

Romans 11:1-10 “Restoration”

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Thesis: Do you ever feel discouraged about the state of your world, and difficulties spreading the gospel? Does it ever feel like God has neglected His promise to restore? Be encouraged, God’s plan to restore shall be fulfilled. In the interim, the faithful God will preserve a faithful remnant. Let’s discover the importance of God’s faithful remnant, and how to be part of that remnant.

Subject: The faithful God’s faithful remnant

Object: Trust the faithful God

Context: The Jewish people are uniquely chosen by Sovereign God (Ch. 9), but Jews have generally chosen to reject Jesus (Ch.10). In this chapter, we find the Jews’ future restoration.

1. The Sovereign God preserves a faithful remnant [1-5]

I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ³ “LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life”? ⁴ But what does the divine response say to him? “I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men

who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”⁵ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

God is not done with the Jews. The church does not replace Israel [1]. Paul uses himself as an example of Jews coming to faith in Christ [1]. God will not *cast away His people whom He foreknew* [2]. Paul notes the example of Elijah recorded in 1Kings 18-19 to remind God’s people that God is faithful to preserve a remnant of the faithful [2-5].

During the time of Elijah, Israel was ruled by wicked king Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Idolatry was rampant, especially worship of Baal and Ashtaroath. God sent Elijah to oppose Israel’s rebellion, and to proclaim God’s message that repentance leads to restoration. The pinnacle of Elijah’s ministry occurred at Mount Carmel. Jehovah demonstrated that there is only one true God, and Elijah defeated the 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of Ashtaroath. Then Jezebel put a ransom for Elijah’s life, and the prophet fled. Elijah was exhausted, afraid, and wanted to die. God provided food, water, and sleep for the weary man of God.

Elijah felt that he was the last one loyal to God and now they were going to kill him. In a still small voice, not an earthquake, tempest or fire, God assured the prophet He had preserved a faithful remnant of 7000 prophets. Then God re-commissioned Elijah for His work.

There are several important lessons for us to glean:

Celebrate and remember God's victories: take time to celebrate and commemorate God's victories, and in the midst of present struggles remember God's faithfulness.

Continue His work: feed on God's provision, receive His rest, and be re-commissioned for His good work.

Trust Him in difficult times: God preserved a faithful remnant in Elijah's day, Paul's day [5], and the present day. There are an estimated 14 million Jews in the world today. Prior to WWII an estimated 16 million. During WWII an estimated 6 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust. God has preserved the Jewish people despite unique persecution, and nearly two thousand years without a country. Similarly, despite continued hostility from Israel's Middle-East Muslim neighbors since the nation's return in 1948, God has preserved the Jews.

There has been and always will be a faithful remnant who are loyal to the faithful God.

Sometimes, God's people can be discouraged as they see a culture that they are in the midst of that is contrary to God. Do not lose heart. Jesus has promised to build His church [Matt 16:18]. There are presently an estimated 2.4 billion people who identify as followers of Jesus.

2. God's chosen people are restored by grace through faith not works [5-6]

Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

God chose the Jews by grace not based on performance [Deut. 7:6-9]. Grace is unmerited favor, based on the kindness and faithfulness of God. If chosen people fail in their performance like the parable of the Prodigal Son [Lu. 15], or delay their response like in the parable of the vineyard workers [Matt. 20], it won't void God's promises or plan. If God's choice is by grace then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

God chose the Church by grace not based on performance [Eph. 2:8]. The Church is all followers of Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews). You can know that God has chosen you by choosing to yield to Him [Jn. 6:37-39]. People are restored to God by grace through faith in Jesus. Your desire to continue to yield to God shows you are restored. Your obedience and good works aren't the basis of being right with God, but prove that you are right with Him.

3. God offers restoration to those who see and trust the faithful God [7-10]

⁷ What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. ⁸ Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day." ⁹ And David says: "Let their table become a

snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. ¹⁰ Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.”

Many Gentiles recognized Jesus as the Christ (Messiah), and some Jews, but most Jews were blind to Jesus' identity as the Messiah [7].

God allows those who don't want to see Him to remain spiritually blind [7-10]

Those who refuse Jesus and life with God have a *spirit of stupor* or deadness re spiritual truth [8].

God gives us over to our own desires. Paul quotes Psalm 69 penned by King David [9-10]. The more people refuse to see their need for restoration, and that Jesus is the only means to restoration with God [Jn. 14:6] the blinder they become to spiritual truth.

“So this is the situation: Most of the people of Israel (Jews) have not found the favor of God they are looking for so earnestly” [7] [NLT]. Religious Jews have sought to be right with God through their performance of God's commandments (religious observance), apart from Christ.

Yet, without yielding to God and receiving Jesus you cannot be restored.

God gives His peace to those who see and trust the faithful God.

There are a handful of ways that people try to be restored: the Jews have tried through religious works, the Greeks through knowledge and either pursuing or avoiding pleasure, and the Romans through power and control. Yet, these ways do not restore our fundamental need of restoration with

God. You cannot experience the peace of God, until you make peace with God by yielding to Jesus [Rom. 5:1]. Trusting God is not fatalism, the idea that all events are predetermined and thus inevitable. Rather, it is a confident understanding that God is Sovereign, good and loving as proven by the cross and resurrection, and that your response to His love and desire to yield to Him is meaningful and reasonable in light of these realities. You can know that you are part of the faithful remnant, and navigate this life and the life to come through trusting the faithful God.

Study Guide Qs

Q1. Describe a time when you felt discouraged about the state of your world, and difficulties spreading the gospel?

Q2. How does the reality of the faithful God's faithful remnant encourage you in this season?

Q3. As we consider the faithful remnant and the life of Elijah, we're encouraged to: celebrate and remember God's victories, continue His work, and trust Him in difficult times. What might that look like in your life in this season?

Q4. How has trusting God impacted your sense of peace and restoration in the midst of challenges? Describe a particular experience.

Digging Deeper:

1. Here is a helpful article regarding the faithful remnant, and why most Jews have rejected Jesus as Messiah <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jews-reject-Jesus.html>
2. Here are some interesting insights about the faithful remnant from an exposition of Is. 1:9, quoted in Rom. 9:29: https://biblehub.com/sermons/auth/statham/the_faithful_remnant.htm