

Twelve Lessons

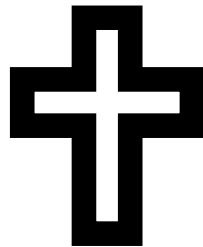
on

Romans III

(Chapters 11-16)

by

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THE SURVIVAL OF ISRAEL – LESSON 1

Romans 11:1-36

Introduction: One of the enigmas of History has been the survival of Israel. This nation has survived one national calamity after another. In A.D. 70, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus the Roman general who had over one million Jews slaughtered. Sixty-five years later the state was overthrown, 500,000 were killed and the Jews were cast out from Judea and Jerusalem. Since that time they have been killed and driven out of one country after another. Hitler had over 6 million Jews killed during his reign of horror. In spite of all their persecution, they were declared a state in 1948 and today are a viable nation. Israel is one of the strongest evidences we have that there is a God in heaven.

1. The theme of this chapter is that Israel has not been set aside forever. Paul brings witnesses to the stand to prove his point. Although, Israel has fallen and been rejected, God's covenant promises will be fulfilled.
2. There is a school of thought which says that in the church God has fulfilled everything in the Old Testament and there is no future for the Jew as a nation. The other view (and the correct one) is that God has set Israel aside for an age, and at some future time God will fulfill to the letter every promise He has made to Israel as a nation.

Lesson Goals:

1. To study how God preserved a remnant.
2. To examine the blindness of Israel.
3. To consider the salvation of the Gentiles.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Remnant – The part of a community or nation that remains after a dreadful judgment or devastating calamity, especially those who have escaped and remain to form the nucleus of a new community (Isa 10:20-23). The survival of a righteous remnant rests solely on God's providential care for His Chosen People and His faithfulness to keep His COVENANT promises. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)
2. Blindness – Judicial Blindness. This phase of blindness or hardness of heart is characteristic of the nation Israel as a result of its rejection of the Messiah. It extends throughout the entire Christian age since the crucifixion of Christ. (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary)
3. Graft – In horticulture, the process of uniting a shoot or bud with a growing plant so they grow as one. The apostle Paul used this procedure to illustrate the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in God's plan. The natural branches of the good olive tree (Israel) were broken off (because of Israel's unbelief) and the alien branches of a wild olive tree (the Gentiles) were grafted onto the root of the good olive tree (because of the Gentiles' faith; Rom 11:17-24). (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

I. THE REMNANT – Vs. 1 – *“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.”*

A. A Present Remnant – Himself – Vs. 1

1. Himself – Although Paul's salvation experience is recorded three times in the book of Acts, it should never be used as an example of how present day believers are saved.
 - a. Paul uses two phrases that are points of prophecy of how Israel will be saved. He says that he is *“one born out of due time”* in I Cor. 15:8 and in I Tim. 1:16 that God saved him *“that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.”*
 - b. His Damascus road experience of seeing a blinding light, seeing the resurrected Lord, and hearing His voice is not the ordinary salvation experience but is a “pattern” of the Revelation of Jesus when He comes in great glory and presents Himself to Israel, face to face.
 - c. If God's foreknowledge can work in the life of an individual, will it work in the life of an entire nation? Most certainly. God is omniscient and knows how to predetermine Israel's restoration.
2. During the church age – The remnant is composed of believing Jews (Rom . 11:4-5).

B. A Past Remnant – Elijah – Vs. 2

1. In Elijah's period, 7,000 had not bowed the knee to Baal (I Kings 19:18) Note: Why is Elijah translated Elias in the New Testament. You never find “ah” translated in the New Testament because you cannot translate it.
2. In Isaiah's period, it was the “very small remnant” that caused Israel not to become like Sodom and

Gomorrha.

3. During the Babylonian captivity, we have Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Esther, and Mordecai, the Jewish Remnant.
4. After the captivity, we have Ezra and Nehemiah.
5. At the first coming of our Lord, we have John the Baptist, Simeon, and Anna as “*them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem* (Luke 2:38).”

C. A Prophetic Remnant – During the great tribulation a remnant out of all Israel will turn to Jesus as Messiah.

1. They will become His witnesses after the rapture of the Church (Rev. 7:3-8).
2. Some of them will become martyrs (Rev. 6:9-11).
3. Still others will survive to enter the millennial kingdom (Zech. 12:6-13:9).
4. Old Testament Prophecy in Ezekiel 37 of the Valley of Dry Bones. In 1948, there was a stirring of the bones as the Nation Israel came back into existence. It is true that “there is no breath in them” but if the bones are back together will not the rest of the prophecy be fulfilled?

D. Point: The greatest argument that Paul uses against the idea of God completely rejecting Israel is “salvation by grace.” This blows away the doctrine proposed today that people are saved differently in different dispensations. If Israel was saved by faithfulness, then she would be lost by unfaithfulness. But God saved Israel by grace and therefore she has not been cast aside forever.

E. Practical Application – As it was in Elijah’s day, so it was in Paul’s and ever has been. God never leaves Himself without a remnant. There have been times in the history of the church, as it was with Israel, when the lamp of testimony has burned dim, but it has never gone out.

II. THE RETRIBUTION

A. Israel has become Calloused – Vs. 7 – “*...the rest were blinded...*”

1. “*Blinded*” – porou – A medical term meaning “a callous.” When someone uses a tool for a long time, callouses form on the hand. Spiritually, when people constantly ignore the Word of God and live on in willful wickedness, callouses are formed on their souls.
2. Israel has become insensitive to the awfulness of their sin.

B. Israel has become Coldhearted – Vs. 8 – “*...the spirit of slumber...*”

1. “*Slumber*” – katanuxis – The numbness that comes from a sting of certain insects. It is also used of the disease, leprosy, and how it renders the flesh insensitive. Because Israel has hardened their heart against the truth, they have become apathetic to any solicitation from God.
2. Israel has also become completely unresponsive to God’s voice.

C. Israel has become Circumvented – Vs. 11 – “*Have they stumbled that they should fall?...*”

1. “*Fall*” – paraptoma – “a false step, transgression”
2. The “*fall*” was their unbelief causing God to circumvent or go around Israel and give the Gospel to the Gentiles.

III. THE RESTORATION

A. The Riches of the Gentiles – That God would bless the Gentiles and save them through the Gospel. This is no doubt one of the great benefits of Israel’s rejection.

B. The Restoration of the Israelites – Vs. 15 – Paul argues if the reconciliation of the Gentiles was a marvel, the restoration of the Jews will be even greater.

1. At the giving of the Gospel to the Gentiles, there was no great ecological transformation.
2. At the restoration of the nation Israel, the Millennial Kingdom will be ushered in with all of its details.
3. Not only will man be released from the curse but also the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms.

IV. THE RESPONSIBILITY – There are two metaphors used by Paul to show that Israel can never be totally and finally rejected.

A. The Example

1. First fruits and the lump – In this case, the Israelites offered the first portion of the dough or the first cake to God which is an example of God’s covenant with Abraham bringing all of his descendants into the covenant. If the first fruits were dedicated to God, then the lump was also dedicated.
2. Root and the branches – Again, Abraham being the root brings the branches, his descendants into the covenant. It was an unconditional covenant with Abraham and his seed.

B. The Exhortation – Vs. 17-22

1. Simply, the Gentiles were grafted into the tree and became partakers of the covenant. This is not individual salvation but Gentiles being brought into the plan of God. Just as Israel, there will be with the Gentiles those who do not believe. To interpret this as individual salvation would be to say that one can

lose his salvation and this would be contrary to other scriptures about eternal salvation.

2. The warning is that if God would “*spared not the natural branches*”, he would have no problem breaking off the wild branches.
 - a. There were “natural branches” who were not saved, unbelieving Jews, who were cut off and will be cut of, and will not inherit eternal glory.
 - b. There will be “wild branches” who are outwardly Christian but not possessing genuine faith that will be dealt with exactly like the unbelieving Jews.

C. The Encouragement – Vs. 23--24

1. God did graft into the olive tree, wild branches, the Gentiles. This was a miracle, something contrary to nature. No horticulturist would graft a wild branch into a natural branch because it would overcome the natural and produce wild fruit. But God works miracles.
2. God will again graft Israel back into the olive tree, the unbelief of Israel shall someday be changed into faith.