

**The Epistle to the Romans
(Special English Edition)**

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Israel's Temporary Blindness

Reading assignment: Romans 11

Introduction

Remember to keep the large, overall outline in view. This lesson covers Romans 11 and concludes the section of our outline under "DISPENSATION" which involves chapters 9-11.

We want you to see God's faithfulness in the restoration of Israel in this lesson. God did not throw the nation of Israel away. They are His chosen people forever. God will surely fulfill His promises to them. God will complete His plans for them. God will save all Israel someday.

Importance of this Lesson

- ❑ It is important to understand that God never changes His mind. He has a plan for Israel. God will fulfill that plan. It is important to understand that in Israel there is a godly "remnant according to the election of grace" which has never "bowed the knee to Baal." This remnant always existed in the past and it still exists today.
- ❑ It is important to understand that believing Gentiles are grafted into the olive tree with believing Jews.
- ❑ It is important to remember that Israel is now spiritually blind. But this blindness is only for a time. God will save all Israel someday.
- ❑ The Deliverer will "come out of Sion" and "take away their sins." "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

THE LESSON

- Outline:**
- A. God always has a remnant saved by grace – verses 1-6
 - B. God set Israel aside for a time – verses 7-12
 - C. The two olive trees – verses 13-24
 - D. God will save all Israel – verses 25-32
 - E. The matchless wisdom of God – verses 33-36

I. GOD ALWAYS HAS A REMNANT SAVED BY GRACE – Romans 11:1-6

- A. Verse 1 – Here Paul meant Israel as a nation. Has God thrown His people away? *God forbid* (or away with such an idea) Paul said. Paul uses himself as an illustration. He, too, was an Israelite and saved by grace.
- B. Verse 2 – God foreknew Israel and brought them into existence through Abraham, Genesis 12.
- C. Verse 3 – Elijah the prophet complained that Israel had killed the prophets, destroyed the altars and that he alone remained as the only one who believed God.
- D. Verse 4 – God rebuked Elijah and informed him that there were seven thousand Israelites "who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." They had not worshipped the idol called Baal. This was the godly remnant in Elijah's day. See 1 Kings 19:10-18.
- E. Verse 5 – Here Paul stated that even in his day ...*at this present time...* there was a remnant of believing Jews. God had saved these Jews ...*according to the election of grace.*

- F. Verse 6 – This is one of the greatest texts in the Bible about the doctrine of grace. Here it is clearly stated that salvation is not a mixture of grace and works. To mix works with grace for salvation destroys the meaning of grace – for then grace is no more grace. If salvation is by works, grace cannot be part of it, ...*otherwise work is no more work*. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and Galatians 5:4-6.

II. ISRAEL WAS TEMPORARILY SET ASIDE – Romans 11:7-12

- A. Verse 7 – God did not save Israel as a nation, but the elect who believed received salvation. The Law blinded those who looked for salvation by their works.
- B. Verse 8 – This is a quotation from Isaiah 29:10. Paul used this verse to show that God had shown Israel's blindness in the Old Testament. Paul quoted Isaiah, ...*God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day*.
- C. Verses 9-10 – These verses are a continuation of the argument, Paul quoted David. Paul quoted David in Psalm 69:22-23, *Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway*. God fulfilled these horrible prayers when the leaders of Israel cried "His blood be on us, and on our children." God fulfilled them when they rejected Christ and because of that, God rejected them.
- D. Verses 11-12 – Some Christians believe that God rejected Israel forever, but these two verses assure us that this is not so. Will God reject them forever? *God forbid...* or by no means. God won over their rejection and blindness when He offered His great salvation to the Gentiles. The salvation of the Gentiles will make Israel jealous. Someday Israel will turn back to the God of their fathers. The fall of Israel made the Gentiles spiritually rich. Paul asked, ...*how much more their fullness?* Note verse 25, the word *fullness* is used again and we realize that here Paul wrote about the time when ...*all Israel shall be saved...* (verse 26), when God's glorious plan for them will be fulfilled.

III. THE TWO OLIVE TREES – Romans 11:13-24

- A. Verses 13-24 – Here Paul stated that God had called him as an apostle to the Gentiles. By talking about the importance of his office, he hoped that some of the Jews would follow his example and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. Verse 15 – Somewhat of a repetition of verse 12. God cast Israel away. This brought a great number of Gentiles to God, the ...*receiving of them...* When Israel returns to the Lord and it really becomes a holy nation, it will be like a resurrection from the dead.
- C. Verse 16 – In verse 16, Paul began to write about fruit and branches and olive trees. The *first fruit* and *the root* refer to Abraham and the other fathers. The "lump" and "branches" are the people of Israel who are connected to Abraham by faith. ...*If the root be holy, so are the branches*.
- D. Verse 17 – Paul stated that some of the branches (the people of Israel) were broken off and that a ...*wild olive tree...* (the Gentiles) were ... *grafted in among them...* These are Gentiles who believe and are saved by grace. When Gentiles believe, they become part of the root and fatness of the olive tree. In other words God fulfills the promise to Abraham "in thee shall all the families (nations) of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Salvation comes to a great numbers of Gentiles.
- E. Verses 18-21 – Verses 18 and 21 warn Gentile believers not to boast that they are better than the Jews. Gentiles must not think that they have taken the place of the Jews. Paul tells the Gentiles they did not support the root. The root supported them. We are blessed because of God's promises to Abraham and not the other way around. Remember that the "natural branches" (the Jews) were broken off "because of unbelief" (verse 20). God made Gentile believers a part of the tree by grace on the basis of faith alone (verse 20). Gentiles have no reason for pride. *For if God spared not the natural branches...* (verse 21), He can treat the Gentiles in the same way. Note the apostasy of the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-5).
- F. Verses 22-24 – God punished Israel harshly for their unbelief. God showed His goodness to the Gentiles because of Israel's unbelief. The Gentiles must continue in that goodness, otherwise, God will cut them off too.

- G. Verse 23 – God promises to make Israel part of the olive tree again when they turn from their unbelief, *...for God is able to graft them in again.*
- H. Verse 24 – The normal way of making a branch a part of a tree is to put a good branch on the stem of a wild tree. Paul teaches here that putting the Gentiles, who are wild by nature into the stem of the good olive tree is not normal, “contrary to nature.” Because God did it in this way, it will be much easier for God to put the “natural branches” back into the good olive tree. This will happen when God restores and saves Israel.

IV. ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED – Romans 11:25-32

- A. Verse 25 – The *mystery* is that the blindness of Israel is only for a time. God’s plan for the nation of Israel has not come to pass yet. So, Gentiles, don’t be proud. Remember that the blindness from which Israel is suffering is neither total nor permanent. It is *in part* until *the fullness of the Gentiles* comes in. That will be the time when the church is complete. When God has fulfilled his plan to call out a people for His name. When Christ will take us up in the Rapture and we will be with him.
- B. Verse 26 – God will save all Israel. When will this happen? When the Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ comes out of Sion, turns away the ungodliness of Israel and takes away their sins (verses 26-27). Read Isaiah 59:20 and Deuteronomy 30:3-6.
- C. Verse 28 – God has an eternal agreement with Israel (verse 27). The Jews are of the Gospel now for the sake (or benefit) of the Gentiles. But the Jews are still God’s chosen people and *...beloved for the fathers’ sake* (Abraham and the patriarchs).
- D. Verse 29 – The gifts and calling of God *...are without repentance*. In other words, God and His works are unchangeable. He never changes His mind or modifies His plans.
- E. Verses 30-31 – Gentiles worshipped idols for thousands of years. Now they have received mercy because of Israel’s unbelief. Is it not natural to expect that the Jews, who knew and served the true God at one time, will also receive mercy again in the future?
- F. Verse 32 – Here is the blessed conclusion. God would “have all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4). All, both Jews and Gentiles, are guilty, unworthy sinners in God’s eyes (Romans 3:19), but His wonderful mercy extends to all.

V. THE MATCHLESS WISDOM OF GOD – Romans 11:33-36

- A. Verse 33 – Here Paul, breaks forth in a song of praise. Without question, Paul was moved by the wonder of the truth he had written. It was a glorious doxology. Who can investigate and understand the length, breadth and depth of God’s boundless wisdom and knowledge? Who can understand the meaning of His judgments and His ways? He knows everything. He is the all wise God who created all things and holds them together by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:2-3; 11:3).
- B. Verse 34 – No man can understand the mind of God and certainly no one can advise Him. We should be humble as we stand before Him and we should be thankful for His grace and mercy!
- C. Verse 35 – No one can give God anything or do anything for God to force God to payback for what we did. God owes us nothing. We owe Him everything.
- D. Verse 36 – This is a fitting crown to a great chapter. When Paul spoke about Christ, he said, *For OF Him...*, (referring to all creation)... *and THROUGH Him...*, (for He holds all things together, Colossians 1:16-17)... *and TO Him...*, (God’s final plan) *...are all things*: (all created things were made for His glory) *...to whom be glory forever. Amen.*

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS
EXAM - LESSON 18

Name _____

Address _____

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1. The overriding, dominant truth in lesson 18 is: (Value 6 points)
 - a. faith in Christ is the only way of salvation.
 - b. God's faithfulness in the future restoration of Israel.
 - c. God's continued rejection of Israel.

 2. The duration of Israel's spiritual blindness: (Value 6 points)
 - a. is temporary.
 - b. is permanent.
 - c. will endure until the end of the Millennium.

 3. Paul's visual proof that God has not cast away His people is: (Value 6 points)
 - a. Israel's existence as a nation.
 - b. that God brought them into existence through Abraham.
 - c. that God saved him, Paul, who also was an Israelite.

 4. Elijah's complaint was that: (Value 6 points)
 - a. he did not have enough food.
 - b. Israel had killed all the prophets and he only was left.
 - c. Israel always wandered away from God.

 5. According to Paul, a remnant of believing Jews existed even in his day because: (Value 6 points)
 - a. Paul had preached to them.
 - b. God had chosen them.
 - c. they believed the Word of God.

 6. David's invocations in Psalm 69:22-23 were fulfilled when: (Value 6 points)
 - a. Jerusalem was destroyed.
 - b. the Jews killed the prophets of the Old Testament.
 - c. the Jews rejected Christ.

 7. The blessing that came out of the Jewish rejection of Christ was that: (Value 6 points)
 - a. some of them were saved.
 - b. the Gospel came to the Gentiles.
 - c. Jesus rose from the dead.

 8. The claim Paul made in Romans 11:13 was that: (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
 - a. he was called to be an apostle.
 - b. he had a right to be proud of himself.
 - c. many of the Jews would be saved.

9. Paul's warning in Romans 11:18-21 was that: (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
- Gentile believers must be careful because they can lose their salvation.
 - Jews must not be proud of their inheritance.
 - Gentile believers must not boast and think that they are better than Jews.
10. *The fullness of the Gentiles* in Romans 11:25 means: (Value 6 points)
- the receipt of the Gospel by the Gentiles.
 - the time when the completed Church is caught up to be with Christ.
 - the time when Christ comes to set up the Millennium.
11. *All Israel* will be saved: (Value 6 points)
- by the end of the church age.
 - when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come out of Sion and turns away their sin.
 - at the close of the Tribulation.
12. In Romans 11:29, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" means: (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
- God cannot repent.
 - God cannot change His character or His purposes.
 - God will never take back a gift once it has been given.
13. In Romans 11:32, God concluded: (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
- everyone will perish in unbelief.
 - that He will have mercy on some people.
 - that He wants all men to be saved.
14. **Identify** the following regarding the two olive trees: (Value 15 points)
- Who is the root? _____
 - Who are the branches? _____
 - Who is the wild olive tree? _____
15. In Romans 11:36, of whom do the words "of," "through," and "to" speak? (Fill in the blank) (Open Bible) (Value 7 points)
- _____