two-edge of a coin. You have salvation for the gentiles through grace, judgment for the Jews because they are pride on their own effort. So if we are also proud they will be saved through grace and you will die because of your own pride. So God always applies the same standard, very important. What are the philosophical considerations? There are couple of things in the passage. There are warning passages and there are assurance passages and there is a tension

Romans 11:22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

Romans 8:17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Assurance passages

Romans 8:38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here it looks like we are not saved, so are we saved or not saved that is the problem. Another passage here

Roman 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

If you live according to flesh you will die, but by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.

Romans 8:33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

So it depends on how we look at these passages. So therefore our theology will depend on which bit of the bible we underline. We use to underline those that talk about God helping you, no suffering then you will have a very positive view of God. If you underline all those scary ones then you will also have a very scary attitude towards God.

The first approach is Calvin's idea and a lot of people misunderstand Calvin, he says once saved always saved. So he takes this passage,

38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Calvinist thinks that whatever they will do, at the end they will arrive in heaven. So in the end people become over-confident, they are tempted to sin, they take spiritual growth for granted because they only got ticket to heaven and then they focus on the world not the word, your apathy to spiritual matters, no need to keep on repenting, salvation by hyper grace. Just talk about grace and nothing else. So this will affect the way you live.

The second approach is the Arminian or Methodist approach where warnings are interpreted as vulnerabilities. So we look at all the passages, provided you continue in his kindness otherwise you too will be cut off. So therefore if warnings interpreted as vulnerabilities accident is probable because it all depends on us. We will put everything on us to go to heaven. If we focus like that we have a problem too because you will not be sure. This is salvation by works, so therefore you try as hard as possible, because it all depends on you.

Approach number three is a more balanced view, which takes both of these passages together and it maintains the tension, it is supposed to be there. That means the tension is worked in. it means God gives you both of things together and they have always like a string in a bowl, always have the tension, you cannot release one without the other, the tension is important. These are guide posts to our destination. Accident is possible if we don't follow the warning, it does not mean accident is probable. Assurance passages tell us that we will get there and the warning passages in the bible are given to help us drive in this life carefully and get to the destination. So warning passages basically tells us about our responsibility in order to complete our journey. Assurance passages guarantees you will get there, is God sovereignty. So God sovereignty means, he will make control so that you will be responsible if you will get there, so there is a tension. Thomas Schreiner wrote a book recently about this particular thing. He says,

“Jesus fully intends for us to understand that God who elected his own for salvation secures them from apostasy and preserve them through afflictions by use of warnings that caution watchfulness, wariness and vigilant steadfastness.”

So the warnings cannot be interpreted as eternal insecurities. They are interpreted as guidepost to help you get to where Jesus wants you.

God will give us trial and temptations and during those trial and temptations assurance passages, warning passages, circumstances. He will arrange all of these things so that you will make the right decision to endure to the end to be fully saved. He knows you are here but he uses these things to get you here.

Acts 27, Paul was supposed to go to Rome to testify. Paul told the ship captain that the ship will wreck, we will be trapped, they did not listen to him. They went on and Paul was very upset them.

Act 27:21 Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss.

22 Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

23 For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship,

24 and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.'

25 So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.

26 But we must run aground on some island."

Here Paul is saying to don't jump from the ship, stay with the ship till the bitter end and the ship will run aground. This is the future God knows, the ship will run aground, Paul will be in Rome. This is your ship floundering. The street view is, don't leave the ship. If you don't leave the ship you will be saved. But if purposely leave the ship you will die and this won't get fulfilled. God knows that through this intervention you will not leave the ship that is the difference, because he uses this to get you there. It is like you are in a theme park and you are taking a ride. The ride has instructions to stay inside with the seatbelt on and you will be save. There are two things here, theme parks responsibility and passengers' responsibility. If you don't obey the instructions you are not save. The Calvinist idea is that I can do whatever I want, I can stand on one toe up there and then I will be saved. This is not true. God works through natural circumstances. So salvation process is that you will be saved through holy living. If you decide to go sinful living you will go to hell that is a fact. So we are saved first from sin. The law is an expression of our faith. This law is basically our journey.

Salvation is a process, salvation is like a roller coaster. Let's take the example of Abraham. God choose Abraham, he made a covenant with him that salvation will pass to the whole generation of Israel and towards the end. How does God know, because God can see the future and God knows that Abraham will obey him right up till the end? What if Abraham jump out from the ship here, the promise will not be fulfilled but God knows, so God guides Abraham even though he mistakes here

and there but push him back into the right path so that finally when he is on mount Moriah, he sacrifices his son. So God builds up his faith, so he stays on the path but you always get saved on the path of holiness, you do not get saved and make a mockery of God living a profligate life. So the warning passages are to tell us that if you stay here you will be saved, nothing to worry about. So if you are living a life with a law obedient to God because you love him then no matter how difficult things get, we do not have to be scared, we have to stay inside the word of God and we will get to the end, it is a guarantee, but if you get out and say “curse you God” then you will probably never have been a Christian in the first place.

What if I left the faith for a little while?

Some people call this backsliding.

Roman 11:22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

23 And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.

The criteria here is persevering faith. At the end of time, towards the end of life we got to be persevering. So the danger is if you continue on your backsliding against God then you will not be inclined to come back anyway. The longer you stay away, the longer you are going to stay away. So the tension here, if you don't repent you will likewise perish, once saved always saved, there is a tension. We always live in this tension because we don't know.

So warning passages

2:12work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

These provide us with warning. So when you look at the roller coaster, you are sitting there and warning is stay in your seat, continue to be faithful and obey God, you get out you will die. If you stay in you will live. So the warning passages don't tell us that we will die, they just warn us to stay inside.

Romans 11:25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

So there will be a time when enough gentiles have come in then something will happen to Israel. Luke 21 says,

Luke 21:23 Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.

24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

So that means there will be a time when the full number of gentiles will be saved then all Israel will be saved.

26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";

27 "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

28 As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

It means that once God gives you a calling and God gives you a gift he will not bring it back, it means his ultimate promise when the whole of Israel come back next time, his promises have been fulfilled. That means God's word never fails.

30 For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,

31 so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.

32 For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

God always keeps his words, as Abraham said shall not the judge of all the earth do what is right. Our proper response to this tension is worship. He ends of this beautiful doxology.

33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"

35 "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

There is not a single theology in this world from any religion that is exactly like this. It is too marvelous to tell and when you understand man's responsibility and God glory and his eternal power and sovereignty, we are all able to rest because if we just in this roller coaster no matter how life gets difficult, we will be saved.

At the same time the warning passages tell us that we cannot cheat God.

1 John 2:19 tells us those who leave us were never with us in the first place. If you are a true Christian you will persevere till the end. If you are a false Christian you will not persevere to the end, you will halfway fall out. If we don't persevere till the end there is no salvation.