

ROMANS CH.11

MAJOR THEME: THE GOSPEL: THE RIGHTEOUSNES OF GOD REVEALED IN SOVEREIGN CHOICE

Hymn: #576 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

(Modified Outline of John A. Witmer- Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, Dallas Theological Seminary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; SP Publications; 1983; p.438)

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C) God's Sovereign Choice Fulfilled (Ch. 11) Back in Ch. 8:28-30, Paul had said that the believer has an eternal security that is grounded in Election. God foreknew each believer in a meaningful and relational way (Jer. 1:4-5; 1 Pet.1:2) before creation; they were chosen IN Christ (Eph. 1:4) who Himself as the Elected Man and Electing God, was foreknown from before the creation of the world (1 Pet. 1:20). As such, each believer is called (summoned and given salvation), justified and will be glorified. This election of grace will absolutely stand. Following in Ch. 9 we saw that Paul anticipated push back and questions that might arise in his hearer's minds. "Someone might ask, 'What about the Jews? They were chosen by God, yet now you tell us they are set aside and God is building His Church. Did God fail to keep His promises to Israel?' ... If God was not faithful to the Jews, how do we know he will be faithful to the Church?" Paul said in 9:6 that God's word hadn't failed regarding Israel. Here in Ch.11 Paul drives this point home by conclusively proving God's faithfulness to Israel. In doing so he proves the security each believer can have in own election of grace and God's faithfulness to bring each one to glory.

i) In Election of Grace (Ch. 11:1-10)

- (1) V.1 Did God reject His people. By no means! Lit. μὴ γένοιτο- may it NEVER be. Paul uses this expression a full ten time in Romans like the final "nail in the coffin" of anticipated questions and false conclusions. (3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11)
- (2) V. 2- 5 Paul provides two proofs that God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew in election of grace:
 - (a) #1 Paul himself.
 - (i) He himself was a Jew, a descendant of Abraham and of the tribe of Benjamin.
 - (ii) The fact that Paul had come to faith in Christ is proof that God has not rejected the Jews.
 - (b) #2 Elijah
 - (i) Paul recounts God telling the depressed and lonely prophet Elijah that he was not alone. In fact God had reserved 7,000 who had not been unfaithful to Him by bowing their knee at the altar of Baal.
 - (ii) This too is proof that Paul was not the only Jew who God had reserved for himself. God has not rejected the Jews.
- (c) V. 5 So too at the present time there is lit. "a remnant according to the election of grace". These are currently Messianic Jewish believers. After the Rapture, they are the sealed 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel and a component of the remaining one third surviving Jews at the end of the Tribulation.
 - (i) By way of application for us today, we may sure that we are not alone though we may feel like are voice crying in the wilderness. We may not see them amidst the professing church, but there is a remnant out there, according to the election of grace.
- (3) V. 6 It is impossible to mix grace and works, for the one cancels the other. You are either trusting in Jesus by grace through faith or you are lost in self-righteous works through unbelief or confusion. You can only do one or the other.
- (4) V. 7-10 Paul continues this contrast between works and grace as embodied in national unbelieving Israel and the Elect body of believing gentiles and Jews.

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- (a) Israel was “hardened”- lit. πωρώ which is the verb form of the noun used in v. 25 lit. πώρωσις,- from pōros, a kind of marble – meaning made of stone; to be insensible; dull, unperceptive as a rock; to render stupid or callous; unresponsive (dense), completely lacking sensitivity or spiritual perception.
 - (i) In Aussie parlance they “Were thick as bricks!”
- (b) This is a different word than is used for the hardening of Pharaoh in 9:18 where it is σκληρύνω- meaning stubbornness; describing that which “won't budge” (bend, submit), or what is unyieldingly harsh.
- (c) The difference between these two kinds of hardening is seen in Paul’s referencing two OT passages:
 - (i) V. 8 Isaiah 29:10 and Deut. 29:4 here Israel is given a “spirit of stupor” lit. κατάνυξις- meaning a deep sleep; numbness; from katanusso; meaning a prickling sensation, as of the limbs that fall asleep.
 - (ii) V. 9-10 Ps. 69:22, 23 here we see the very things that should have been a blessing to Israel by leading them to Christ, instead became a snare to them. Their trust in rites and religion became a substitute for faith in God and salvation, because their eyes were darkened so as not to see.
- (d) While this is hardening is serious, Paul makes it clear in this chapter that it is neither a total hardening nor a final hardening. The day is coming when Israel will awake from her slumber and will enjoy her table in the Kingdom.

ii) In Gentiles (Ch.11:11-24)

- (1) V. 11-15 we see God’s sovereign choice fulfilled in the Gentiles by way an astonishing paradox.
 - (a) Israel’s transgressing means salvation for the gentiles; riches for the world (all humanity); riches for the gentiles.
 - (b) Israel’s rejection means reconciliation for the world.
- (2) The gentiles have a particular responsibility to Israel for having received salvation, riches and reconciliation. They are to so enjoy and embody these gifts that Israel will be provoked to jealousy. The Church is to make Israel envious of that which is theirs, namely their Jewish Messiah Jesus; “Yeshua Hamashiach”.
 - (a) For the largely gentile Church to be ignorant of the Jewish roots of our faith or to be theologically anti-Semitic through Replacement Theology is not going to provoke Israel to envy...it is just going to provoke them.
 - (b) In addition, such ignorance robs us of seeing beautiful OT riches; God’s covenant faithfulness; and leaves us ill-prepared eschatologically.
- (3) The day Israel’s rejection is changed to acceptance will be life from the dead...literally. Revelation 20:5 speaks of the “the first resurrection” which includes the rapture/resurrection of the true church before the beginning of the Tribulation. It also includes the resurrection of the OT saints and the tribulation martyrs at the end of the Great Tribulation. Unfortunately it will take this “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7) to awaken Israel from her stupor, and that only a remnant of one third will survive (Zech. 13:8). But when she does awaken, the King will come, raise the dead Jewish saints and establish her in His Kingdom.
- (4) V. 16 Paul provides two object lessons to illustrate the certainty we can have that the God is not through with Jewish remnant.
 - (a) First, the part of dough offered as “First fruits” and the “whole batch”

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- (i) Num. 15:20-21 “Present a cake from the first of your ground meal and present it as an offering from the threshing floor. Throughout the generations to come you are to give this offering to the LORD from the first of your ground meal.
- (ii) The meaning is when God accepts the part, he accepts the whole.
- (b) Secondly, the “root” and “branches”
 - (i) The root supports the branches and if the roots are holy the branches are too.
- (c) The interpretation is that Abraham is both the part of dough offered and first fruits and he is the root. God elected Abraham in grace and made unconditional promises to him (Gen 12:2-3) and entered into covenant with him (Gen. 15:18) where God fulfilled both sides of the covenant, thus it cannot fail. God accepted the founder of the nation Abraham and in so doing he accepted the rest of his descendants, who are the “whole batch”.
- (d) Similarly Abraham (and the Patriarchs Isaac, Jacob, and David (v. 28)) are the roots and the people of Israel are the branches.
- (e) This is the historic and prophetic interpretation. But we can also make personal application of this in the present:
 - (i) Jesus is also the “first fruits” (1 Cor. 15:23) and as a result of His Federal and Seminal Headship (Ch. 5; Romans outline 3; D) all humanity is the whole batch. An ontological reality and objective union has been established in His incarnation.
 - (ii) Jesus is the “root” (Rev. 22:16) and believers are the branches (John 15:5). An epistemological discovery and subjective participation of abiding faith.
- (5) V. 17-18 Some (not all) Jewish branches have been broken off and Gentile “wild olive shoots” have been grafted in and are now sharing in the covenant blessing made to Abraham. This is no reason for Gentiles to boast, for the root supports the branches not the other way around.
 - (a) “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22) and Jesus Christ our Saviour was Himself a Jew.
- (6) V. 19-24 Paul says Jewish branches have been broken off because of unbelief and gentiles grafted in by faith. He again warns the Gentiles not to be arrogant but to have a reverential fear of God.
 - (a) V. 21-23 here the Greek word “if” is a first-class conditional statement assumed to be true.” (*John Witmer; Dallas Theological Seminary; Bible Knowledge Commentary; p. 485*) This renders the word “Since”. Since God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.
 - (i) “It’s worth noting that, according to Bible prophesy, the professing Gentile church will be “cut off” because of apostasy. 1 Tim 4 and 2 Timothy 3, along with 2 Thessalonians 2, all indicate that the professing church in the last days will depart from the faith. There is no hope for the apostate church, but there is hope for apostate Israel! Why? Because of the roots of the olive tree. God will keep His promises to the patriarchs, but God will break off the Gentiles because of their unbelief. No matter how far Israel may stray from the truth of God, the roots are still good. God is still the ‘God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Matt.22:23; Ex. 3:6). He will keep his promises to these patriarchs. This means that the olive tree will flourish again!” (*Wiersbe; Romans-Be Right; p.139*)

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1. The trajectory of the professing church is downward; the trajectory of Israel is upwards.
- (b) V.24 One last observation here. Normally a fruitful cultivated olive branch is grafted into the lesser stock of a wild olive tree. This way it can share in the life of the wild tree without producing the poor fruit of the wild tree. Here, it is just the opposite. The "wild by nature" Gentile olive branches have been grafted into the cultivated stock of Israel. This is pure grace to the Gentiles.

iii) In Israel's Salvation (Ch. 11:25-32)

- (1) V. 25 A mystery is that which is unknown prior to and apart from its disclosure in the NT by divine revelation. For example, the Church is a Mystery (Eph. 3:3,4,5,9)
 - (a) Paul calls Israel's hardening (V. 7; see Roman notes 5,C,i,(4),(a)) a "mystery" and equates ignorance of this mystery with conceitedness; the third warning against boasting (v. 18) and arrogance (v.21).
 - (b) Replacement Theology does not understand the mystery and as such is in fact "conceited" according to the Apostle Paul.
 - (c) "Until the full number of the gentiles has come in".
 - (i) Only God knows when that will be, but we can "speed its coming" (2 Pet.3:12) by faithfully using our gifts, supporting the equipping of the saints and the proclamation of the Gospel.
- (2) V. 26 "All Israel will be saved" does not mean every single Jew in time immemorial, nor does it mean every single Jew living at the time of the Second coming for we know that the Jewish "rebels" will be judged (Ezek. 20:34-38) at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. "All Israel" means the full and true remnant of believing Israel of all time.
- (3) V. 28 in other words as far as the Church age is concerned, Jews and Israel are enemies of the Gospels. As far as the fulfilling of God's purpose through His chosen vessel out of all the other nations unto the end of the ages, Israel is loved on account of Abraham; Abraham the covenanted Father of Israel and the Father of Faith for the Church. He is the father of us all (Rom. 4:16).
- (4) V. 29 "for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable."
 - (a) God will NEVER abandon His promise to Abraham in Gen 12:2-3 thus He will NEVER abandon Israel. How certain are God's gifts and call?
 - (i) Jer. 31:35-37 "This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar- the LORD Almighty is his name: "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me." This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.
- (5) V. 30-31 Gentiles were disobedient (Rom. Ch.1), but they received mercy because of Israel's disobedience. Now Israel is disobedient that they might receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to the Gentiles, namely through their making Israel envious for their Jewish Messiah Jesus Christ.

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- (6) V. 32 is the great and final summation of Paul's "Trilogy" of Romans 9, 10 and 11. This statement answers the anticipated questions raised by Paul's grounding the Certainty of Sanctification in Election:
- (a) "For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all."

iv) To God's Glory and Praise (Ch. 11:33-36)

- (1) After all the "theology" that has been said not only in the last three chapters, but from Chapter 1 through 11, Paul shifts from theology to doxology; from logical argument and understanding to a humble head shaking amazement before the Glory of God. Only this God in His Wisdom could turn the fall of Israel into the salvation of the world.

Whew! We made it. After 11 Chapters of deep doctrine, we are on the verge of the final five chapters where Paul takes us on the journey of practical application to our Christian lives all that he has laid down up to this point.

As we close, let's see if we can't summarize these first 11 Chapter as follows:

The ground and certainty of our **Justification** is **faith** in Jesus Christ and His finished work for us in Redemption, Propitiation and Reconciliation.

The ground and certainty of our **Sanctification** is **identification** with Jesus through the ever increasing knowing of the Holy Spirit expressed through our Reckoning, Offering and Serving.

The ground and certainty of our **Glorification** is eternal **election** in Jesus Christ and the faithfulness of the covenant keeping God of Abraham. He knew us, predestined us to sonship and conformity to the likeness of Jesus, called us, justified us and will glorify us in eternity.

Hallelujah!

| SALVATION | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Past | Present | Future |
| I have been saved | I am being saved | I will be saved |
| Penalty of sin | Power of sin | Presence of sin |
| Justification | Sanctification | Glorification |
| Righteousness imputed | Righteousness imparted | Righteousness eternalized |
| Son | Holy Spirit | Father |
| Rom. 3:21-5:21 | Rom. 6-8 | Rom. 9-11 |
| Substitution | Identification | Election |
| He died for me | I died with him | Chosen in him |
| Saved by his death | Saved by his life | Predestined to sonship |
| He died <i>for</i> my sins | He died <i>unto</i> sin | Glorification is certain |