

Romans: The Crown Jewel of Salvation

“What about Israel?”

Romans 11

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa 11/1/15

“...we need to recognize that this chapter [Romans 11] is one of the most difficult in Scripture to understand.” – Keller, Timothy J. Romans 8-16 for You.

“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

I. Paul PERSONALLY proves God has not rejected Israel.

Rom. 11:1 “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.**”

Paul first debunks the myth that God has rejected Israel by looking at what God has done in his own life. He never, ever gets over the saving grace of God, or gets “used to” the fact that he’s a Christian.

If you’re a Christian, you’re living proof that God’s Word can be trusted, that God keeps His promises!

What about you? What in your life is proof positive that His Word is at work in you? What can you point to in your life to show others that God keeps His promises?

II. Paul HISTORICALLY proves that God has not rejected Israel.

Rom. 11:2-6 “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? “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” But what is God’s reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.”

Paul reminds his readers that God doesn’t require a “majority.” He accomplishes His will with just a remnant of people who will bring Him glory.

III. Paul shows God's PROVIDENCE in what He's doing with Israel for the sake of the Gospel.

Rom. 11:11-12 "So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

Paul reminds his readers that God is always causing all things to work together for good for His people (Rom. 8:28), according to His plan, and all for His glory.

God is always at work, and sometimes He lets us watch.

What about you? Today is not the whole story, but only part. In what area(s) of your life are you tempted to write your own ending to the story? Where are you connecting the dots on your own when in reality, you have very little dots to work with? Where have you forgotten that today is only part of the story, but not the whole?

IV. Paul reminds us of the ever-present element of MYSTERY in God's sovereignty and election.

Rom. 11:25-27 "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. 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"; 'and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.'"

"The statement that 'all Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11:26-27) may foretell a mass conversion of Jews, or it may assert the salvation of all the 'remnant' (Rom. 11:5) of God's people, that is 'Israel' in the spiritual sense (see Rom. 2:29; 9:6-8). Whatever the case, the effects of God's 'election' of Abraham's descendants—however they are defined—are permanent (Rom. 11:28-29)." – The ESV Gospel Transformation Bible.

Prov. 3:5-7 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. **Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.** ⁸It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

What about you? Think of something in your life for which you have little to no answer or explanation. As God allows that to remain mysterious, how might He working in you to keep you from becoming “wise in your own eyes”?

V. God’s personal, historical, providential, mysterious ways leave us in grateful, joyful awe, with only one appropriate response—WORSHIP!

Rom. 11:33-36 “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.