

(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. 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?

(3) “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left --- and they seek my life!” (1 Kings 19:10, 14)

(4) But what is God’s reply to him?

“I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”
(1 Kings 19:18)

(5) 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.

(7) What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, as it is written,

“God gave them a stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.” (Isaiah 29:10 and Deuteronomy 29:4)

(9) And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them;
Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs
forever.” (Psalm 69:22,23)

(11) 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!

Think on These Things

- 1) The question of verse 1 is very important. The Jews are God’s “chosen people,” but they have also misbehaved and rejected God continuously over the generations. For these reasons, has God given up on them? The unstated implication is this, “If He has, will God also give up on me if I continually disobey and walk apart from Him?” What is Paul’s answer?

No, God has NOT given up on His chosen people. Rather, in this time of Jewish rejection He is extending His kindness (grace) even more generously to other peoples, hoping the Jews will react to His kind actions in humble repentance and renewed faith commitments.

- 2) Skim 1 Kings 17:1 through 19:18. This is the background story of Elijah referred to in verses 2-3 of our passage. What is the significant spiritual victory that precedes Elijah’s depression? What was said that shifted his emotional “high” to an emotional “low”? Can you understand why he is so angry as he stands before God complaining? What’s his conclusion?

Elijah had just successfully challenged the 450 false prophets of Baal and 400 false prophets of Asherah on Mount Carmel, with God sending down fire from heaven to consume a public sacrifice. As a result, all the false prophets were slaughtered, and God brought rain to Israel.

Queen Jezebel, however, immediately threatened Elijah’s life upon hearing of this event, and Elijah fled and hid in a cave. Elijah complained to God that only he was left as God’s champion in the land; everyone else had turned away from God and killed all the other prophets. He believed he was the ONLY one who believed in Israel’s true God anymore.

- 3) Vs. 4-6 introduce an important concept: God preserves a “remnant” of the faithful. Here in this passage it pertains to whom? What about today? See what Jesus says in Matthew 7:13.

Originally, God identified 7000 Israelites who had not become idol worshippers. The quote in Romans indicates a “remnant” of faithful Jews has always existed across time, even if the majority of Jews became unfaithful. It implies a remnant remains true to this day. In Mt. 7:13, Jesus says the gate leading to life is “narrow”, but the gate leading to death is “wide.”

- 4) Can you see the concept of a remnant being applied to the Christian church today? Explain.

Generally speaking, the concept would imply that regardless of membership size of Christian churches, there would remain a ‘smaller’ remnant representing the true believers who will go to heaven. Others may be attending church more like a club, but never actually encountering Christ personally to find salvation from their sins. They may be the ones Jesus referred to in the Matthew, “Depart from Me, I never knew you” (Mt.7:21-23 and 25:31-46).

- 5) Israel is always considered the “chosen” of God. The “elect” is a term used for God’s Christian church, the Body of Christ. (Election can sometimes be used of Israel, but, here, it clearly is differentiated between chosen and elect.) How are the modern “elect” selected by God (v.6)?

The ‘Elect’ are selected by God’s plan of grace (undeserved favor and kindness) in response to personal faith in Jesus. No one can earn this position by performing enough good works.

- 6) The elect is receiving today what God offered the Jews. God aims to provoke them to jealousy (v.11), something we addressed in a previous lesson. Looking at verses 7-10, how would you describe the Jew’s situation of faith today? Who or what has caused this? What don’t they get?

They can see. They can hear. But they do NOT grasp what God is truly saying to them. The Jews are in a stupor (v.8) and are hardened towards God (v.7). They continue to strive to earn a salvation that God has provided for them freely through Jesus Christ.... In so doing, they stand outside of God’s grace!

- 7) Is God’s current plan to ruin the Jews? According to v.11, what is the result of Israel’s falling away from God? If this is so, what do you think is the answer to v.12? The key principle to understand is that God’s original plan, promised to Abraham, is not forgotten or revoked. His chosen people are still very dear to Him, and He will fulfil His promise to exalt them.

No, Paul makes it clear that if the Jews’ current stumbling brings riches to the world of Gentiles, just imagine what their inclusion (obedience) will bring! Paul sees an eventual returning. God is currently using Gentile believers to challenge (provoke to jealousy) the Jews’ concepts of God and their place as His chosen people. He is confronting their generational disobedience across the years!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: