



Christian Life Fellowship

Becoming fully devoted followers of Christ



God's Plan For The Jews

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Introduction:

Paul uses this eleventh chapter of Romans to let people know that God is not through with the people of Israel. In this part of his letter, Paul discusses a literal future for a literal nation. There were five witnesses to prove that there was a future in God's plan for the Jews.

I. Paul himself is a witness

If God had given up on the Israeli people, then the Apostle Paul could not have been converted. But we know that Paul had a conversion that was dramatic and the result of the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul's conversion was quite different from most of ours. I don't expect that when we found Christ any of us saw the glory of God, nor heard God's voice from heaven, nor saw a blinding light, nor were we thrown to the ground.

The conversion of Paul is a picture of how the nation of Israel will be saved when Christ comes to establish his kingdom on earth. The details of this restoration and salvation are given in [Zechariah 12:10- 13:1](#).

What will happen at that time is that the nation will see Christ, recognize and acknowledge Him as the Messiah. They will repent and receive Him. Paul refers to himself as the first witness. If God could save Paul who had been named Saul and went about persecuting Christians, then God could save the entire nation of Israel.

II. Elijah is a witness

In his day, Elijah thought the entire nation had rejected God and totally departed from Him. Elijah discovered that there was a remnant of true believers.

He thought he was alone in his faith and service to God, but he found there were 7,000 others who had not bowed down to Baal.

Please understand that this remnant of Jewish people is saved by faith and God's grace, not by their works and keeping laws. Israel's main concern was that they try to please God with good works. As a nation they refused to submit to Christ's righteousness, just like religious self-righteous people do today.

If there was a remnant saved, what happened to the rest of the people? They had been hardened or a better translation was, "their eyes were blinded." This happened because they resisted the truth.

The same thing happened to Pharaoh when God was dealing with him. This is a caution for us today. Do not harden your heart to God's truth. We choose how we will respond to things that come into our lives. We may have heartache. We may have disappointment. People may fail us. People may say cruel things or untrue things about us. People may misunderstand us, but how we respond to them is critical. We can harden our hearts, shut down, never let people into our lives again and who loses? We do.

We can also harden our hearts toward God's Word and His Spirit. I don't want to hear that truth. I resist

what God may be saying to me. When I do that, I am hardening my heart against God. We would expect pagans to harden their hearts toward God, but we do not expect God's people to do so.

In verse 9 and 10, Paul refers to **Psalm 69:22-23- Let the bountiful table set before them become a snare, and let their security become a trap. Let their eyes go blind so they cannot see, and let their bodies grow weaker and weaker.** He speaks of their table to become a snare meaning that their blessings would turn into burdens and judgments.

This is exactly what happened to Israel. The spiritual blessings that should have led them to Christ became a snare to them that actually kept them from Christ. Their practices and observances became substitutes for the real experience of salvation. It is sad to say, but the same thing happens to people today. The spiritual blessings of God that should lead people to Christ actually at times become a burden to them.

Hardness in heart has become a way of life for the Israeli people until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. **Romans 11:25-I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud and start bragging. Some of the Jews have hard hearts, but this will last only until the complete number of Gentiles comes to Christ.**

III. The Gentiles

In the second chapter of Romans Paul used the Gentiles to prove that the Jews are guilty of sinning. But in chapter 11 he uses the Gentiles to prove that God has a future restoration for the Jewish people. Follow Paul's logic. When the Jews rejected the Gospel, God sent it to the Gentiles and they believed and were saved. Israel fell, she was lost and was cast away, but none of these things indicates that the nation of Israel was finally judged by God.

Paul goes on to say that because of these things, salvation came to the Gentiles and God had promised that the Gentiles would be saved. If God kept His promise to the Gentiles, don't you think He will also keep His promises to the Jewish nation? There is a future for Israel. Paul calls it their fullness and their receiving. Today Israel is fallen spiritually, but when Christ returns, the nation will rise again.

IV. The Patriarchs

Paul looked back to the past to show Israel's heritage. From the start, God had set this people apart for Himself. God used two illustrations to show he was not done with the Jews.

1. The lump of dough that Paul refers to **Numbers 15:18-21- "Give the people of Israel the following instructions: When you arrive in the land where I am taking you, you will eat from the crops that grow there. But you must set some aside as a gift to the LORD. Present a cake from the first of the flour you grind and set it aside as a gift, as you do with the first grain from the threshing floor. Throughout the generations to come, you are to present this offering to the LORD each year from the first of your ground flour.** The first part of the dough was to be offered up to God as a symbol that the entire lump of dough belonged to Him. The concept is that when God accepts the part, He sanctifies the whole. We understand the example when we realize that God accepted Abraham as the founder of the nation and in doing so He accepted his descendants too.

2. The olive tree that This is a symbol of the nation of Israel.

Hosea 14:4-6 The LORD says, "Then I will heal you of your idolatry and faithlessness, and my love will know no bounds, for my anger will be gone forever! I will be to Israel like refreshing dew from heaven. It will blossom like the lily; it will send roots deep into the soil like the cedars in Lebanon. Its branches will spread out like those of beautiful olive trees, as fragrant as the cedar forests of Lebanon.

Paul is sharing the place of Israel in the plan of God, not the relationship of individual believers to God. Paul talks about branches being broken off which refer to the Jewish people who didn't believe. He also saw an amazing thing that other branches were grafted into the tree. These branches represented Gentiles. Paul tells the Gentiles that they were obligated to the Jews and so they should not boast about their new spiritual position. The Gentiles entered God's plan because of faith and not because of anything good they had done.

According to prophecy, the entire professing Gentile church will be cut off because of apostasy. In the last days it tells us in [I Tim 4](#) and [II Tim 3](#) that there will be a great departing from the faith. God will break off the Gentiles that have fallen away but the Jews He will save. No matter how far the Jews may stray from God, the roots are still good. God is still the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This means that the olive tree will come to life again.

V. God Himself is a witness

God's timing is perfect. What has happened to Israel is all part of God's plan. God knows what He is doing. The hardening of Israel as a nation is neither final nor total. God in His grace is working with the Gentiles and taking out a people for His name. When God is finished visiting the Gentiles and building His church, then he will once more deal with the Jews.

God's promise in [\(11:26\)](#) is that He will save His people and He will keep His promise. God has always kept His promises in the past and He will not fail to keep this promise as well.

Conclusion:

In each of these witnesses, there is agreement that there is a future for Israel. Israel will be reconciled and received and it will be like a resurrection. In the meantime, this is the day of grace for us Gentiles. We have been given incredible opportunities to love and serve God. We have been extended His grace and it is important that we take steps in our faith journey to position ourselves for service.

God's covenant ó The emphasis here is on the covenant that God had with Israel. If the nation was not chosen because of its goodness, then can it be rejected because of its sin? Election means grace not merit. God will not break His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God's nature ó [Numbers 23:19](#)- **God is not a man, that he should lie. He is not a human, that he should change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?**

God's grace ó Paul repeatedly reminds the saved Gentiles that they had a spiritual obligation to Israel to provoke them to jealousy. God's promise to Abraham was that through the Jews all families of the earth would be blessed. It was tragic that Israel became exclusive and did not share the truth with Gentiles. They thought Gentiles had to become Jews to be saved.

God's wisdom ó Only a God as wise as our God could take the fall of Israel and turn it into salvation for the world. His plans will not be cancelled; it will come to pass. God is too wise to make plans that will fail or not be fulfilled.