

Prophetic Fall Feasts of The LORD

August 21, 2019 Lesson #32 Paul's Case For Israel: Witnesses #1 & #2

Question: Is Israel's failure a fatal error?

Truth: Man's Failures Do Not Frustrate The Purposes Of God

Question: So, what is God's Purpose For Israel?

For centuries people have been puzzled by the nation of Israel.

- ❖ The Roman government recognized the Jewish religion, but called the nation secta nefaria — "a nefarious sect." [wicked, criminal]
- ❖ The great historian Arnold Toynbee classified Israel as "a fossil civilization" and did not know what to do with it.
- ❖ Many Evangelicals and denominations today believe the Church has replaced Israel.

Rom. 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

For centuries Israel had known the OT prophecies and had practiced the law which was a "schoolmaster" to lead them to Christ. [Gal. 3:24] However, when Jesus Christ came, they rejected Him. [John 1:11] BUT, there was a faithful remnant in the nation, including Simeon and Anna, [Luke 2:25-38] who looked for His arrival.

So, how can this tragic event be explained?

Paul gives several reasons:

1. They did not feel a need for salvation. [Rom. 10:1]
They wanted political salvation, but not spiritual.
2. They were zealous for God. [Rom. 10:2]
Their zeal was not based on knowledge but on the keeping of their laws.

Rom. 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.

3. They were proud and self-righteous. [Rom. 10:3]
Their ignorance of God's righteousness stemmed from their willful, stubborn resistance to the TRUTH.
4. They misunderstood their own law. [Rom. 10:4-13]
Their law told them they were sinners in need of a Savior. Instead of letting the Law bring them to Christ, they worshiped the law and rejected their Savior.

Romans 10:18-21 The 3 Results of Their Rejection

Each is supported by a quotation from the Old Testament.

1. Israel Is Guilty: Rom. 10:18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Question: "How do you know that Israel really heard?"

Reply: Psalm 19 which emphasizes the revelation of God in the world.

- God reveals Himself in creation Ps. 19:1-6
- God reveals Himself in His Word Ps. 19:7-11

The "book of Nature" and the "book of Revelation" go together and proclaim the glory of God. Israel saw God at work in nature and she received God's written Word. Israel heard, but she would not heed. Jesus often had to say to the crowds, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

2. The Message Goes To The Gentiles Rom. 10:19-20

When Israel rejected her Messiah, God sent the gospel to the Gentiles that they might be saved.

- One reason God sent the Gospel to the Gentiles: Provoke the Jews to jealousy.

Rom. 10:19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. [also, Rom. 11:11]

- This was predicted by Moses in Deuteronomy 32:21.

They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

- It was an act of grace both to the Jews and to the Gentiles.

- The prophet Isaiah predicted God would save the Gentiles [Isa. 65:1].

Rom. 10:20 I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

Note: "To the Jew first" is a ruling principle of operation.

- Jesus began His ministry with the Jews. He forbade His disciples to preach to the Gentiles or the Samaritans on their first tour of ministry [Matt. 10:1-6].
- After His resurrection, He commanded them to wait in Jerusalem and to start their ministry there [Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8].
- In Acts 1-7, the ministry is to Jews and to Gentiles who were Jewish proselytes.
- But when the nation stoned Stephen and persecution broke loose, God sent the Gospel to the Samaritans [Acts 8:1-8] and then to the Gentiles [Acts 10].
- The Jewish believers were shocked when Peter went to the Gentiles [Acts 11:1-18]. But he explained > God sent him. It was clear to him that Jews and Gentiles were both saved the same way—by faith in Christ.
- But the opposition of the legalistic Jews was so great that the churches called a council to discuss the issue [Acts 15]. Their conclusion:
 - Jews and Gentiles were all saved by grace through faith in Christ.
 - A Gentile did not have to become a Jewish proselyte before he could become a Christian.

3. God Still Yearns Over His People Romans 10:21

But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

Quote from Isaiah 65:2. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

While Israel as a nation has been set aside, individual Jewish people can be saved and are being saved.

Acts 28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

"From morning till evening" Paul expounded the Scriptures to them and sought to convince them that Jesus is the Messiah. Through Paul, God was stretching out His arms of love to His disobedient people, yearning over them, and asking them to return.

God's favor to the Gentiles did not change His love for the Jews. Jesus Christ wept over Jerusalem and longed to gather His people in His arms! Instead, those arms were stretched out on a cross where He willingly died for Jews and Gentiles alike. God is long suffering and patient "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" [II Peter 3:9].

- Israel has miserably failed.
- Israel is without excuse for their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah.

Questions: Will God's patience with Israel wear out? Is there any future for the nation?

Does Israel's willful rebellion and rejection of the gospel mean: God has written them off?

Answer: Israel's hope is sure. The God who started His work will bring that work to completion.

The Consequences Of Israel's Failure To Believe In Jesus As Their Messiah is the subject of Romans 11.

- V. 1-12 Paul deals with Israel's future hope which is certain because it rests in God.
- V. 13-32 Paul points out the lessons Gentile believers should learn from Israel's failure.
- V. 33-36 Paul concludes the argument with an outpouring of praise and adoration based upon God's character as evidenced in His eternal plan for saving both Jews & Gentiles.

Paul devoted all of Romans 11 to presenting proof that God is not through with Israel. We must not apply this chapter to the church today, because Paul is discussing a literal future for a literal nation. He called 5 witnesses to prove there was a future in God's plan for the Jews.

Witness #1: Paul Himself

Rom. 11:1-2a 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. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. [to know beforehand]

- ❖ Israel had always been "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears." [Acts 7:51]
- ❖ Now the Israelites have rejected the Messiah, God's Son, in person. [Matt. 21:33-46]
- ❖ Have they gone too far? Is it all over for Israel?

Consider: It is clear Paul is speaking mainly to Gentiles in Romans 11.

- ❖ Rom. 11:13 Paul warns the Gentiles against PRIDE [Rom. 11:18, 20]

Consider: As the Gentile Christians observed and reflected on the failure of Israel, feelings of disdain for the Jews began to arise. Perhaps a sense of smugness and superiority was becoming evident among the Gentile believers.

- ❖ They were beginning to look upon the Jewish pagans in the same way Jews looked upon the Gentiles as pagans.
- ❖ If God had truly rejected Israel, then the Gentiles would be their replacement.
- ❖ Thus, the Gentiles and the church would replace the Jews.

Key: God's purpose was MUCH BROADER, including both Jews & Gentiles as Paul emphasizes in Romans 11.

Rom. 11:1 Hath GOD CAST AWAY His People? God forbid

- ❖ God is the center of attention in this verse. Israel's future does not depend upon her, but upon God.
- ❖ Israel's failure is not prominent in this verse. God's faithfulness is paramount.
- ❖ God has committed Himself to finishing what He has started and that which He promised His people.

I Sam. 12:22 For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.

Jer. 31:35-37 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: ³⁶ If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. ³⁷ Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

Rom. 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. [irrevocable]

Question: If God has cast away His people, how do you explain the conversion of Paul?

- His conversion is presented 3x in Acts!

Consider: Luke wrote this to show Paul's conversion as an illustration of the future conversion of Israel.

- Paul called himself, "one born out of due time." [I Cor. 15:8]

I Tim. 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

- Paul's conversion tells very little that parallels our salvation experience today.
- None of us have seen Christ in glory or actually heard Him speak from heaven.
- We were not blinded by the light of heaven nor thrown to the ground.

Question: In what way is Paul's conversion a pattern?

- It is a picture of how the nation of Israel will be saved when Jesus Christ returns to establish His kingdom on earth.
- Details of Israel's future restoration and salvation are in Zech. 12:10-13:1]
- The nation will see Him as He returns. [Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7]

- They will recognize Him as their Messiah, repent and receive Him.
- It will be an experience similar to that of Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road.

Paul's reaction: How could anyone even conceive of the thought that God would fail to fulfill His Word?

Witness #2 Prophet Elijah Romans 11:2-10

Rom. 11:2a God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.

The fact that most of the nation has rejected Christ is not proof that God has finished with His people.

Truth: Israel's hope is certain because her salvation and restoration are not dependent upon fallible, sinful men but on the sovereign grace of God.

1. Israel's future is certain because God chose them as part of His eternal plan and purpose.

Consider: Satan has offered and fallen man has persistently attempted, to establish a second way > man's righteousness attained through his own good works. It cannot work:

- All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, not even one.
- The basis for man's salvation, sanctification and security = God's Sovereign Grace
- Rom. 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
- Heb. 12:2 He is the author and finisher of our faith.
- Phil. 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Consider: When Paul writes, God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew, he doesn't need to say more.

- The fulfillment of the promises and covenants do not depend on the faithfulness of fallible men, but on God.
- If men cannot earn or merit the blessings by their good works, neither can they frustrate the purposes and promises of God by their failures.

Rom. 11:2b-6 provide an OT illustration of the doctrine of sovereign grace.

Or do you not know what the Scripture says in *the passage about Elijah*, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, They have killed Your prophets, They have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and They are seeking my life. But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. ⁵ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Context of this passage: Elijah was a prophet to the nation of Israel.

- ❖ Due to the sin of the people, God's judgment was pronounced on the nation just as Moses had warned in Deut. 28-31.
- ❖ Elijah's ministry began with the announcement:
No more rain in the land until he gave the word. [I Kings 17:1]

- ❖ Elijah was sent into hiding until the time God would send the rains. [I Kings 17:2-24]
- ❖ After considerable time passed, God commanded Elijah to present himself to king Ahab and announce: The Rains Were Coming. [I Kings 18:1-15]
- ❖ When Elijah stood before Ahab, he challenged the false gods of Ahab & Jezebel, his wicked wife, to a contest on Mt. Carmel.
- ❖ The false gods were exposed when God revealed His power. He sent fire from heaven and consumed the watered-down sacrifice offered by Elijah. [I Kings 18:19-40]
- ❖ In spite of this: Israel did not repent as a nation. Ahab & Jezebel retained power.
- ❖ Jezebel vowed to put Elijah to death. [I Kings 19:2]
- ❖ Elijah thought his ministry was a failure. He turned and fled.

Consider: Seems Paul wants us to focus on 1 aspect of Elijah's error and how God corrected it.

- Elijah is said to have pled with God AGAINST Israel and not FOR Israel. [Rom. 11:2] Why?
- Elijah thought the nation had totally departed from God. He gave up hope. [I Kings 19]
- He believed God had or should have given up on this rebellious people.
- Elijah had just dramatically demonstrated the sin of their idolatry.
- He had presented to them the God they must trust and obey.
- But in spite of his ministry, which proved they were guilty and without excuse, they did not repent and turn to God.

Question: Why did Elijah give up hope? He Had The Wrong Focus.

Rom. 11:3 Lord, THEY have killed thy prophets, and THEY have torn down thine altars; and I am left alone, and THEY seek my life.

- Because he has fixed his eyes on man rather than God, Elijah only sees failure.
- In his mind, his failure and Israel's had nullified the purposes and promises of God.
- His conclusion: Hope was gone because man failed God.

God's answer corrected his thinking. God's subsequent actions proved that Israel's hope rests not in the faithfulness of men but in the faithfulness of God.

Rom. 11:4 I have kept for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL. [Quote from I Kings 19:18]

- God's response is God-centered.
- Elijah's conclusion was wrong because he linked the hope of Israel to the works of the Israelites rather than to the sovereign grace of God.

Key: God would not allow man's failure to hinder His purposes and promises for Israel.

- He discovered there was a REMNANT of true believers. 7000 more!

Paul referred to the remnant in Rom. 9:27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, A REMNANT SHALL BE SAVED:

- This is a quote from Isa. 10:22-23.
- God's purposes would be carried out through the remnant.

- ❖ The needy will rejoice in the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel.
- ❖ The wicked will be punished. [v. 20-21]
- ❖ Great repentance and turning back to God [v 22-24]

Rom. 11:9-10 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompence unto them:

¹⁰ Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

This is a reference from an important messianic Psalm. Ps. 69:22-23 Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

²³ Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

- ❖ Their table to become a snare = their blessings turn into burdens and judgments.
- ❖ This is what happened to Israel: their spiritual blessings should have led to Christ, but instead they became a snare that kept them from Christ.
- ❖ Their religious practices and observances became substitutes for the real experience of salvation.

Sad: this same mistake is still made when people depend on religious rituals and practices instead of trusting in the Christ who is pictured in these activities.

Paul made it clear that the hardening of Israel is neither total nor final.

Proof: God has a future for the nation.

Rom. 11:25 Hardness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

Conclusion: The existence of the believing Jewish remnant today, as in Elijah's day, is evidence that God still has a plan for His people. Paul did not imitate Elijah's mistake and say, "I only am left!" He knew that there was a remnant of Israel in this world who trusted God.

Key Point #1: The fact that most of the nation have rejected Christ is NOT proof that God has finished with His people.

Key Point #2: Since it was a remnant according to grace, Israel's future was not dependent upon good works but upon God, whose purposes and promises are based on grace.

Key Point #3: Therefore, it cannot be earned by man's good works. It cannot be lost by human failure.

Key Point #4: The failure of Israel cannot nullify the sovereign purpose of God to bless His people, Israel. Their hope is based upon God's grace, His character and His power.

Has God cast away His People? Has Israel's failure ruined her hope for the future?

Paul's 1st argument: Rom. 11:2-6

- ❖ Israel's failure cannot thwart God's purposes and promises because these were never dependent upon men but upon God.
- ❖ God's promises to bless Israel and the whole world were not dependent upon man's good works but on His Divine and Sovereign Grace.

Paul's 2nd argument: Rom. 11:7-10

- ❖ Israel's disobedience has not frustrated God's plans but has fulfilled divine prophecy.

Paul's 3rd argument: Rom. 11:11-12

- ❖ Israel's failure has brought about the salvation of the Gentiles.

We can barely grasp the blessings which will follow when Israel comes to trust and obey God by turning to their Messiah for salvation on the Future Day Of Atonement.

God will never break His covenant with His people, and He has promised to restore them.