

The Remnant of Grace: God Has Not Rejected His People

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Romans Road to Recovery / Romans 11:1–10

Even in times of spiritual blindness and loneliness, God preserves a remnant chosen by grace, not by works

Notes

05/03 The Remnant of Grace," Subtitle: God Has Not Rejected His People Title: "The Remnant of Grace," Subtitle: God Has Not Rejected His People, Main Idea: Even in times of spiritual blindness and loneliness, God preserves a remnant chosen by grace, not by works, Scripture: 1 Kings 19:14-18

Your salvation isn't held by the strength of your grip on God, but by His unbreakable grip on you. 🙏

Don't miss this week's message: "The Remnant of Grace" (Rom. 11:1-10). 📅 Sunday, May 3rd @ 10:30 AM 📍 Join us in person or watch live online: [Insert Link] #Romans11

Date: Sunday, May 3rd

Text: Romans 11:1-10 (Supporting: 1 Kings 19:14-18)

Title: The Remnant of Grace

Subtitle: God Has Not Rejected His People

Main Idea: Even in times of spiritual blindness and loneliness, God preserves a remnant chosen by grace, not by works.

Introduction:

- During the devastating London Blitz of World War II, the city was relentlessly bombed for 57 consecutive nights. But on December 29, 1940, through the thick, black smoke and raging fires, a photographer captured the massive dome of St. Paul's Cathedral standing tall, entirely untouched. It became a symbol of endurance. No matter how much the world burned around it, the foundation held.

That is the same emotional and theological weight Paul carries in Romans 11. He looks at his own people, the nation of Israel, and sees a spiritual wasteland. They have rejected their Messiah. This leads to the ultimate questions: "Has God permanently replaced Israel with the Church?" and "Did they forfeit their unconditional covenants because of their unbelief?"

- This isn't just a historical debate; it is present and deeply personal.

If God's unconditional promises to the nation of Israel could be cancelled by their failure, then what absolute assurance do you have that God won't cancel His promises to you when you fail?

- [Transition]: When the smoke of the London Blitz cleared, the Cathedral still stood. Here in Romans 11, Paul is telling us that when the smoke of Israel's national unbelief clears, the Cathedral of God's unconditional covenants will still be standing. Why? Because...

The Main Idea: God has not replaced His people. Even in times of spiritual blindness and overwhelming unbelief, God preserves a remnant chosen by grace, guaranteeing that He always keeps His literal, unconditional promises.

- To start, here is one of the most precious realities of God's relationship with His people and a characteristic of that relationship, whether with His chosen people Israel or present-day believers.

I. God's unshakable promise is that He has never, nor will He ever abandon His covenant people. (vv. 1-4)

- To truly grasp the magnitude of this unshakable promise, we have to remember exactly where Paul left us at the end of chapter 10. Paul had just finished quoting God's heartbreaking assessment of the nation of Israel, calling them a '*disobedient and contrary people*' (Rom. 10:21). They had the law, they had the prophets, the Messiah arrived right on their doorstep—and yet they stumbled over Him. From a human perspective, ethnic Israel had completely blown it.
- And this is where human nature and divine nature collide. In our world, when someone continually disobeys you, rejects your provision, and breaks their end of the deal, what do you do? You walk away. You rip up the contract. You find someone else to work with. You move on and chalk that relationship up as a lost cause.
- So the natural, terrifying question hovering over the early church was this: *Did Israel's colossal failure finally exhaust the patience of God? Did God rip up the covenant?* That brings us to verse 1, where Paul answers that question and establishes our first foundational truth about the nature of God's promises...

A. God's unconditional covenants never expire, even when

humanity completely fails (vv. 1-2)

Romans 11:1–2 "1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?"

- Paul asks the ultimate question here in verse 1: "Has God cast away His people?" Paul's answer is an emphatic, absolute "**By no means!**"
 - When Paul asks, 'Has God cast away His people?', the Greek word he uses is *apōtheō*. It means to violently shove away or to stiff-arm. Paul is asking, 'When Israel stumbled, did God stiff-arm them? Did He violently shove them away from Himself so He could start over with someone else?' And Paul's answer is, 'Perish the thought!' God does not stiff-arm the people He has bound Himself to by covenant.
 - When we fail, God does not shove us away; He holds His ground."
 - So, when He says "God forbid," "May it Never Be," "By no means," the Greek phrase Paul uses is *mē genoito*. This is the strongest negative exclamation available in the Greek language. It means, "**Perish the thought!**" Paul is directly refuting what we call Replacement Theology. **God isn't just mildly opposed to abandoning Israel; the very thought is repulsive to His nature.**
- Notice Paul says God did not reject the people He "**foreknew**." In this context, quoting Amos 3:2, foreknowledge is not just about individuals; it is about **God's covenantal choice of a nation**.
- Because never changes, the character and nature of God towards His people of Israel is the same as the character and nature of God towards His people, the church.
- If God could break a national, unconditional covenant just because Israel stumbled, then the foundation of our individual salvation crumbles.

B. Paul uses his own literal, physical DNA as living proof that God keeps His literal promises (v. 1b)

- Notice Paul doesn't just point to his spiritual resume here in v. 1; he points to his birth certificate.

"For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."

- Paul is saying, "God made literal, unconditional promises to Abraham's physical, ethnic seed. I am breathing proof that God does not spiritualize or

cancel His literal promises based on Israel or even humanities choices."

- We can see that reality clearly in what Paul says next, teaching us that...

C. National unbelief does not forfeit unconditional promises; God always preserves a faithful remnant (vv. 2-4 & 1 Kings 19:14-18)

Romans 11:2–4 "2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 "Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." 4 But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.'"

- Here Paul reaches back to Elijah after confronting the prophets of Baal. Elijah was exhausted, depressed, and convinced he was the only faithful Jew left in Israel.
- By the way, we always need to be cautious in our perceptions of those around us and feeling like we are the only ones who are faithful, the only ones committed to God's work, the only ones charging forward. God's response to Elijah was a revelation of divine sovereignty: "**I have kept for myself seven thousand men.**"
- We deny the sovereign work of God in the lives of those around us, when all we do is see the spiritual shortcomings of those around us. Rest assured, we are all equally in need of God's sovereignty to be at work in us, and are all equally secure in the fact that He is at work through us.
- The Greek phrase that Paul uses here (katelipon emautō) means, "I have kept for myself." God preserved these 7,000 to prove that **Israel's temporary unbelief does not destroy His overarching plan.**
 - When you look around the culture and feel completely isolated, remember that God is actively preserving His people for His own glory according to His own plan and purpose.
- [Transition]: So, Paul has proven from history that God always preserves a remnant. But that begs a crucial question: **Who gets to be in it?** Did God pick those 7,000 men in Elijah's day because they were the strongest, the most religious, or the ones who tried the hardest? Did they earn their way into the remnant?
 - Paul answers that in verses 5 and 6, and his answer completely destroys religious systems that answer "yes," and any human pride that might think that we can.

You see...

II. We are kept entirely by the unmerited privilege of God's grace, never by the exhaustion of our own works. (vv. 5-6)

Romans 11:5–6 "5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."

Paul has just proved from history that God always preserves His people. But now, he shifts his eyes from the history of Elijah to the reality of his own day—and our day.

- If salvation is entirely by grace, what does that actually look like in real time? Grace is not just a comforting theological concept; it is the active engine of God's prophetic calendar.
- In verse 5, Paul says, '*Even so then at this present time...*' He is pointing directly to the Jewish believers who are sitting right there in the early church. Paul here crosses the bridge of application from the reality for the nation of Israel to the other side of the bridge that lands with the people of His church.
- But we have to ask a crucial question: "If the nation of Israel stumbled and rejected their Messiah, why didn't God just pause His grace toward Israel entirely during the Church age?" "Why are there Jewish believers at all right now?"
- Paul wants us to see that this remnant hasn't just survived by accident. They are here by divine design, and they serve a massive, prophetic purpose..."

A. The literal present-day remnant is God's living guarantee of a literal future kingdom (v. 5)

- Here in v. 5 Paul says, "Even so then at this present time..."
 - There is, right now in this church age, a remnant of Jewish believers.
 - This present-day remnant of grace isn't a "Plan B" which would suggest that God's plan is somehow dependent upon or can be altered by humanity's choices. Nor is this remnant of Jewish believers a replacement for the nation. They are God's living guarantee that **He will eventually fulfill every literal, geographical, and spiritual promise He has made.** That is true today in the church of Jesus Christ and is also true to the nation of Israel in the coming Kingdom.
- The Greek word for "remnant" (*leimma*) carries the idea of a surviving trace pulled from the wreckage. Looking at the spiritual ruin around us, the church isn't

a humanly triumphant earthly majority right now; however, it is a thriving and surviving trace, sustained purely by the election of grace, even at times in the face of intense persecution.

- [Transition]: Paul looks at the Jewish believers of his own day and calls them a 'remnant according to the election of grace.' But we have to be very careful here, because 'grace' is the most hijacked word in the Christian vocabulary. We like to think of grace as a booster cable that jump-starts our own engine of good works. But in verse 6, Paul draws a hard theological line in the sand.

B. Grace is a gift we could never earn, because the moment you earn it, it ceases to be a gift, it ceases to be grace (v. 6a)

- Paul draws a hard theological line in the sand. Grace is receiving the absolute, unmerited favor of God. It is not a paycheck for good behavior. God reduces our "works" to zero so that we have absolutely no choice but to say, "The Lord **alone** delivered me."

C. You cannot dilute divine grace with human merit; God demands all the glory for His sovereign plan (v. 6b)

- Paul says in v. 6, "*Otherwise grace is no longer grace.*" God gets all the glory for preserving His remnant because He does the preserving **from start to finish**.
- Paul writes that if salvation is of works, grace "is no longer" (*ouketi ginetai*) grace. Mixing works with grace doesn't just dilute it; it annihilates the definition of the word.

If you contribute even a fraction of works to your salvation, grace ceases to exist.

- [Transition]: Paul has made it crystal clear: salvation is 100% the unmerited privilege of grace. You cannot bring a single ounce of your own merit to the table. But what happens to the rest of the nation—and what happens to religious people today—who refuse to drop their spiritual resumes? What happens when you demand that God look at your works?
- You step right into the terrifying reality of verse 7.

III. When we reject grace to trust in our own righteousness, we face the unavoidable peril of spiritual hardening. (vv. 7-10)

Romans 11:7–10 "7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; 8 just as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day." 9 And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them. 10 "Let their eyes be darkened to see not, And bend their backs forever.""

The first thing that we see in these verses is that...

A. Spiritual pride breeds spiritual blindness, causing us to miss the very Savior standing in front of us. (v. 7)

- Israel intensely sought after righteousness, but they missed it because they sought it through the law rather than by faith in Christ.
- Notice this, they weren't hardened because they were lazy; they were hardened because they were exhausting themselves running in the wrong direction.
- The word for "blinded" or "hardened" (epōrōthēsan) is a medical term used to describe a thick callus forming over a fractured bone. The more you trust in your own righteousness, the thicker the skin over your heart becomes, until you can no longer feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
- [Transition]: Israel was blinded by their own pride because they were running in the wrong direction. But verse 8 takes this to a much darker place. This wasn't just Israel being stubborn; this became a divine, judicial sentence. The terrifying rule of Scripture is this: if you continuously harden your heart against God's grace, eventually, God will give you what you are working so hard to do, have a hard heart towards Him and His grace.

B. The most terrifying judgment of God is when He finally gives a stubborn heart exactly what it demands (v. 8)

- Quoting Isaiah and Deuteronomy, here in v. 8 Paul describes a "spirit of stupor"—eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear. **A stubborn, continual rejection of God's grace ultimately leads to a confirmed, judicial hardening by God.**
- The Greek word for "stupor" (katanyxis) refers to the numbness caused by the prick of a poisonous insect. Israel's reliance on their own works put them in a spiritual coma. Relying on religion over relationship creates an anesthetized church—going through the motions but entirely poisoned against the reality of God.

C. Without the finished work of Christ, your religious routines will become the very trap that destroys you (vv. 9-10)

- Quoting David (Psalm 69), Paul in v. 9 notes that their "table" (their blessings, their religious feasts, the law itself) became a snare and a trap.
- When we trust in our religious checklists instead of Jesus, our very religion becomes our stumbling block.

Conclusion:

- On December 29, 1940, the photographer who snapped that famous picture of St. Paul's Cathedral couldn't stop the bombs from falling. He couldn't put the burning city back together. But by capturing that indestructible dome standing tall through the smoke, he gave the people of London the exact thing they needed to survive: Hope. They knew that if the foundation held through the fire, they would too.
- In Romans 11, Paul is doing the exact same thing for us. He looks at the spiritual devastation of his own nation, but instead of panicking, he points our eyes to the indestructible dome of God's unconditional promises.
- The existence of a Jewish remnant today is God's living proof of a glorious truth: God never abandons His original people. Even when Israel stumbled, God did not tear up His covenant with them to start over with someone else. He has preserved a remnant, and He will faithfully fulfill **every** literal promise He made to them in the coming Kingdom. And because the Cathedral of God's promise to them is still standing through the bombardment of life in this sin-cursed world, you can have absolute, unshakable confidence that His promise to you will never collapse either.

"Because we serve a God who keeps His unconditional covenants by grace, here are three ways this text must change how you live this week:

1. Drop Your Spiritual Resume (Check Your Heart for Hardening)

- "Israel missed their Messiah because they were exhausted trying to earn what God only gives freely. Are you approaching God this morning with your spiritual checklist—your church attendance, your moral behavior, your giving, maybe even your zeal—hoping He is impressed or even thinking, "at least I am not like them?" That is the exact recipe for a calloused, hardened heart. Drop your resume. Grace requires empty hands. Rest entirely in the unmerited privilege of the cross."

2. Reject the Lie of Isolation (See the 7,000)

- "Elijah was depressed and ready to die because he believed the enemy's greatest lie: 'You are the only one left.' **The enemy wants you to feel isolated.** He wants you to look at the culture, see the smoke, and feel overwhelmingly alone. But God always has His 7,000. **You are not alone.** God is actively preserving a people for Himself in this very room. Reject isolation, lean into the local church (God's people), and draw strength from the remnant God has placed around you." It is the plan of the evil one to keep you from here and from these people because he

knows that together, we stand, and the gates of hell will not prevail. Triumph is found together as God's church, which is by His design.

3. Base Your Security on His Grip, Not Yours

- "When you fail—when you stumble, fall short, and sin this week—do not let the enemy convince you that God has cast you away. God did not cancel His covenant with the nation of Israel when they stumbled, and **He will not cancel His covenant with you.**

Your salvation is not sustained by the strength of your grip on God; it is sustained by the omnipotent, unbreakable grip of God on you.

- God's promises never expire, and His grace never fails.
- Walk in the freedom of that security today.
- Next week, we will see how God actually uses this temporary stumbling of Israel to bring the riches of salvation to the entire Gentile world, proving that His wisdom is vastly deeper and more glorious than we can ever comprehend.