

Romans – The Crown Jewel of Salvation

55- What About Israel? What about God?

Romans 11:1-32

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You will not understand the nature of the gospel apart from Romans because it is central to New Testament thought. It's a little like trying to comprehend a hot fudge sundae without the hot-fudge.

A Review of Romans 9-10

God chooses those He will save through faith in the gospel. We are responsible for our rejection of Him and His gospel.

Likewise the Jews are responsible for their refusal to turn to Christ. They have not come to faith because God has not chosen to have mercy on them. What then becomes of God's promised faithfulness to his people? What becomes of His Word? The great majority of Israel has rejected her Messiah and is accursed and cut off from Christ. What does this all mean?

...we need to recognize that is chapter [Romans 11] is one of the most difficult in Scripture to understand.

- Tim Keller, Romans for You

Romans uses a rhetorical question system called "DIATRIBE", which teachers used to provoke thought. Romans 11 is one of those places, and that first question is, "So what about Israel?"

Questions like these are vitally important and have implication for your life in how you view Jews and how you see God.

Two key objectives:

- Gain Knowledge (surface truth) so you can understand better God's word.
- Gain Application –apply truth (deeper insight) so as to live pleasing to God.

No chapter in the New Testament reveals more than Romans 11. It is all about the way God has acted and will act toward Israel and toward the nations in history. And therefore it is all about who God is and what he is like.

- John Piper

What about Israel? (*Has he rejected his people? And if He has what does that mean for believing Christians?*)

Truth #1: God has not rejected Israel.

Application #1: Rightly relating to God is and has always been about having TRUST in the right place.

Israel is a nation born from God's interaction with an individual in Genesis 12.

God tells Abram to do three things:

- (leave your country) - Security
- (leave your kin and friends) - Community
- (leave father's house) - Your Identity

Jews in Jesus day had put their eggs (faith) in one prophetic basket, one interpretation which was a DELIVERER-- a powerful Messiah, overthrowing oppressors.

They had a confidence in "We are God's people. We are different. We have a place because we DO THE THINGS THAT PLEASE GOD."

For non-Jews of Paul's day it was about philosophy and knowledge. Both views have misguided focus.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me

New Testament “gospel faith” is focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ as the substitute for, and savior from sin. Who He was and what He accomplished is the core. It is putting your life on the line just like Abraham did.

Genesis 15:6 And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Romans 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

It’s a startling statement and indictment for the Jews of Paul’s day.

Rom 11: 7-8, “Israel failed to attain what it was seeking.” (which is a righteousness of appeasing God by doing all kinds of religious things)

Truth #2: God has not abandoned His Plan for Israel; Christianity is not plan B.

Application #2: Don’t allow circumstances to cloud your view of God and what He is doing in His salvation story.

What is happening right now in your life is not the whole story, nor were the circumstances that begged for conclusive answers when Paul wrote this letter. There is more going on than you see. Humans interpret their existence. We are good at jumping to conclusions because we think we know.

The issue with jumping to conclusions is that the very character of God is at stake! Are his promises solid? If God is done with Israel then how can we depend on Romans 8:31-39 that says “nothing will separate us from the love of Christ”?.. for those who have placed our confidence in the death and resurrection of Jesus to make us right with God.

Paul answers the question of “is God done with Israel?” with an emphatic NO and by pointing to himself. God reached him!

Paul also points to deeper application by pointing to Elijah (1 Kings 18), who is an example of the committed finding themselves in unsettling circumstances and concluding despair vs. trusting God with the whole story.

God's response to Elijah (Rom 11:4) is the same to you and to me. You don't see it all. In the midst of suffering and unexplainable circumstance of loss and disappointment God says, "I'm working out my plan."

At any given moment, God is doing 10,000 things in your life...and you might be aware of three of them.

- John Piper

Truth #3: Respond to God's work with humility and trust in His mysterious, but good sovereignty.

Application #3: Only by God's mercy and grace are you drawn into the family of God. (vv. 25-32)

Pride blinds. Paul's teaching in Romans 11 is put forth for a reason... "so that you would not be wise in your own eyes v. 27, and everyone is a sinner by nature and choice v. 32"

Our standing and our understanding of salvation through faith alone, in Christ alone, should never be viewed with even a hint of "we are smart" and "they are fools."

Believers need to embrace biblical truth. Israel is precious in the sight of God, as they are the descendants of Abraham with whom God made a covenant promise.

Paul wants the believers in Rome to understand...God is at work right now bringing people into faith in Christ—"grafting in" those that were believed to be outside of God's chosen people. (vv17-24)

There is a thread of prophesy put on display... (v. 25) "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in". Unless you sit here with Jewish heritage, you are a gentile. The hint is there is a time coming when the eyes of the Israelites will be opened. They will view Jesus as He is, the promised Messiah, and will utter the same thing we have cried out..."save me, Lord Jesus...I am the sinner."