

Romans Chapter Eleven

Read Romans 11:1-7 – A Faithful Minority

v.1 "I SAY THEN, DID GOD CAST OFF HIS PEOPLE? GOD FORBID. FOR I ALSO AM AN ISRAELITE, OF THE SEED OF ABRAHAM, OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN." (ASV)

Paul having shown in the previous chapter that the Jews had rejected Christ and that God had rejected the Israelites who rejected Christ; wants to make sure that they don't misunderstand. God has not abandoned them completely. There was to be a remnant saved from Babylon and there would be a remnant saved by Jesus Christ because they would accept and turn to him. Paul is one of that remnant. As he has done in other places Paul reassures them that he, a Hebrew, is also a follower of Christ. Two of those places are:

II Corinthians 11:22 "ARE THEY HEBREWS? SO AM I. ARE THEY ISRAELITES? SO AM I. ARE THEY THE SEED OF ABRAHAM? SO AM I." (ASV)

And in his writing to the Philippian brethren regarding his authority to speak as a Jew Paul says he was "CIRCUMCISED THE EIGHTH DAY, OF THE STOCK OF ISRAEL, OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN, A HEBREW OF HEBREWS; AS TOUCHING THE LAW, A PHARISEE;" **Philippians 3:5** (ASV)

Paul was of the purest blood of the Israelites and he is also a child of God, not only fully accepted but an apostle. Those Hebrews who were rejected by God were rejected by Him because they had rejected Christ. Their prior status as God's chosen people because of ethnic ancestry was no longer valid. Now to be part of God's chosen people, His royal priesthood (**I Peter 2:9**) their citizenship was spiritual, of the heart and mind, not of physical birth.

v.2 "GOD DID NOT CAST OFF HIS PEOPLE WHICH HE FOREKNEW. OR KNOW YE NOT WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAITH OF ELIJAH? HOW HE PLEADETH WITH GOD AGAINST ISRAEL:" (ASV)

God has not wholly cast off his people whom he had formerly chosen, but the fact that he has rejected them as a nation is indisputable. Paul here uses the example of Elijah taking the problem of Israel's unfaithfulness to God and requesting that God remove him from them.

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v.3 "LORD, THEY HAVE KILLED THY PROPHETS, THEY HAVE DIGGED DOWN THINE ALTARS; AND I AM LEFT ALONE, AND THEY SEEK MY LIFE." (ASV)

This would be enough to discourage anybody. Israel had killed the prophets of God, destroyed the altars of God where they were supposed to make sacrifices. They had replaced these altars with altars to their idols, and now they were seeking to kill even Elijah. Elijah had hidden himself in a cave in the mountains where God finds him and reassures him. (**I Kings 19:10-14**)

v.4 "BUT WHAT SAITH THE ANSWER OF GOD UNTO HIM? I HAVE LEFT FOR MYSELF SEVEN THOUSAND MEN, WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." (ASV)

What was God's response to Elijah? Paul here quotes from **I Kings 19:18** where God tells Elijah that he has reserved or protected seven thousand men among the Israelite nation who had not gone into the idol worship of Baal. Baal worship had troubled Israel for generations because they disobeyed God. When God gave them Canaan they were to completely destroy the Canaanite people and their idol worship. But they married Canaanite women, and learned to worship their idols.

Baal was the principal male deity of the Canaanites and Phoenicians. He was adopted by other nations and, as early as the time of Moses, was worshiped by the Moabites (**Numbers 22:41**). In the time of the judges altars were built to him by the Israelites (**Judges 2:13, 6:28-32**). Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab and a Phoenician by birth, championed the worship of Baal in Israel. Through Athaliah, her daughter who married King Jehoram of Judah, this false worship took root in that kingdom as well. (**II Chronicles 17:3, 21:6**). On Mount Carmel Elijah proposed a great test which completely discredited Baal and vindicated Jehovah (**I Kings 16:31-32, 18:17-40**). Jehu and Hezekiah stopped Baal worship in Judah and tore down his altars but it was revived (**II Kings 21:3**). The prophets denounced it (**Jeremiah 19:4, 5**). The worship of Baal was attended by lascivious ceremonies and human sacrifices (**I Kings 14:24, Jeremiah 19:5**). But there was a remnant in Israel that had not fallen, just as there is a remnant today that will continue to be God's people.

v.5 "EVEN SO THEN AT THIS PRESENT TIME ALSO THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE." (ASV)

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Romans 9:27 "AND ISAIAH CRIETH CONCERNING ISRAEL, IF THE NUMBER OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT SHALL BE SAVED:" (ASV)

Paul assures them here that it isn't as bad as it first may seem. Even at the time of the general apostasy of the Israelite nation there was a remnant of Israel left that had accepted the authority of God. Now, as the Israel repeats their rejection of God by rejection of his son Jesus Christ there still is a remnant that will obey him.

God, through his grace, offered mercy and pardon through Jesus Christ, and whosoever believed in him was chosen and approved by God. Jesus personified as God's grace and in fact is called "THE GRACE OF GOD." (**Titus 2:11**)

v.6 "BUT IF IT IS BY GRACE, IT IS NO MORE OF WORKS: OTHERWISE GRACE IS NO MORE GRACE."

Peter tells us that Paul's writing can be a little hard to understand (**II Peter 3:16**) and this is one of those passages. We are saved by the grace of God, not of the kind of works that the Mosaic Law required. That doesn't mean that we need not obey God because that is how we acquire the benefits of God's grace.

Romans 4:4-5 "NOW TO HIM THAT WORKETH, THE REWARD IS NOT RECKONED AS OF GRACE, BUT AS OF DEBT. BUT TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, BUT BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY, HIS FAITH IS RECKONED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (ASV)

Galatians 5:4 "YE ARE SEVERED FROM CHRIST, YE WOULD BE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW; YE ARE FALLEN AWAY FROM GRACE." (ASV)

If they were saved it was by the provisions of grace in Christ, it was not by the works of the Jewish law, or by any work that allowed boasting. The Holy Spirit says:

"FOR BY GRACE HAVE YE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD; NOT OF WORKS, THAT NO MAN SHOULD GLORY. FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD AFORE PREPARED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM." (**Ephesians 2:8-10**) (ASV)

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God, moved by love, has presented in Christ gracious terms of mercy that man can acquire through faith. Salvation does not come of works that would allow boasting, but was given by God to those who through faith accepted God's commandments and walked in God's ways.

He follows that thought with another that says that if salvation under Christ is by works, then grace and works have lost their meaning.

v7. "WHAT THEN? THAT WHICH ISRAEL SEEKETH FOR, THAT HE OBTAINED NOT; BUT THE ELECTION OBTAINED IT, AND THE REST WERE HARDENED:" (ASV)

"WHAT THEN?" So now Paul asks; what conclusion should we draw from what has just been stated?

Israel by the works of the law did not attain to the righteousness which he sought, and was not accepted of God.

Those who by faith accepted the grace of God offered through Jesus Christ, and so were chosen of God, have attained that righteousness.

The rest were hardened by refusing to accept Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:8-10 – Israel's Blindness

v8. "ACCORDING AS IT IS WRITTEN, GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SEE, AND EARS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HEAR, UNTO THIS VERY DAY."(ASV)

Paul tells that this blindness had been foretold by the prophets. Isaiah cried about the senselessness of the destruction of Jerusalem and the refusal by the people of God to accept and obey the commandments they had been given. He states the following:

"FOR JEHOVAH HATH Poured OUT UPON YOU THE SPIRIT OF DEEP SLEEP, AND HATH CLOSED YOUR EYES, THE PROPHETS; AND YOUR HEADS, THE SEERS, HATH HE COVERED." **Isaiah 29:10** (ASV)

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We see some of the reasoning in **Jeremiah 5:19-21**

"AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, WHEN YE SHALL SAY, WHEREFORE HATH JEHOVAH OUR GOD DONE ALL THESE THINGS UNTO US? THEN SHALT THOU SAY UNTO THEM, LIKE AS YE HAVE FORSAKEN ME, AND SERVED FOREIGN GODS IN YOUR LAND, SO SHALL YE SERVE STRANGERS IN A LAND THAT IS NOT YOURS. DECLARE YE THIS IN THE HOUSE OF JACOB, AND PUBLISH IT IN JUDAH, SAYING, HEAR NOW THIS, O FOOLISH PEOPLE, AND WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING; THAT HAVE EYES, AND SEE NOT; THAT HAVE EARS, AND HEAR NOT:" (ASV)

Their hearts were not near God; so they did not fear him nor hear His teachings. Whatever fear of God; whatever concept they had of God came from the teachings of men about God, not the teaching of God. Sound familiar? We have far too many preachers and teachers today to want to teach us about God, about God's word, about God's precepts, but do not want to teach us the Words of God.

When people look to the wisdom and precepts of men rather than the wisdom and precepts of God for instruction, God says their heart is far removed from him; and when they persist on this course, he gives them over to blindness that they should bring ruin on themselves.

"SAYING, GO THOU UNTO THIS PEOPLE, AND SAY, BY HEARING YE SHALL HEAR, AND SHALL IN NO WISE UNDERSTAND; AND SEEING YE SHALL SEE, AND SHALL IN NO WISE PERCEIVE: FOR THIS PEOPLE'S HEART IS WAXED GROSS, AND THEIR EARS ARE DULL OF HEARING, AND THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED; LEST, HAPLY THEY SHOULD PERCEIVE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND SHOULD TURN AGAIN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM. BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE UNTO YOU, THAT THIS SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES: THEY WILL ALSO HEAR. AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THESE WORDS, THE JEWS DEPARTED, HAVING MUCH DISPUTING AMONG THEMSELVES." **Acts 28:26-29** (ASV)

v9. "AND DAVID SAITH, LET THEIR TABLE BE MADE A SNARE, AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLINGBLOCK, AND A RECOMPENSE UNTO THEM:" (ASV)

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This is a quote from David in **Psalm 69:22**. Let that which was intended for their good become a snare to trap them, a stumbling block over which they may fall, and that God reward them justly for their iniquity.

This shows God's dealings with men in a nutshell. He proposes to bless man if they will trust him; but if they are determined to rebel, then the very things provided to bless them will become a curse and will lead them to even greater sin and bring even deeper ruin.

v10. "LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED, THAT THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND BOW THOU DOWN THEIR BACK ALWAYS." (ASV)

We continue with David in **Psalm 69:23**.

Let the spiritual eyes of those of Israel who reject the Messiah become darkened; let their perception become blunt and their understanding dull that they may remain ignorant. They willfully refused to see in Jesus the Messiah which they had long been promised and had sought after for generations. When men insist and continue in refusing to do right it is God's policy to leave them to the results of their own foolishness. That was true in Paul's day and is still true today.

Romans 11:11-15 – Israel's Blindness = Gentile's Blessing

v11. "I SAY THEN, DID THEY STUMBLE THAT THEY MIGHT FALL? GOD FORBID: BUT BY THEIR FALL SALVATION IS COME UNTO THE GENTILES, TO PROVOKE THEM TO JEALOUSY."

Paul asks, have they stumbled that they should finally fall away and never return to God again? Of course not, God always gave them first opportunity to turn and accept Christ:

Acts 13:46 "THEN PAUL AND BARNABAS WAXED BOLD AND SAID, IT WAS NECESSARY THAT THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD FIRST HAVE BEEN SPOKEN TO YOU: BUT SEEING YE PUT IT FROM YOU, AND JUDGE YOURSELVES UNWORTHY OF EVERLASTING LIFE, LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES."

It is difficult to see how the falling away from God of the Jews would create the situation that would allow the bringing in of the Gentiles; yet that seems to be the meaning. History tells us that every time that the Israelites came in contact with the Gentile people around them; they had this strong tendency to be led into idolatry, with its lascivious worship and immersion in the lusts of the flesh.

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But in violation of God's commands, the Jews did corrupt themselves with the ways of the Gentiles until they were so far gone that God sent them into captivity among the Gentile people. At the same time that the Jews were becoming so much like the Gentile peoples around them that they would refuse to accept the One that had been promised them for so many centuries; the Gentile people; partly through their association with the Jews came to know God and then did accept the Savior that the Jews rejected.

Paul also tells us that part of God's purpose was that through the coming of the Gentiles, their receiving the gifts of the Spirit, and the general spiritual prosperity which the acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as Lord brings to nations, would provoke the Jews to jealousy and make them anxious to secure again the favor of God.

v12. "NOW IF THEIR FALL, IS THE RICHES OF THE WORLD, AND THEIR LOSS THE RICHES OF THE GENTILES; HOW MUCH MORE THEIR FULNESS?" (ASV)

The dispersion of the Jews among the Gentiles greatly helped the spread of Christianity when Christ came:

"NOW THERE WERE DWELLING AT JERUSALEM JEWS, DEVOUT MEN, FROM EVERY NATION UNDER HEAVEN." **Acts 2:5** (ASV)

After the day of Pentecost, those Jews who heard Peter preach and were converted, upon the return to their home lands, helped spread the good news of the Messiah among the nations.

Now, if the fall of the Jews was the means of opening the riches of God's blessings to the Gentiles, by bringing them into the favor of God. If God did this by diminishing the importance of the Jews; thereby helping the Gentiles to enjoy the favor of God, how much greater blessings for the world would result from the Jews returning to God? When they returned, they would enjoy the favor of God in Christ Jesus.

v13. "BUT I SPEAK TO YOU THAT ARE GENTILES. INASMUCH THEN AS I AM AN APOSTLE OF GENTILES, I GLORIFY MY MINISTRY;" (ASV)

The reason that Paul is bringing all this to the Gentile Christians in Rome is to generate their gratitude for God's blessings and to warn them against abusing God's grace and mercy that had been so graciously poured out upon them.

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He presents his credentials to them as one appointed by God to bring the gospel of Christ to the Gentile people (**Acts 9:15**). He did this by showing that the conversion of the Gentiles had been prophesied and what wonderful influence that their conversion would have on the world.

v14. "IF BY ANY MEANS I MAY PROVOKE TO JEALOUSY THEM THAT ARE MY FLESH, AND MAY SAVE SOME OF THEM." (ASV)

Paul's purpose and only purpose was to provide all who would listen the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of God's salvation. But if by converting the Gentiles Paul could generate enough jealousy in the hearts of the Jews to listen to the Gospel of Christ also; then so much the better.

Let us consider here the power of influence – peer pressure we call it today. We usually do not know just how the influence of someone is going to affect another, good or bad. This is why we find the following in scripture:

"FOR HOW KNOWEST THOU, O WIFE, WHETHER THOU SHALT SAVE THY HUSBAND? OR HOW KNOWEST THOU, O HUSBAND, WHETHER THOU SHALT SAVE THY WIFE?" **I Corinthians 7:16** (ASV)

"TO THE WEAK, I BECAME WEAK, THAT I MIGHT GAIN THE WEAK: I AM BECOME ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN, THAT I MAY BY ALL MEANS SAVE SOME." **I Corinthians 9:22** (ASV)

v15. "FOR IF THE CASTING AWAY OF THEM IS THE RECONCILING OF THE WORLD, WHAT SHALL THE RECEIVING OF THEM BE, BUT LIFE FROM THE DEAD?" (ASV)

The discussion here says the casting of the Israelites off as the exclusive people of God opened way for other nations to accept Christ. At the same time through Christ the Jews are offered the same status as chosen people that they enjoyed under the Law of Moses. Many were converted but many also refused, as they continue to do today. But that if the Israelites returned to God's favor through their repentance, confession and baptism; God would rescue them from spiritual death. Because of their rejection they were dead spiritually, condemned; but their return to God would give them life again.

Romans 11:16-24 – The Olive Tree Parable

v16. "AND IF THE FIRSTFRUIT IS HOLY, SO IS THE LUMP: AND IF THE ROOT IS HOLY, SO ARE THE BRANCHES." (ASV)

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This verse begins the use of an analogy, a comparison, to help the readers understand the deeper meaning of the previous verses. The firstfruits refer to the requirement to offer the first fruits to God before the harvest could be eaten. (**Leviticus 23:10-14**) The harvest was spiritually unclean until an offering had been made. In like manner the first fruits of the gospel on the day of Pentecost (that is the Jews who believed and obeyed) were as holy as the first fruits of the grain offering being used as a comparison. As the leaven in the parable leavened the whole lump then because the first fruits of Christ were holy then those that came after them was holy as well.

"AND IF THE ROOT IS HOLY" Again this is an analogy referring to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in whom God chose the Israelite nation and for whose sake they were accepted and loved. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were holy, acceptable to God and they were the "root" of the Israelite nation.

"SO ARE THE BRANCHES" As the root was acceptable to God, so will the branches be holy if they bear the proper fruit. "HOLY" here means acceptable in the service of God. If God has accepted the first converts (first fruits), the Jews on Pentecost, then that provides assurance that he will accept those who come later as well.

v17. "BUT IF SOME OF THE BRANCHES WERE BROKEN OFF, AND THOU, BEING A WILD OLIVE, WAST GRAFTED IN AMONG THEM, AND DIDST BECOME PARTAKER WITH THEM OF THE ROOT OF THE FATNESS OF THE OLIVE TREE;" (ASV)

The analogy being given here is: how and why was the one broken off and the other grafted in so that life is received? The branches of the tame olive represented by the Jewish people, received life from the root just as on any tree. Christ's analogy of the vine and branches carries the same message. While receiving life from the root, they lost faith: so they bore evil fruit; or no fruit at all. Consequently they were removed, turn and read **John 15:1-8**. When the wild olive branch, changed by faith so as to bear good fruit, is grafted into the root, it receives its life from that same root; it partakes of that same root and fatness of the olive tree. The parallel, of course, is the Jews who failed to bear fruit meet or appropriate for those who were God's children they were broken off and the Gentile who by their faith grafted in and did become fruit bearers acceptable to God.

Jeremiah 11:16 "JEHOVAH CALLED THY NAME, A GREEN OLIVE-TREE, FAIR WITH GOODLY FRUIT: WITH THE NOISE OF A GREAT TUMULT HE HATH KINDLED FIRE UPON IT, AND THE BRANCHES OF IT ARE BROKEN." (ASV)

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Though spoken about the captivity Jeremiah's record provides a similar description to that used here.

v18. "GLORY NOT OVER THE BRANCHES: BUT IF THOU GLORIEST, IT IS NOT THOU THAT BEAREST THE ROOT, BUT THE ROOT THEE." (ASV)

This is a reminder to those among the Gentiles who are described in Paul's analogy to have been grafted into the tame olive tree not to boast against the natural branches, the Jews, which had been broken off. The Gentile Christian's whole duty, and ours today, was to learn and do what God tells them to do. It is to do that in a spirit of complete trust in Him. It is to do it in the way he directs, being careful to not go beyond God's word leaving the results with God.

I Corinthians 10:11-12 says "NOW THESE THINGS HAPPENED UNTO THEM BY WAY OF EXAMPLE; AND THEY WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE AGES ARE COME. WHEREFORE LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL." (ASV)

If they did boast, they were to remember that the Jews had long been in the favor of God, and, as the root, were the source of the Gentiles relationship with God in that it was through the Jews that Christ was brought into the world.

v19. "THOU WILT SAY THEN, BRANCHES WERE BROKEN OFF, THAT I MIGHT BE GRAFTED IN." (ASV)

This was spoken as a warning against a feeling of boastful pride they were liable to have against the Jews. It is possible that they would say to the Jews; "You have shown yourselves unworthy, so were cast off, while we have shown ourselves worthy and have been grafted into the favor of God." This attitude was not acceptable to God and would make them unacceptable to God as well.

v20. "WELL; BY THEIR UNBELIEF THEY WERE BROKEN OFF, AND THOU STANDEST BY THY FAITH. BE NOT HIGHMINDED, BUT FEAR:" (ASV)

Isaiah records for us "FOR ALL THESE THINGS HATH MY HAND MADE, AND SO ALL THESE THINGS CAME TO BE, SAITH JEHOVAH: BUT TO THIS MAN WILL I LOOK, EVEN TO HIM THAT IS POOR AND OF A CONTRITE SPIRIT, AND THAT TREMBLETH AT MY WORD." **Isaiah 66:2** (ASV)

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Isaiah is talking about a believer, someone whose faith is firm and grounded in the truth of God's word. He is to be as a poor man, of a contrite spirit, humble and trembling in the presence of God, grateful for God's grace but fearful of God's wrath.

The sole cause of the breaking off of the Jews was their disbelief in Christ.

The only ground of acceptance of the Gentiles was their faith in Christ. Nothing stronger could be said of anyone's faith in God other than if that he stands by it; he stands justified.

Be not lifted up with a feeling of superiority, but fear God lest you fall. Don't be like a child who will disobey when a parents back is turned but be faithful to obey all the time.

"SO THEN, MY BELOVED, EVEN AS YE HAVE ALWAYS OBEYED, NOT AS IN MY PRESENCE ONLY, BUT NOW MUCH MORE IN MY ABSENCE, WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING;" **Philippians 2:12** (ASV)

And yet this fear is in no way inconsistent with rejoicing in the Lord nor with the highest comfort in his service but remember.

v21. "FOR IF GOD SPARED NOT THE NATURAL BRANCHES, NEITHER WILL HE SPARE THEE." (ASV)

If God did not spare the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob whom he loved, whom he carried out of Egyptian slavery, nurtured through rebellion and sin for centuries; take care as to your own faithfulness lest he not spare you either. God will no more tolerate unbelief and self-sufficiency in the Gentile than he did in the Jew.

v22. "BEHOLD THEN THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD: TOWARD THEM THAT FELL, SEVERITY; BUT TOWARD THEE, GOD'S GOODNESS, IF THOU CONTINUE IN HIS GOODNESS: OTHERWISE THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF." (ASV)

Remember the admonition of Jesus:

"EVERY BRANCH IN ME THAT BEARETH NOT FRUIT, HE TAKETH IT AWAY: AND EVERY BRANCH THAT BEARETH FRUIT, HE CLEANSETH IT, THAT IT MAY BEAR MORE FRUIT." **John 15:2** (ASV)

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Paul reminds the Corinthian church that the gospel was that:

"BY WHICH ALSO YE ARE SAVED, IF YE HOLD FAST THE WORD WHICH I PREACHED UNTO YOU, EXCEPT YE BELIEVED IN VAIN." **I Corinthians 15:2** (ASV)

God is noted for two qualities that appear to be in direct contradiction with each other. One is goodness, mercy, and pity; the other is severity, wrath, and vengeance.

The Jews, upon whom he showered his goodness for many generations turned from him and refused to trust and obey him, and as a result felt his wrath and severity. He brought them to destruction as a people.

The Gentiles, who though their fathers were without God and without hope in the world, but who had believed in Christ; God has granted his goodness and mercy.

The Hebrew writer gives us two very important ifs:

"BUT CHRIST AS A SON, OVER HIS HOUSE; WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE, IF WE HOLD FAST OUR BOLDNESS AND THE GLORYING OF OUR HOPE FIRM UNTO THE END." **Hebrews 3:6** (ASV)

"FOR WE ARE BECOME PARTAKERS OF CHRIST, IF WE HOLD FAST THE BEGINNING OF OUR CONFIDENCE FIRM UNTO THE END:" **Hebrews 3:14** (ASV)

These two little ifs are very important. If we do not continue in the way of faithfulness in which his mercy flows, we will be cut off and God's wrath would fall upon us as well.

v23. "AND THEY ALSO, IF THEY CONTINUE NOT IN THEIR UNBELIEF, SHALL BE GRAFTED IN: FOR GOD IS ABLE TO GRAFT THEM IN AGAIN." (ASV)

While he warns the Gentiles that if they did not continue in his goodness they would be cut off, he holds out the assurance as well to the Jews that if they will turn from their unbelief which caused them to be broken off as branches, God will graft them in again and restore them to their former state as his children.

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v24. "FOR IF THOU WAST CUT OUT OF THAT WHICH IS BY NATURE A WILD OLIVE TREE, AND WAST GRAFTED CONTRARY TO NATURE INTO A GOOD OLIVE TREE; HOW MUCH MORE SHALL THESE, WHICH ARE THE NATURAL BRANCHES, BE GRAFTED INTO THEIR OWN OLIVE TREE?" (ASV)

If the Jews should change their attitude toward God and toward Christ; God can, consistent with the principles of his will, change his attitude toward them and can bring them back into his favor again, graft them back into the good olive tree. He does not will that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth that is in Christ and be saved.

Romans 11:25-32 – Israel Restored

v25. "FOR I WOULD NOT, BRETHREN, HAVE YOU IGNORANT OF THIS MYSTERY, LEST YE BE WISE IN YOUR OWN CONCEITS, THAT A HARDENING IN PART HATH BEFALLEN ISRAEL, UNTIL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES BE COME IN;" (ASV)

What is a mystery? A mystery is not something that could not be understood, but rather something that has not been revealed or explained. It is no longer a mystery after it has been revealed. It was a mystery, or secret, that the hardness of heart or blindness to the fact that Jesus was the promised Messiah had come upon the very people who had been prepared all these centuries to receive Him.

He warns them to not feel conceit since God had prepared a special way for the Gentile people to become His along with the children of Israel.

This hardening was to last "UNTIL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES BE COME IN." The gospel was to be preached unto all the Gentiles so that they would have the same opportunity to accept God and His Son Jesus that the Jews had enjoyed. Of course, all of this was fulfilled during the 1st century.

v26. "AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED: EVEN AS IT IS WRITTEN, THERE SHALL COME OUT OF ZION THE DELIVERER; HE SHALL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB:" (ASV)

Will all Israel be saved? That depends upon how you use the term. Will all of physical Israel be saved? No. God destroyed them by the uncounted thousands because of their rebellion against him. Will all of spiritual Israel be saved? Absolutely!

Speaking of the salvation that was to come, David said:

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"OH THAT THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL WERE COME OUT OF ZION! WHEN JEHOVAH BRINGETH BACK THE CAPTIVITY OF HIS PEOPLE, THEN SHALL JACOB REJOICE, AND ISRAEL SHALL BE GLAD." **Psalm 14:7** (ASV)

Salvation does not apply to all Israel, of course, because all Israel did not believe and accept Christ. Paul has already recorded for us and we studied earlier:

Romans 9:6-7 "BUT IT IS NOT AS THOUGH THE WORD OF GOD HATH COME TO NOUGHT. FOR THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAEL, THAT ARE OF ISRAEL: NEITHER, BECAUSE THEY ARE ABRAHAM'S SEED, ARE THEY ALL CHILDREN: BUT, IN ISAAC SHALL THY SEED BE CALLED." (ASV)

Romans 2:28-29 "FOR HE IS NOT A JEW WHO IS ONE OUTWARDLY; NEITHER IS THAT CIRCUMCISION WHICH IS OUTWARD IN THE FLESH: BUT HE IS A JEW WHO IS ONE INWARDLY; AND CIRCUMCISION IS THAT OF THE HEART, IN THE SPIRIT NOT IN THE LETTER; WHOSE PRAISE IS NOT OF MEN, BUT OF GOD." (ASV)

Also:

Galatians 3:7 "KNOW THEREFORE THAT THEY THAT ARE OF FAITH, THE SAME ARE SONS OF ABRAHAM." (ASV)

We can look at the prophecy of Isaiah as well and understand that this salvation was conditional upon their turning from transgression:

"AND A REDEEMER WILL COME TO ZION, AND UNTO THEM THAT TURN FROM TRANSGRESSION IN JACOB, SAITH JEHOVAH." **Isaiah 59:20** (ASV)

v27. "AND THIS IS MY COVENANT UNTO THEM, WHEN I SHALL TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." (ASV)

God's covenant with the Israelite nation (and with us as well) is that all who will obey Christ will be delivered from sin, and this covenant is complete when he takes away our sins.

We can read the prophecy of God purging Jacob of sin in **Isaiah 27:9** and read of the new covenant in prophecy in **Jeremiah 31:31** and then the fulfillment that is declared in **Hebrews 8:8** and **10:16**.

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v28. "AS TOUCHING THE GOSPEL, THEY ARE ENEMIES FOR YOUR SAKE: BUT AS TOUCHING THE ELECTION, THEY ARE BELOVED FOR THE FATHERS' SAKE." (ASV)

The "they" here and in the verses that follow seems to refer to the Israelites. They are enemies to the gospel that the Gentiles might be brought in.

At the same time that we are shown that the Israelite nation was an enemy of Christ and his cause we are reassured that through election - that is they could elect to accept Christ - and through this choice and their obedience they could stand as God's children under God's new covenant with man just as they had under the Mosaic covenant.

v29. "FOR THE GIFTS AND THE CALLING OF GOD ARE NOT REPENTED OF." (ASV)

God had called Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or Israel and their families to follow him and given them the honor of producing the Messiah. They were to bring into the world the Saviour that was prophesied as the seed of woman in **Genesis 3:15**. God never repented of that decision in spite of Israel's rebellion and sins against him; but rather used them to accomplish his purpose. God in the same manner stands ready today regardless of how bad we think our sins might be; to accept and cleanse us if we turn to him in obedience.

v30. "FOR AS YE IN TIME PAST WERE DISOBEDIENT TO GOD, BUT NOW HAVE OBTAINED MERCY BY THEIR DISOBEDIENCE." (ASV)

The Gentiles were an idolatrous and unbelieving people but when the gospel was preached to them, they became obedient to it. Their opportunity to receive Christ and the gospel was provided in the consequence of the Jews rejecting that same gospel.

v31. "EVEN SO HAVE THESE ALSO NOW BEEN DISOBEDIENT, THAT BY THE MERCY SHOWN TO YOU THEY ALSO MAY NOW OBTAIN MERCY." (ASV)

The Jews (Israelites) had rejected God and through their rejection opportunity came for the Gentiles to hear and accept Christ. Now the situation is reversed; not because the Gentiles had rejected Christ but rather because they had accepted him. Now the gospel was being preached throughout the entire known world and any Jew or Israelite; even though they and/or their fathers had rejected Jesus; could accept Him now and be restored to God's favor as his child.

Romans Chapter Eleven

v32. "FOR GOD HATH SHUT UP ALL UNTO DISOBEDIENCE, THAT HE MIGHT HAVE MERCY UPON ALL." (ASV)

All are dependent upon God's mercy, God's grace. Paul says (**Galatians 3:22**) that those who practice disobedience are under sin. They will never experience the benefit of God's mercy; they will remain in bondage to sin unless they become believers in Christ. Consequently whether the benefits of God's mercy, God's grace, are ever realized or not depends upon our faith in Jesus Christ and the actions that our faith will generate.

Romans 11:33-36 – Wisdom of Divine Purpose

v33. "O THE DEPTH OF THE RICHES BOTH OF THE WISDOM AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD! HOW UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS, AND HIS WAYS PAST TRACING OUT!" (ASV)

Here we have from Paul an outburst of wonder and delight. He marvels at the revelation of the wisdom and goodness of God that surpasses anything that mortal man can imagine. Wisdom and goodness so great that man's imagination cannot comprehend it without God having revealed it to us.

Job 11:7 "CANST THOU BY SEARCHING FIND OUT GOD? CANST THOU FIND OUT THE ALMIGHTY UNTO PERFECTION?" (ASV)

Is it any wonder that the very men who study God's creation (scientists), unless they are students of the Word of God as well, appear to be the most confused about the origin of the wonders they contemplate?

"THY RIGHTEOUSNESS IS LIKE THE MOUNTAINS OF GOD; THY JUDGMENTS ARE A GREAT DEEP: O JEHOVAH, THOU PRESERVEST MAN AND BEAST." **Psalms 36:6** (ASV)

In a Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day; **Psalms 92:5** we find a declaration made that is much the same as some of our songs of praise carry today.

"HOW GREAT ARE THY WORKS, O JEHOVAH! THY THOUGHTS ARE VERY DEEP." (ASV)

v34. "FOR WHO HATH KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD? OR WHO HATH BEEN HIS COUNSELLOR?" (ASV)

Romans Chapter Eleven

In his condemnation of Job; Eliphaz the Temanite said "ART THOU THE FIRST MAN THAT WAS BORN? OR WAST THOU BROUGHT FORTH BEFORE THE HILLS? HAST THOU HEARD THE SECRET COUNSEL OF GOD? AND DOST THOU LIMIT WISDOM TO THYSELF?" **Job 15:7-8** (ASV)

Who of his own wisdom has known the mind of God?

Who of us who have read these scriptures down through the ages has God taken as his advisor in these matters?

Of course, the answer is no one because "BEHOLD, GOD DOETH LOFTILY IN HIS POWER: WHO IS A TEACHER LIKE UNTO HIM?" **Job 36:22**

God's designs and purposes are beyond our understanding unless He reveals them unto us; and he has. God has enlightened the entire world about his design for the salvation of man as Paul record tells us:

I Corinthians 2:16 "FOR WHO HATH KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? BUT WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST." (ASV)

See Jesus and Philip. We have the mind of Christ through this revelation of His word, the New Testament that has been preserved down through the centuries.

v35. "OR WHO HATH FIRST GIVEN TO HIM, AND IT SHALL BE RECOMPENSED UNTO HIM AGAIN?" (ASV)

All that we received of God, whether we be Jew or Gentile, is of and as a result of God's grace, not to repay the favors we might have paid him or to compensate us for anything we might have done.

v36. "FOR OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND UNTO HIM, ARE ALL THINGS. TO HIM BE THE GLORY FOR EVER. AMEN." (ASV)

"YET TO US THERE IS ONE GOD, THE FATHER, OF WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE UNTO HIM; AND ONE LORD, JESUS CHRIST, THROUGH WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE THROUGH HIM." **I Corinthians 8:6** (ASV)

The Hebrew writer tells us that "THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT" He will:

"MAKE YOU PERFECT IN EVERY GOOD THING TO DO HIS WILL, WORKING IN US THAT WHICH IS WELL-PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST; TO WHOM BE THE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN."

Hebrews 13:21 (ASV)

Romans Chapter Eleven

"THE LORD WILL DELIVER ME FROM EVERY EVIL WORK, AND WILL SAVE ME UNTO HIS HEAVENLY KINGDOM: TO WHOM BE THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN." **II Timothy 4:18** (ASV)

All the things that we have, all the things that we are, all the things that we should desire are bestowed by God that we may bring him service and honor.

"THIS IS THE END OF THE MATTER; ALL HATH BEEN HEARD: FEAR GOD, AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS; FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN. FOR GOD WILL BRING EVERY WORK INTO JUDGMENT, WITH EVERY HIDDEN THING, WHETHER IT BE GOOD, OR WHETHER IT BE EVIL." **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** (ASV)