

**Subject: God's Plan for Israel – Part 1**

**Scripture: Romans 11:1-10**

The nation of Israel is in the news more and more. We hear about anti-Semitism on the rise. What happens to Israel and the Jews should be of great interest to Christians. Paul was interested in Israel, but it was not a casual interest or a political interest. It was a spiritual interest and it had to do with God's covenants with Israel and His promises to Israel. Paul's interest had to do with God's character and integrity. It had to do with the gospel itself.

Israel is at the heart of God's plan of redemption. Israel is a chosen people, a unique people. They are not just another nation; they are a special, one-of-a-kind nation. They are God's possession (vs. 1, 2, "his people"). Other nations have come and gone, but Israel remains. They have been preserved by God all these years. Israel is not only God's ancient people, but also God's present people and His future people.

Israel was not only a chosen people and a blessed people, but they were a disobedient people and a stubborn people. When Jesus came they rejected Him as their Messiah.

**John 1:11** *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

**John 19:15** *But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.*

**Acts 3:13-15** <sup>13</sup> *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. <sup>14</sup> But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; <sup>15</sup> And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.* They rejected the Messiah and asked for a murderer (Barabbas).

Israel stumbled over Christ as a stumbling stone and a rock of offense (Rom. 9:32-33). They rejected God's righteousness in Christ and tried to establish their own self-righteousness. God continued to stretch out His hands to a disobedient and obstinate people (Rom. 10:21). Since Israel rejected Christ and His righteousness, God would have been justified to reject them forever. Had He done that? Would He do that? That is the question Paul deals with in Rom. 11.

What was at stake was the very character and integrity of God. God had made covenants and promises with Israel (Rom. 9:4). God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2). He is the one true God (Jn. 17:3) and His word is true (Jn. 17:17). God could not fully and finally reject Israel because all of His promises have not yet been fulfilled. If God rejected His chosen people Israel, His Word would be false and His character would be discredited, and the gospel would not be a reliable place to put our faith. If God can't be trusted to keep His promises and covenants with Israel, why would we expect Him to keep His promises to believers in Christ? That's what is at stake here.

Paul sets out to prove that Israel's rejection (being cast away or being set aside) is not total or permanent. Here is how Paul deals the subject in Romans 11.

1. Israel's rejection is *partial* (vs. 1-10)
2. Israel's rejection is *passing* (vs. 11-24)
3. Israel's rejection is *purposeful* (vs. 25-36)

This chapter presents what we might call “Remnant Theology.” From the time that God called Israel to be His people, there has always been a remnant of believers. Vance Havner used to say “God has always been in the remnant business.”

## **1. THE BLESSED MINORITY**

- A. Paul (vs. 1) – If God saved Paul, He could save anybody. Paul was on the road to Damascus on a mission to terrorize Christians. He put them in prison and persecuted them, but the Lord saved him, and he was a Jew (Phil. 3:5-6). Paul was living proof that God had not rejected all Jews.
- B. Elijah and the 7,000 (vs. 2-4) – God told Elijah that he wasn’t the only faithful person.
- C. The chosen remnant (vs. 5-6) – God’s remnant is blessed by His grace (undeserved favor) and not by works or what they deserve. God’s people are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Because we are saved by grace, we are thankful and humble.

## **2. THE BLINDED MAJORITY**

They are described in the Old Testament Scriptures (the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms)

***Deuteronomy 29:4*** *Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.*

***Isaiah 29:10*** *For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.*

***Psalms 69:22-23***<sup>22</sup> *Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.*<sup>23</sup> *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.*

- A. Their search (vs. 7) – They searched for righteousness, but settled for self-righteousness. Jesus said in **Matthew 5:20** *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* They searched for salvation by works and missed salvation by grace.
- B. Their sleep (vs. 8) – God put them into deep spiritual sleep so they did not see and did not hear.
- C. Their snare (vs. 9) – God brought them to the table of privilege and blessing and fellowship, but it became a snare (trap) and a stumbling block. Their blessings turned into a curse and their privilege became their punishment.
- D. Their slavery (vs. 10) – The bowing down of their back describes their slavery and oppression and their ultimate destruction. It describes people in a hunched-over position as they are led into bondage, suffering, and death.

These unbelievers are responsible for rejecting Christ. They refused to see what they could have seen and therefore God blinded them. They refused to hear what they could have heard and therefore God caused them to be deaf. They were cold and indifferent toward God’s truth and therefore He put them in a spiritual slumber. They took God’s blessings for granted and that became the trap that destroyed them. Are you one of the blessed or one of the blinded?