

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

— A Study of Romans —

Lesson Twenty-one

Romans 11:1-24

*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.*

Romans 11:23

Day 1

Pray:

Father, my hope is in you! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. (Ps. 130:7) Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior and my hope is in you all day long. (Ps.25:5)

Read: Romans 11:1-24. Read it again in another translation such as NLT.

Observe:

- Write key words and themes, repeated words, or phrases. Circle on your Scripture pages any transition words (therefore, but, because, if/then etc.)
- Are there any commands to be obeyed, or truths to be trusted?
- What questions do you have about the text?

Day 2- Romans 11:1-6

1. In typical Paul fashion he anticipates the question we will likely be asking. What is the question and answer in verse 1?
2. Paul is going to give four pieces of evidence showing that God has not rejected his people. What is his first example in verse 1?

Digging Deeper

Read the passage below. How would you describe Paul's heart toward Jesus before he was saved?

[Paul speaking] ⁹ "I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus the Nazarene. ¹⁰ Indeed, I did just that in Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death. ¹¹ Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities. Acts 26:9-11 (NLT)

- a. How did God overcome Paul's hard heart according to the verses below?

¹² "One day I was on such a mission to Damascus, armed with the authority and commission of the leading priests. ¹³ About noon... as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. ¹⁴ We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will.' ¹⁵ "Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. ¹⁶ Now get to

your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness. Tell people that you have seen me...Acts 26:12-16 (NLT)

b. How did Paul respond according to the verses below?

¹⁹ *"And so, ... I obeyed that vision from heaven...Acts 26:19 (NLT)*

3. What is Paul's next argument in verse 2a?

4. His third example is Elijah. What was Elijah's perspective according to verse 3?

a. What was it that Elijah didn't see or know according to verse 4?

5. So, if it seems like God has rejected Israel to our perspective, what is in fact true according to verse 5?

Scholar's Note: a remaining, usually small part, quantity, number or the like.



Paul was fanatically against Jesus, but a hard heart is no match for God. He regularly takes hearts of stone and turns them into hearts of flesh. We have no idea of what God will do in the lives of our loved ones who, like Israel, have rejected Jesus, but we do know that he is a God who performs wonders (Ex. 15:11), that nothing is

impossible for him (Luke 1:37) and he is abounding in mercy and grace (Ps. 86:15). All our hope is in him.

- ◆ Put your hope in God with this prayer adapted from Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!

O Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,

and in his word I hope;

My soul waits for the Lord...

O my heart, hope in the LORD!

For with the LORD there is steadfast love,

and with him is plentiful redemption.

For Discussion

Verse 6 reminds us again that we are saved by grace and not by works. Hopefully this is solidified in our thinking about how we are saved. But how do we make sure we continue living our Christian life by grace and not by works, while at the same time doing the good works God has called us to?

Day 3- Romans 11:7-10

1. In verse 7 Paul says that Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. Look back to 9:31. What were they seeking?
 - a. Who did obtain it according to Paul in verse 7?
 - b. What does Paul call the elect of Israel in verse 5?
 - c. What happened to the rest of Israel according to verse 7?

Scholar's Note: As with the hardening of Pharoah, this hardening “is a judicial process by which God gives people up to their own stubbornness.”¹

2. What does the hardening look like according to verse 8?

Scholar's Note: Verse nine's imagery is hard to interpret, but the main point is that it is a quote from Psalm 69 which is a Messianic Psalm. Jesus applied verse 4 to himself saying '*they hated me without reason.*' Because of the messianic nature of the psalm Paul applies it here to Israel's rejection of Christ. ¹



John Stott explains that a *spirit of stupor* (v.8) is “a complete loss of spiritual sensitivity which was self-induced before it became a divine judgment.”² The Jewish people were so sure of their own righteousness that they hardened their hearts to the truth of the gospel, and so finally God let them have their way.

- ◆ How do we keep our hearts soft so that we don't lose spiritual sensitivity?

Day 4- Romans 11:11-16

1. So far, from this chapter we have learned that the present situation for the Jewish people is that there is a remnant of believing Jews that God has preserved, and the others at this moment are hardened and can't see the truth. Paul now asks in verse 11, if this situation is permanent and hopeless. What is the simple answer to this question in verse 11?
 - a. What plan is God working through Israel's unbelief?

Digging Deeper

Paul's practice was to bring the gospel to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. Four times in the book of Acts we see this scenario play out. Read the passage below. What did Jewish unbelief result in?

⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, "It was necessary that we first preach the word of God to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we will offer it to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For the Lord gave us this command when he said,

*'I have made you a light to the Gentiles,
to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.'*

⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and thanked the Lord for his message; and all who were chosen for eternal life became believers. Acts 13:46-48 (NLT)

2. What good news about the Jewish people does Paul hint at in verse 12b?

3. What is Paul's purpose in magnifying his ministry to the Gentiles according to verse 14?



Making Israel jealous. We saw it in chapter 10, and we see it again here in chapter 11. We don't usually think of jealousy as something good, but it is appropriate at times (God even calls himself a jealous God in Deut.4:24). Jealousy can be a real motivator for us. When someone wants something or someone that is ours or that we have rejected, suddenly we see that thing in a new light. The Gentiles embracing the God of the Jews was designed to do just that.

- ◆ What riches do we have as followers of Jesus that should make people jealous? Does your life exhibit these benefits to the people around you?

4. Paul tells us that Israel's rejection of Jesus meant salvation, riches and reconciliation for the Gentile nations. What does he say their inclusion and acceptance will bring one day according to verse 12 and 15?

Picture and Ponder

If their falling out initiated this worldwide coming together, their recovery is going to set off something even better: mass homecoming! If the first thing the Jews did, even though it was wrong for them, turned out for your good, just think what's going to happen when they get it right! Romans 11:15 (MSG)

Scholar's Note: "Verse 16 is a hard verse to interpret. It probably means that the faithful remnant should be seen as a "firstfruits" of a far greater harvest later. The gospel faith of Jews such as Paul is a sign that there will, one day, be many more like him."³

Day 5- Romans 11:17-24

1. In verse 17, Paul creates a metaphor using a picture of an olive tree. Match the word with its metaphor.

Branches

Patriarchs- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

Wild olive shoot

Unbelieving Jews

Root

Believing Gentiles

2. What warning does Paul give Gentile believers in verse 18a?
 - a. What reminder does he give them in 18b?

3. What is the reason the branches were broken off according to verse 20?
 - a. Why is there no reason for the Gentile believers to become proud according to verse 20?

For Discussion

What is the difference between arrogance and assurance regarding our salvation?

4. Paul contrasts pride with fear, so we can see that he is not telling us to be afraid in the usual sense. Fear in this case is to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience. Why should we have this demeanor according to verse 21 and 22?

Picture and Ponder

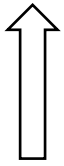
“Not that those who truly belong to him will ever be rejected, but that continuance or perseverance is the hallmark of God’s authentic children.”⁴ There is no talk of “losing salvation” here, only of the revelation of counterfeits.⁵

Digging Deeper

What do the following verses have to say about what authenticates faith?

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. 1 John 2:19

For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. Hebrews 3:14



Father help us not to live in fear of losing our salvation because nothing can snatch us out of your hand (Jn 10:28). Rather, help us to focus on persevering in faith and abiding moment by moment and day by day in Jesus.

5. What promise is given in verse 23?



The severity of God will offend us if we don't have a proper view of God and ourselves. To disbelieve God, the Holy King of the universe, is a grave offense that demands a severe response. But the kindness of God to those who believe is far beyond what our meager minds can even conceive. What a gracious task is ours to just continue in his kindness.

◆ Reflect on the following verses:

²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life...

²⁴ Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. Jude 20-21,24-25

One Thing:

What is one thing from this week's study that God has impressed on your heart, or convicted you about; is there something new that you learned or is there a verse you want to ponder and meditate on?

Praise God for this and thank him for the work he is doing in your life. Ask him to help you remember this and live it out for his glory.

¹ Stott, John The Message of Romans. P. 293 InterVarsity Press, 1994

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series Book 2) (p. 96). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Stott, John The Message of Romans. P. 301 InterVarsity Press, 1994

⁵ Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series Book 2) (p. 100). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

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