

# Romans 11:1-10

God's relationship with Israel

# Review

- Romans 9-11 – Israel and the Gospel
- Romans 9:1-30 – God’s word has not failed
  - God’s sovereignty
- Romans 9:31-10:21 – Israel’s failure
  - Man’s responsibility
- God’s past, present, and future plans for Israel

# Our Three Questions

## What does it say?

- Authorial intent to the intended audience

## What does it mean?

- What is the timeless theological truth

## How does it apply?

- What do we do with this information

# Romans 11:1-10

<sup>1</sup> I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? <sup>3</sup> “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.”

# Romans 11:1-10

<sup>4</sup> But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." <sup>5</sup> So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. <sup>6</sup> But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

<sup>7</sup> What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

# Romans 11:1-10

<sup>8</sup> as it is written,

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,  
eyes that would not see  
and ears that would not hear,  
down to this very day.”

<sup>9</sup> And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,  
a stumbling block and a retribution for them;

<sup>10</sup> let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot  
see,

and bend their backs forever.”

# Road Mapping

- Unpacking Paul's question
  - Who is Paul talking about?
- How does he answer the question?
  - Understanding the "remnant"
- Grace is not works
- Spiritual blindness
- Application
  - Remnant – Grace – and Spiritual blindness

# Romans 11:1-2a

<sup>1</sup> I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

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Who is Paul talking about?

Is it spiritual Israel or physical Israel?

# **Spiritual Israel?**

- 1. Not all Israel is Israel**
- 2. God has foreknowledge of them**
- 3. All Israel will be saved**

# Spiritual Israel?

**Not all Israel is Israel**

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**<sup>6</sup> But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel**

**Romans 9:6**

# Spiritual Israel?

God has foreknowledge of them

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**Romans 11:2**

<sup>2</sup> God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

**Romans 8:29 & 30**

<sup>29</sup> For those whom he foreknew he also predestined ... <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he ... also justified ...

# Spiritual Israel?

## All Israel will be saved

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<sup>25</sup> Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion,  
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;  
<sup>27</sup> “and this will be my covenant with them  
when I take away their sins.”

# Physical Israel?

- 1. Immediate context**
- 2. Broader context of Romans**
- 3. All Israel will be saved**

# Physical Israel?

## Immediate context

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I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

# Physical Israel?

## Broader context

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- We are in Romans 9-11 (not 8)
  - Why ask the question at this point?
  - The subject of 9-10 was physical Israel as well as the rest of 11.

# Physical Israel?

**All Israel will be saved**

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Since this is a future tense statement, it presumes they still need saving.

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<sup>1</sup> Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. <sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

**Romans 10:1-2**

# Questions

- How does Paul's existence act as evidence to the fact that God has not rejected His people?
- If this is true, what is happening in the present for Israel?

# Romans 11:2-4

<sup>2</sup> God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? <sup>3</sup> “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” <sup>4</sup> But what is God's reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”

# **Drawing from 1 Kings 19**

- **Paul is evidence of a remnant**
- **What is happening at the present with Israel is not without precedent**

# Story of Elijah

- 1 Kings 16:29-34
  - Ahab is king of Israel and does evil
  - He marries Jezebel and worships her god Baal
- 1 Kings 17:1-7
  - Elijah prophecies drought – rain stops for 3 years
- 1 Kings 18:1-40
  - Elijah calls out Ahab and the prophets of Baal
  - Elijah has a throw-down with them and God wins
  - Elijah has the false prophets killed and calls for rain

# Story of Elijah

- 1 Kings 19:1-2
  - Ahab tells Jezebel the news
  - Jezebel is upset and vows to have Elijah killed
- 1 Kings 19:3-8
  - Elijah runs away and laments – Asks for death
- 1 Kings 19:9-18
  - Elijah prays twice of loneliness in his love for God
  - God replies with the news of a remnant
  - God gives Elijah his last tasks in ministry

# Romans 11:5

**<sup>5</sup> So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.**

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- **Paul is a part of the remnant or minority.**
- **God wasn't done with Israel then and He isn't now.**

# Romans 11:5-6

<sup>5</sup> So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. <sup>6</sup> But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

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1. God's goodness, not their performance, won't let them go.
2. You can't have both. You either have grace or works.

# Romans 11:7a

What then?

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**God is not done with Israel.**

**There is still a remnant.**

**How are we to understand what is happening?**

# Romans 11:7-10

**7** What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, **8** as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.”

# Romans 11:7-10

<sup>9</sup> And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,

a stumbling block and a retribution for them;

<sup>10</sup> let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,

and bend their backs forever.”

# Paul's Quotations

## ■ The Law: Deuteronomy 29:4

- <sup>4</sup> But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.

## ■ The prophets: Isaiah 29:10

- <sup>10</sup> For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes (the prophets), and covered your heads (the seers).

## ■ The Psalms: Psalms 69:22-23

- <sup>22</sup> Let their own table before them become a snare; and when they are at peace, let it become a trap.
- <sup>23</sup> Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually.

# **Paul's Answer**

**Those that are physical Israel, but  
have rejected Jesus as the Christ,  
are hardened with spiritual blindness.**

**... What is spiritual blindness?**

# Jesus on Israel's blindness

## Luke 13:31-35

<sup>31</sup> At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." <sup>32</sup> And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.'

# Jesus on Israel's blindness

**<sup>34</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"**

# Jesus on Israel's blindness

## Luke 19:41-44

<sup>41</sup> And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side

# **Jesus on Israel's blindness**

**<sup>44</sup> and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."**

# **Spiritual Blindness**

**Spiritual blindness is an inability to see or understand what God is doing or saying, even when it is right in front of you.**

# Application

- Physical Israel
- The Remnant
- God's grace
- Spiritual blindness

# Application

## Physical Israel

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**God is not giving up on or done with Israel, in spite of their rebellion.**

- We should not have apathy nor anti-Semitism.**
- We should not have blind allegiance to whatever national agenda they may take up.**

# Application

## The Remnant

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It is often the case that the mass of people, even the people under the banner of God (then Jewish and now Christian), do not submit to the Lord.

- Be made wise. We love the Church. We follow Jesus.
  - The Gospel, Hell, sexuality, nationalism
- Know in advance that following Jesus can be lonely
  - Know also that you are not alone in your pursuit of Jesus

# Application

## God's Grace

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God's people are His by grace alone and not by merit.

- Beware of false, merit-based, “gospels”.
- Let this truth guard your heart from pride and drive you toward gratitude and humility.
- Since it is God's grace and not our merit, you and I are unable to disqualify ourselves from forgiveness.
  - You should tell everyone about the Gospel and not discount someone because of their presupposed merits.

# Application

## Spiritual Blindness

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The difficult thing about being insensitive to the working of God, is that the reality of our spiritual blindness keeps us from seeing that very truth.

So what do we do with this?

# Application

## Matthew 15:10-20: Spiritual Blindness

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<sup>10</sup> And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: <sup>11</sup> it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.” <sup>12</sup> Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

# Application

## Matthew 15:10-20: Spiritual Blindness

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<sup>13</sup> He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. <sup>14</sup> Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

<sup>15</sup> But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” <sup>16</sup> And he said, “Are you also still without understanding?”

# Application

## Matthew 15:10-20: Spiritual Blindness

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**<sup>17</sup> Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled?**

**<sup>18</sup> But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. <sup>19</sup> For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. <sup>20</sup> These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."**

# Application

## Revelation 3:15-20: Spiritual Blindness

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<sup>15</sup> “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!

<sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

<sup>17</sup> For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

# Application

## Revelation 3:15-20: Spiritual Blindness

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<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

# Application

## Revelation 3:15-20: Spiritual Blindness

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<sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

# Application

## Spiritual Blindness

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How do we guard against Spiritual blindness?

- Hear from Jesus – Be in the word
- Hope to be offended
  - Opportunity for repentance
- Ask questions when you don't understand
  - Invite others in
- Invite Jesus into your pursuit of Him

# Questions

- Do you have opinions about Israel today?
  - Does your position come from the text? Where?
- Do you wrestle with loneliness in your walk with Jesus?
  - What does that look like for you?
  - How do you handle it?
- Do you ever catch yourself feeling like you have to earn God's favor? Do you let grace be grace?
  - Do you have anyone you know that you think could never come to Christ? Why do you think that?
- What comes to mind for you when we speak about spiritual blindness? Worry, sadness, apathy, other?
  - Read and consider Matthew 7:21-23