

Lesson 10 7 July 2013

God's Provision for Jew and Gentile

Lesson Scope: [Romans 11](#)

Lesson Focus

In this chapter, Paul raises and answers some remaining questions about God's relationship with the Israelites. Their rejection of Christ as the Messiah forfeited their position as God's chosen people. "A remnant," however, would choose to receive Him.

Paul's teaching in chapter II is directed especially to Gentile Christians. Their new privileges in the Gospel were no different from those of believing Jews, and their disobedience would result in the same consequences that the unbelieving Jews experienced. Paul also wanted them to understand that their position as partakers of the same promises as "the election" received would not annul the complete fulfillment of the promises God had made to "the fathers."

God is God, and He is accountable to no one (Romans 11:34-35). Gentile salvation was new as God turned away from Israel, but that was not a choice He made when Israel failed. It was part of His plan from eternity past. As the sovereign God, in His infinite foreknowledge, He continues to manifest His eternal purposes to man.

Be sure to spend time familiarizing yourself with the entire lesson scope as well as with its context. This chapter is Paul's expression of what was in his heart in Romans 9:1-5.

Because of Abraham's faith, God chose his posterity to be His elect among the nations. When Israel stumbled from the path that God intended them to follow (by rejecting their Messiah), God chose the Gentiles as His instrument to proclaim Himself to the world. God's intent was that Israel would understand the position from which they fell.

Though provoking Israel to jealousy because of the Gentiles' salvation is focused on in this chapter, the Gentiles' salvation was not an afterthought. It was the purpose of God from eternity past. It is hard to separate God's primary and secondary motives, because He is so abundantly able to accomplish all of His purposes.

God accomplishes His purposes in spite of men's failures. In His deal-

ings with both Jew and Gentile, He pursues the underlying passions of His heart—the salvation of souls and the glory of His Name.

Lesson Aim: To see truths related to Israel's failure.

Theme Verse: [Romans 11:22](#). Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Lesson Text

"A Remnant"

[Romans 11:1-2](#) ¹ I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. ² God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

[Romans 11:5](#) ⁵ Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

[Romans 11:7](#) ⁷ What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

"This Mystery"

[Romans 11:11-12](#) ¹¹ I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. ¹² Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

[Romans 11:15-28](#) ¹⁵ For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead? ¹⁶ For if the firstfruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches. ¹⁷ And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; ¹⁸ Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. ¹⁹ Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. ²⁰ Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: ²¹ For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee. ²²

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree? ²⁵ For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: ²⁷ For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. ²⁸ As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes.

"The Wisdom"

Romans 11:32-36 ³² For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. ³³ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ³⁴ For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? ³⁵ Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? ³⁶ For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

Questions for Study

"A Remnant"

1. Explain Paul's use of the terms "his people," "a remnant," and "the election."
2. What did the election obtain that Israel was searching for but failed to obtain?
3. What causes spiritual blindness?

"This Mystery"

4. What purposes of God were accomplished by turning to the Gentiles?
5. Explain the analogy of the olive trees.
6. What potential danger must we as Gentiles beware of?

7. What determines whether man is a recipient of God's goodness or of His severity?

"The Wisdom"

8. What should be man's response to God's eternal movings?

Analyzing the Passage

Election (Romans 11:5,7,28) means "divine selection." Under the Old Covenant, God's elect was the nation of Israel. In this dispensation, the election is toward a remnant of believing Jews. Gentiles who have been "grafted in" also enjoy similar privileges.

Blinded (Romans 11:7) and blindness (Romans 11:25) refer to a hardening or callousness. (See Strong's Concordance #4456, #4457.) This is the same word translated "hardened" in the Gospels to speak of unbelieving Jews.

Fall as it is first used in Romans 11:11 refers to a falling down or to a loss of status or position. The second time it is used, as well as in Romans 11:12, it means "a lapse of deviation from truth; a transgression." The transgression of Israel opened the way for the Gentiles to be "grafted in," but all believing Israelites also become part of God's elect.

Fulness (Romans 11:12) speaks of the whole of a thing. A study of the thought from which this word was translated indicates the idea of full restoration. Paul calls this restoration "life from the dead" (Romans 11:15). (See Ezekiel 37:1-14.) The "fullness of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:25) refers to God's purposes pertaining to the Gentiles being accomplished.

Those who lived in Palestine were familiar with the two types of trees mentioned in the text. The "good olive tree" (Romans 11:24) was a domestic, cultivated tree in comparison to the "wild olive tree" (Romans 11:17), which was regarded as useless and was therefore abandoned. How fitting to describe Israel as God's "cultivated" tree (Jeremiah 11:16; Hosea 14:6) and the Gentiles as wild by nature.

Principles and Applications

"A Remnant"

1. The mercy of God is not exhausted by Israel's failure (Romans 11:1-2). Paul himself was an example of God's mercy to the unbelieving Jews. Isaiah 17:6 compares the faithful remnant to "two or three berries

in the top of the uppermost bough" remaining after "the shaking of an olive tree."

2. God's offer of grace is available to those who will receive it (Romans 11:5). Jew and Gentile now have equal privileges. God's elect are those who choose to accept His conditions for salvation.

3. The majority of Israel sought for the Messiah, but through unbelief they failed to recognize Him (11:7). They wanted God's blessing and deliverance through the Messiah, but they rejected the lowly Jesus Christ

as their deliverer. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). They, supposing the Law to be God's ultimate standard of holiness, pursued justification by the works of the Law.

"This Mystery"

4. Israel's failure opened the way for the Gentiles to be brought into Christ (Romans 11:11, 15). This has special meaning to us as Gentiles. We were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.... but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh" (Ephesians 2:12, 13).

5. Gentiles must stand by faith lest they also be cut off in unbelief (Romans 11:17-20). Through God's work with His people Israel, the Gentiles have inherited many spiritual blessings. We will lose the benefits of these blessings if we fail to maintain a vital relationship with God. Faith in God's provision for salvation is fundamental to our continued faithfulness.

6. God's goodness and severity are dispensed according to man's response (Romans 11:21-23). God desires to pour out His inexhaustible blessings on Jew and Gentile alike. Man's choices, however, determine whether he will be a recipient of those blessings. Rejecting God's provision results in "blindness" and invokes God's judgment.

7. God is able to graft the natural branches back into their own tree (Romans 11:23-28). God has already demonstrated miraculous power by His ability to graft a wild olive tree into the good olive tree, contrary to nature. This same miraculous power can restore life to the dying branches that were broken off from their own olive tree, by grafting them back in again.

"The Wisdom"

8. God's ability to be consistently merciful and just is cause for humble

worship (Romans 11:33-36). Because God is long-suffering and merciful, it is His nature to provide an offer of salvation along with every judgment. As we contemplate the work of God in providing for man's salvation, we cannot help but respond, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Important Teachings

1. The mercy of God is not exhausted by Israel's failure (Romans 11:1-2).
2. God's offer of grace is available to those who will receive it (Romans 11:5).
3. The majority of Israel sought for the Messiah, but through unbelief they failed to recognize Him (Romans 11:7).
4. Israel's failure opened the way for the Gentiles to be brought into Christ (Romans 11:11, 15).
5. Gentiles must stand by faith lest they also be cut off in unbelief (Romans 11:17-20).
6. God's goodness and severity are dispensed according to man's response (Romans 11:21-23).
7. God is able to graft the natural branches back into their own tree (Romans 11:23-28).
8. God's ability to be consistently merciful and just is cause for humble worship (Romans 11:33-36).

Answers to Questions

1. Explain Paul's use of the terms "his people," "a remnant," and "the election."

"His people" refers to the Israelites, the Jewish race. "A remnant" speaks of a very small part of Israel who receive Christ as the Messiah. "The election" are all those who faithfully looked for the fulfillment of God's promises to the fathers as well as all those who by faith receive Jesus, the Messiah. The Gentiles can also be partakers of these same promises if they receive salvation by faith.

2. What did the election obtain that Israel was searching for but failed to obtain?

Israel sought continued favor with God but rejected the fulfillment of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. The election accepted by faith

God's provision for salvation. Israel sought to be free but did not comprehend the path to true freedom—freedom from sin.

3. What causes spiritual blindness?

Refusing to follow God as He continues to unfold His will to us will result in the same condition that Israel was in. Unduly exposing ourselves to worldly influences will impair our vision. Unwillingness to change when others "provoke" us will result in further deterioration of our vision.

4. What purposes of God were accomplished by turning to the Gentiles?

God brought to fruition His plan that was in place "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). The inclusion of the Gentiles is "to provoke [Israel] to jealousy." Israel's fall initiated a great expansion of God's program (Romans 11:12). Their restoration will be an even greater demonstration of God's grace and mercy to all mankind and of His ability to keep His promises.

5. Explain the analogy of the olive trees.

The good olive tree is symbolic of Israel, through whom God desired to show Himself to the world. The "root and fatness" speaks of God's provisions for man's salvation in fulfillment of the promises made to "the fathers." The branches receive their nourishment from the root and fatness of the tree. Therefore, God will cut off the branches that refuse to receive His provisions for salvation.

The grafting in of the wild olive tree speaks of God's grafting the Gentiles into His promises. Naturally, wild shoots grafted into cultivated stock do not produce good fruit. Therefore, the bringing in of the Gentiles into the covenant is contrary to nature.

6. What potential danger must we as Gentiles beware of?

We must beware lest our Gospel privileges cause us to become conceited. Our privileges do not give us liberty to scorn the Jews. Rather, God's desire is that our faithfulness would kindle in them an awareness of their fallen condition. Unbelief will result in our being cut off as well.

7. What determines whether man is a recipient of God's goodness or of His severity?

This is determined by man's response. To receive God's goodness, we must by faith partake of His mercy and grace. If we refuse, we will be broken off and cast away (John 15:5-6).

8. *What should be man's response to God's eternal movings?*

We should be thankful that we live under the New Covenant, when the Gentiles have full access to God's provisions. As God continues to unfold His plan for mankind, may we not allow the smallness of our human understanding to impede His work. It should rather move us to "serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling" (Psalm 2:11).

Summarizing the Lesson

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:8-11).

Today the Jews largely represent a people who reject Christ as the Messiah. The glory God intended them to have is veiled. "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away" (2 Corinthians 3:16). God will continue to manifest His eternal purposes into the future. Man stands in awe and adoration and responds, "Amen."

Research Guide

1. Read the context from which the Old Testament quotes in the lesson scope are taken (Psalm 69:22, 23; Isaiah 29:10; 59:20, 21).
2. Research Old Testament Scriptures related to Israel's future (Ezekiel 37; Isaiah 54, 55, 65; Jeremiah 30; Zechariah 8).
3. You will find a study of the different original Greek words describing the olive trees in this text to be helpful. See Strong's Concordance #65, #1636, and #2565.