Homework: Read through Romans 11 each day. Circle any words or phrases that you see frequently repeated. Mark what you think is the most important/key verse in Romans 11.

Notes

Romans 11

(ESV)

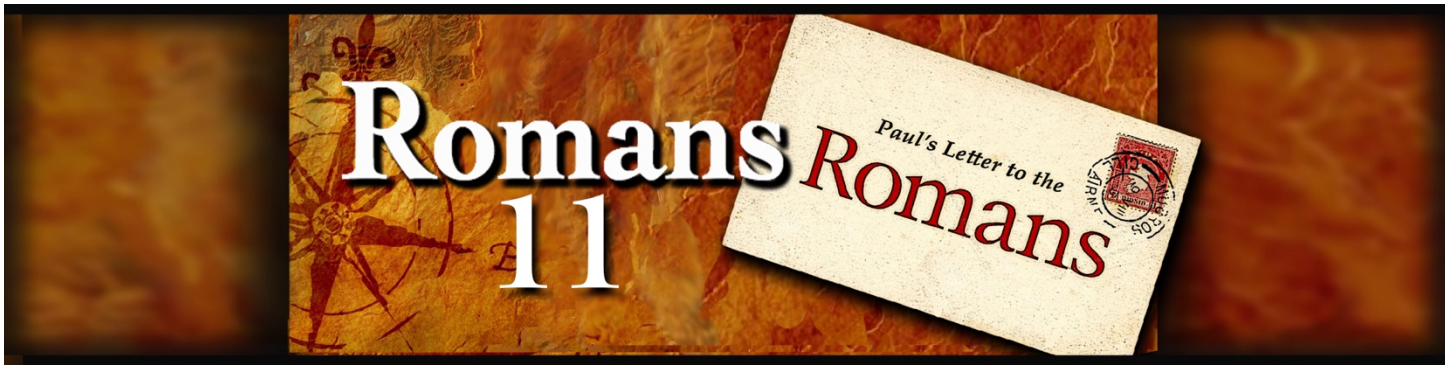
Chapter Title

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.
2 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." 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." 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by
grace. 6 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, 8 as it is
written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and
ears that would not hear, down to this very day." 9 And David says, "Let
their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution
for them; 10 let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend
their backs forever." 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. [12] 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! [13] Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry [14] in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. [15] For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? [16] If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. [17] But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, [18] do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. [19] Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” [20] That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. [21] For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. [22] Note then the kindness and the severity of God:

severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided
you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. [23] And even
they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God
has the power to graft them in again. [24] For if you were cut from what is by
nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated
olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted
back into their own olive tree. [25] 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. [26] 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"; [27] "and this will be my
covenant with them when I take away their sins." [28] As regards the gospel,
they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved
for the sake of their forefathers. [29] For the gifts and the calling of God are
irrevocable. [30] For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but
now have received mercy because of their disobedience, [31] so they too
have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they
also may now receive mercy. [32] For God has consigned all to disobedience,

that he may have mercy on all. [33] Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! [34] “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” [35] “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” [36] For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.



REVIEW

Romans 9-10 focused on the way God has dealt with Israel as a nation since Jesus' earthly ministry, death, and resurrection. Romans 9 reiterates God's plan and purpose for His Chosen People. They were to receive His blessings and to be a blessing by sharing His plan of salvation to the ends of the earth, to the Gentiles. (Genesis 12:3) The Jews rejected God's plan, by rejecting the Messiah He sent to redeem them. God has rejected Israel (as His chosen nation) for a time—until the *"times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled"*—until the full number of Gentiles have come to faith in Jesus. (Romans 11:25, Luke 21:24, Revelation 7:9) However, **God is NOT finished with Israel**—His Word and His promises have not failed. **There is a remnant of Israel that will be saved and restored.**

In Romans 10, Paul explained the failure of the Jews to obtain **God's standard** of righteousness. Israel was **ignorant of the true way of salvation** and God's plan to bring the Gentiles into His family, even though Old Testament writings, the Mosaic Law, and the prophets had been clear. They had pursued Him according to **their own standards**, thinking they were able to keep the Law; they **refused to submit themselves to God's requirement for righteousness**—faith in Jesus Christ. Paul laid out what is necessary for salvation and righteousness.

1. As a reminder, in chapters 9-10, who is Paul **addressing** (speaking **TO**)? Who is Paul speaking **ABOUT**? (Romans 9:4, Romans 10:1)

Romans 11 completes Paul's three-part treatise on the "**true Israel**" or "**spiritual Israel**," made up of both Jews and Gentiles as His chosen people, by election through faith.

Read Romans 11:1-6

Chapter 10 concludes with God **continuing** to reach out in love to the people of Israel, in spite of their rejection and disobedience, while graciously revealing Himself to those who had not sought Him (the Gentiles). So, Paul asks, *"Has God rejected His people?"*

2. What were the "qualifications" that Paul gave about **himself** as "evidence" that God had not rejected His people? (1) (Even MORE evidence about Paul—2 Corinthians 11:22-23, Philippians 3:5-6)

3. How did Paul describe God's people? (2a)

Paul knew that his **own experience was not valid proof of God's intent** regarding the Jews, so he relied upon the **only valid evidence**—God's Word. Paul knew that NOTHING, including Israel's disobedience and rejection of the Messiah, could nullify God's plans and purposes. It would be unthinkable that He should completely reject them after He had chosen them. (Numbers 23:19, Psalm 110:4, 1 Samuel 12:22, Psalm 94:14, Jeremiah 29:13) **(RSB)**

4. The quotation about Elijah in verses 2-3 is from **1 Kings 19:10, 14**. Who is Elijah crying out to God about? Why? What is the context? (**1 Kings 19**)

5. What is God's reply to Elijah? (Romans 11:4-5)

6. Who was the remnant? Where did they come from? How many men made up the remnant? How were they chosen?

God's rejection of Israel was neither total nor final; it was partial and temporary. There was a remnant from the days of Abraham until the days of Paul, and until even today. **(CB)** Despite widespread apostasy, a faithful remnant of Jews did and does remain. The basis for the survival of the remnant was not their good works or clever actions, but through God's grace alone. **(NIVSB)**

Interestingly, this passage teaches us two additional points:

(1) There had never been a time when **every** Jew in the nation of Israel was true to God, and there would never be.

(2) God does not **save** people in groups or nations, but as individuals. Faith is an **individual** relationship with God. Each person must understand, decide, and surrender his life to God through faith. Just as a person of Jewish heritage was not automatically part of "true/believing Israel" because they were born to Jewish parents or lived in Israel, so too, a person cannot be a Christian by living in a nation that calls itself "Christian" or growing up in a Christian family. **(CB)**

7. What is Paul's conclusion in Romans 11:6?

8. What makes "grace" grace?

Human effort and God's grace are mutually exclusive ways to salvation. (JMSB)

Read Romans 11:7-10

9. What is the *"it"* that Israel was seeking, but *"failed to obtain?"* (7)

10. Who are *"the elect,"* of whom Paul is speaking (pay attention to the whole context)?

11. What happened to *"the rest,"* those who were not "elect?" (7)

12. How does Paul explain what happened to them (the "not elect")? (8) (Quoted from **Isaiah 29:10, Deuteronomy 29:4**)

Ironically, Isaiah's message was originally intended to further harden the Israelites' stubborn hearts, and thereby fulfill God's promised judgment. In the same way, **Jesus' parables blinded the eyes of the religious leaders who had already rejected His kingdom message.** (**Mark 4:10-12**) Because of their hardened hearts and resulting blindness, those Jewish leaders accomplished God's purpose of

salvation through the death of the Messiah. The sad truth is, those who were not willing to receive Jesus' message found the truth was hidden from them. The same is true today. **(NIVSB)**

> **"The majority [of the Jews] rested in the fact that they were the chosen people. They were religious but insensitive to the truth. They were so secure, so self-satisfied, that they went to sleep spiritually." (CB)**

Because the Jews **refused the way of faith**, **God made them impervious** (indifferent, resistant, unresponsive) **to spiritual truth**. **(NIVSB)** Paul was saying that a callus had grown over the hearts of the people. (Remember **Romans 9:18**.) When a callus grows on any part of the body, that part loses its feeling; it becomes insensitive—a vivid depiction of the spiritual condition of the majority of the Jews. **(CB)**

Verses 9-10 are quoted from David's words in Psalm 69:22-23. A person's "table" was considered to be a place of safety, pleasure, and support, but David was asking the Lord to make the table of his enemies a trap. While they were seeking refreshment and joy, anticipating no danger, their table would actually become the trap that led to their ruin. Paul uses this passage to describe **the results of God's hardening** of the Jews. The temporal enjoyments [the national and private advantages that the Jews enjoyed and were so proud of—Romans 3:1-2 and 9:4-5] had become a snare and a trap to alienate them from God. Remember at the end of Romans 9 (page 116 in the study text), we delved into the image of Christ as *"a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."* (9:32-33) Here, referred to as a ***stumbling block***, it represents anything that prompts or leads a person to sin, resulting in their destruction. (**1 Corinthians 1:21-24, Romans 14:13**) **Retribution** is the just reward, judgment, or punishment for falling into the trap that the enemy had set for them. (**Hebrews 2:1-3a**) **(JMSB)** Unfortunately, many people trust in the very things that will destroy them. By asking God to *"bend their backs forever,"* David was requesting that they be forced to struggle and experience servitude, bearing heavy and oppressive burdens, as a result of (retribution for) their treatment of the Messiah. **(BNB)**

Read Romans 11:11-15

Again, we meet the word *"stumble,"* meaning exactly what it seems to mean—to trip, to err in a moral sense, to sin. (**James 2:10, James 3:2**) However, *"fall"* doesn't **just** mean getting off balance and hitting the ground as a result of gravity; it means to fall headlong to ruin and destruction. (**1 Corinthians 10:12, Hebrews 4:11**) The form of Paul's question and his strong response confirm that Israel's blindness, hardening, and apostasy are **NOT** irreversible. **(JMSB)** Their stumble would not result in the permanent destruction of "true Israel." Paul is assuring his readers that God's purposes and plan had not changed one bit because of Israel's rejection of Christ; in fact, MacArthur claims that this temporary setting aside of Israel teaches three great truths: **(JM–P2I)**

1. The setting aside of Israel has a **definite purpose**. (11-15)

   Through their fall, their sin of unbelief and rejection, ***"salvation has come to the Gentiles."*** The Gentiles have become both the people of blessing and the people of witness. MacArthur, 'channeling' Paul, questioned, "'Well if the Jews hadn't fallen, would we never have gotten the gospel?'" (By no means! 😊) Of course we would have. If they hadn't fallen, they would have brought us the gospel; they would have been the people of the message. They would have lived out the witness that God wanted them to live. But we never would have become **that people** in the unique way that **they were**. And so, because Israel is set aside, we not only receive the gospel, but we have been made the new people of the ministry, the new people of witness, the new people of testimony, the new channel of blessing to reach the world." **(JM–P2I)** According to God's

own timing, the setting aside of the Jews provided a way to bring **His master plan of salvation** to the non-Jewish world. (Matthew 8:11-12, Matthew 21:43, Acts 13:46-48)

2. It **provokes the Jews to jealousy**. (11)
The Gentiles had become the recipients of God's blessings, but that aroused envy and resentment in the Jews. "How is it that **we** are punished? Why are **we** so cruelly humiliated? How is it that **we** are mistreated over and over?" That's exactly what the Jews have experienced since their rejection of Christ—the 70 A.D. desolation of Jerusalem by the Romans, the scattering among the nations, the holocaust of the 20th century, the Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, and right up to today—they have been recipients of tremendous persecution and pressure throughout all these centuries, meanwhile, the church of Jesus Christ has been greatly blessed. It was all designed to provoke them to jealousy, so that **they** would long for the blessing, so that **they** might be drawn back to God, drawn to Christ, to the roots of blessing and promises that have always been theirs, and will be once again. **God's purpose in setting them aside was to redeem them back to Himself.** **(JM–P2I)**

3. It brings **blessing to the world**. (12) (Genesis 12:3)
The two "if" clauses in verse 12 are **parallel**:

*"if **their trespass** **means** **riches for the world**"* and
*"if **their failure** **means** **riches for the Gentiles**."*

This structure illustrates a type of **catalyst** and a **result** (not exactly cause-effect because the Greek word for "if" indicates that both of the statements **are true**/fact—so, **SINCE** their trespass means riches for the world, and **SINCE** their failure means riches for the Gentiles….). Both of the **catalysts** are negative (*trespass* and *failure*), but the **results** are positive (*riches*).

"Riches for the world/Gentiles" refers to **the abundant benefits of salvation** enjoyed by believing Gentiles (the **result**), which had come about **because of** the rejection of the gospel by the Jews (the **catalyst**). That rejection of the gospel caused the apostles to turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13 above). The Greek sentence form of those parallel "if" clauses means that they are both assumed to be true/factual, so the final clause in the sentence, *"**how much more** will **their full inclusion** mean,"* must also be true, in fact, that's the whole point—***"how much more!"*** The Literal Word confirms that the magnitude is "very, very much, exceedingly" more! **(LW)**

What will happen when Israel returns to her God, when they finally come to faith in Christ? When will that be? The *"full inclusion"* can only signify the Jews receiving Christ and their **complete restoration to God**. (Isaiah 62:11-12, Romans 11:25-32) This suggests that there will be a large increase in the number of Jewish people who recognize Jesus as the Messiah just before the return of Christ, the millennial kingdom, and the judgment of the living and the dead. We have previously called this **"true/believing Israel" or "spiritual Israel," the full number of God's elect from both the Jews and the Gentiles.** **(RSB)**

In verses 13-14, Paul reiterates that he is speaking to the Gentiles and states that he is the *"apostle to the Gentiles."* (Acts 9:15) Paul's ministry was not exclusively to Gentiles. When arriving in a new location on his journeys, he usually went first to the synagogue, but he considered himself to be primarily an apostle to the Gentiles. **(NIVSB)** All of the apostles preached to Gentiles, but Paul was especially called in his original commission to carry the gospel to the Gentiles and be responsible for the Gentile churches. The responsibility for the Jewish churches was especially entrusted to Peter. In

magnifying his ministry, Paul was not praising himself but was demonstrating the great significance of the gospel being preached to the Gentiles, breaking down that barrier between the Gentiles and the Jews and resulting in the gospel being preached to all people, the blessing to the whole world. **(BNB)**

Paul's ministry also definitely had his **own** people in view. Truth can irritate, enrage, and motivate any number of strong emotions in those who are not following the truth, including jealousy. Nothing could be more likely to irritate and offend religious Jews than seeing God **cast THEM off in favor of the Gentiles**! Paul's *"great sorrow and unceasing anguish"* in his heart (Romans 9:1-3) prompted a deep desire, and even anticipation, that this unthinkable situation in the Jews' own minds might at least provoke some of his countrymen to respond to the gospel, resulting in their conversion. **(BNB)** (1 Corinthians 1:21-25)

As in verse 12, the "if/then" clauses in verse 15 are **parallel**, but showing a **stark contrast** between the two—*"if **their rejection** **is** **the reconciliation of the world**"* and
*"**their acceptance** **be** but **life from the dead**."*
This also indicates that both of the statements **are true**/fact and points to a **catalyst** and a **result**. One **catalyst** is negative and one positive, but both of the **results** are positive, but "*life from the dead"* indicating an **even greater result**. (See *"**how much more** will **their full inclusion** mean,"* in verse 12).

"Life from the dead" does not refer to bodily resurrection, which will happen at a later point, but passing from "spiritual death" to "spiritual life" at salvation. (John 5:24) This phrase also describes the future inclusion of the Jews into the church, the spiritual rebirth of Israel before Christ's return. **(JMSB)**

This rebirth of Israel and the conversion of the Jews would be such a joyful and glorious event (like resurrection), and would result in even greater blessing for the world. **(NIVSB, MHC)**

Read Romans 11:16-24

Verse 16 begins with a well-known passage from the law, Numbers 15:17-21; the Israelites were required to offer a sacrifice of the "firstfruits" of the earth to God—both in their raw state (a sheaf of grain) and in their prepared state (dough made into cakes or loaves). This initial offering made the whole harvest and the whole batch of dough holy. **(JFB)** The remainder of verse 16 uses a second **analogy–a tree**, specifically the root and branches, to illustrate the same principle—the consecration of one of them extends to the other—the root is holy, therefore, the branches are holy. The meaning of these images is identical. The *"firstfruits"* (of the dough) and *"the root"* are representative of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob); the *"whole batch"* and *"the branches"* represent the descendants of the patriarchs, the Jewish people. Paul is applying the principle of the firstfruits in a spiritual context—**the firstfruits serve as the pledge of the final harvest.** **(RSB)** Because the patriarchs were "holy," set apart to God, the Jewish people were "holy." This does not mean that all Jews were righteous (saved) but

that God would be faithful to His promises concerning them. (**Romans 3:3–4**) Paul foresaw a future for Israel, even though she was, for a time, set aside. **(NIVSB)**

Paul continues the metaphor of a tree, specifically an olive tree. The prophets often pictured the nation of Israel as the olive tree of God. The olive tree was the most common and useful tree for the Jews; it was commonly planted in gardens and well cared for. The cultivated olive tree represented the Jews. (**Jeremiah 11: 16-17, Psalm 52:8, Psalm 128:3**) The wild olive tree grew in desert areas and was unprotected and uncared for, and is representative of the Gentiles. **(CB)**

Some of the old, unproductive branches (individual unbelieving Jews) were broken off of the cultivated olive tree, and branches from a wild olive tree (individual believing Gentiles) were grafted in, thus allowing the Gentiles to share in the richness of God's covenant blessings as the spiritual heirs of Abraham, "the root." **(JMSB)** The Jews had been like a cultivated olive tree, long under the training and blessing of God. Wild olive trees were typically unfruitful, so the Gentiles were seen as unfruitful in righteousness and uncultivated by true religion, 'growing up' in wildness and sin. It was a common first-century practice to graft young olive shoots into older less productive trees to bring fresh vitality to them, but grafting in wild shoots was not a normal practice. Paul is intentionally exaggerating this metaphor beyond the limits of horticulture to show how the Gentiles have been grafted into the people of God *"contrary to nature."* **(RSB)**

13. What is the warning that Paul gives to the Roman church in verse 18? What is his **exhortation** (emphatically urging someone to do something) to them? (20) What would be the result if they did not heed his warning? (21)

Paul appealed to the Gentile believers to not become arrogant about their place in God's kingdom because of the hard hearts and blindness the Jews. The point of this entire metaphor is to show that Gentiles are not the **source of blessing**; Judaism is **the root** from which Christianity had sprung, so the Gentile believers have been **grafted into the covenant of salvation that God made with Abraham**. The attitude of the Christian should be gratitude and love for the Jew. **(CB)** Furthermore, he makes it clear that there is no place in the church for spiritual pride, much less anti-Semitism—we are **ALL** the **spiritual offspring** of Abraham. Paul repeats that individual Jews were broken off because of their unbelief, not because of race, ethnicity, social or intellectual background, or external morality; likewise, the Gentile believers were not grafted in for any of those same reasons. Therefore, it was vital that the Gentile believers stand fast in faith and humility. (**Proverbs 28:14, Isaiah 66:2, 1 Corinthians 10:12, 2 Corinthians 1:24**) **(JMSB)**

14. What are the two characteristics or attributes of God in verse 22? Why do you think they appear together in one verse?

Every sound doctrine of God must include these two elements. Many non-Christians, and even some who consider themselves to be Christians, will try to focus on the "positive" attributes of God, such as "God is love." On the other hand, believers can have a tendency to focus too much on the "shoulds" of Christianity while ignoring or minimizing God's kindness. When this happens, God can seem like a heartless tyrant or dictator, but when they disregard His severity (seriousness, intensity), He can seem to be weak and 'namby-pamby.' Neither of these views are an accurate perception of our awesome

multi-faceted God! **(NIVSB)** The English word *"severity"* commonly suggests the idea of harshness, even cruelty, but the Greek word here only symbolizes "cutting off," as a gardener trims trees or vines, cutting off the decayed or unfruitful branches. The gardener is not being cruel to the tree; this is what must be done to preserve the health and fruitfulness of the tree, the very life of the tree. In the context of Romans 9-11, God cut off or rejected the unbelieving Jews as useless, unproductive branches for the greater health, and even life, of the entire family of God. (**John 15:1-2**) It conveys no idea of injustice, cruelty, or harshness. It was a justifiable act, consistent with both the holiness and justice of God. Its purpose was righteous and well-deserved, though the administration might seem severe to others who are ignorant of the process. **(BNB)**

Each of God's attributes are in **perfect harmony** with all the others; there is no incongruity between His kindness, love, mercy and His justice, judgment, and wrath. *"Those who have fallen"* (11:22) have rejected the Gospel message and Christ's sacrifice and will experience His **severity** (**Romans 2:5**). Again, *"fallen"* in Greek means *"to fall so as to be **completely ruined**."* Those who **reject** God's offer of salvation bring upon themselves utter spiritual ruin. Those who accept His gracious offer of salvation will experience His kindness and blessing. (**Romans 2:4**) **(JMSB)**

15. What is Paul's second warning, exhortation, and possible result in this section? (22) (**1 Corinthians 15:1-2, Hebrews 3:6, Hebrews 3:14, John 15:4-6**)

The favor of God was dependent on the Gentile churches' continued faithfulness to Him (*"provided you continue in His kindness"*). (**John 8:31-32, Colossians 1:22-23, Hebrews 4:11, 1 John 2:19**) *"Provided"* is the same Greek word as *"if"* (ἐάν) showing a **true conditional statement**— whether they will continue is not clearly known; it is hypothetical (possible), but not guaranteed. Paul cautioned that, should they become **disobedient and unbelieving**, then the same principle which led Him to withdraw His mercy from the Jewish people would also lead to **their rejection and exclusion**. **(BNB)**

We have dipped our toes into the Letter to the Hebrews here and there throughout Romans 9-11, which is very appropriate as we are considering God's continued relationship with the nation of Israel. Hebrews 6:4-9 and Hebrews 10:22-27 serve as a **similar exhortation and warning to remain faithful to the Lord**. Romans 11:20-22 and **Hebrews 6:4-9**, if taken out of the full context of Scripture, might cause the reader to scratch their heads and ponder the possibility of losing their salvation if they sin. It's worth a bit of time to revisit that issue and solidify the truth of the **Doctrine of Eternal Security** found in Scripture. [For a refresher on Eternal Security, review Romans 8 on page 95 of this study.] MacArthur writes, regarding the Letter to the Hebrews, "A proper interpretation of this epistle [Hebrews] requires the recognition that it addresses three distinct **groups of Jews:** (1) **believers**, (2) **unbelievers** who were intellectually convinced of the gospel, and (3) **unbelievers** who were attracted by the gospel and the person of Christ but who had reached no final conviction about him. Failure to acknowledge these groups leads to **interpretations inconsistent with the rest of Scripture**." **(JMSB–HIC)**

In the same way, these groups/divisions can also apply to Gentiles: believers and unbelievers. In the Roman church, and frankly, in all churches past and present, people from each of these 3 groups can be found. For this reason, we often pause to identify whom Paul is addressing or referring in the **context** of the passage.

16. Who is Paul addressing (*"you"*) in Romans 11:17-22? What clues do you find to support your conclusion?

While we don't precisely know the author of Hebrews nor the original recipients of this letter, we can gather from the context that they were a church of Jewish converts, possibly even the church at Rome to whom Paul is writing. Hebrews 6:4-9 uses vivid language to characterize a certain group within that church (*"they," "them," "their"*).

17. How does the author of Hebrews describe them? Were they believers or unbelievers? What supports your conclusion?

MacArthur admits that this portion in Hebrews offers "the most serious interpretive challenge." He observes, "The phrase *'once been enlightened'* is often taken to refer to Christians, and the accompanying warning taken to indicate the danger of losing their salvation if they *'have fallen away'* and *'are crucifying once again the Son of God.'* But there is no mention of their being saved, and they are not described with any terms that apply only to believers (such as holy, born again, righteous, or saints). This problem arises from **inaccurately identifying the spiritual condition of the ones being addressed.** In this case, they were **unbelievers** who had been **exposed to God's redemptive truth**, and **perhaps made a profession of faith**, but **had not exercised genuine saving faith**. **(JMSB–HIC)**

Let's examine the exhortations and warning from **Hebrews 10:22-27**.

18. What are the 5 exhortations?

19. What are the 4 conditions given for drawing *"near to God?"* (22)

20. What is the warning? (26-27)

MacArthur says, "This warning passage [Hebrews 10:26] deals with the sin of **apostasy**, an intentional falling away, or defection. Apostates are **those who move toward Christ, hear and understand his gospel, and are on the verge of saving belief, but then rebel and turn away**. This warning against apostasy is one of the most serious warnings in all of Scripture…. God will judge the apostate church just as surely as he judged apostate Israel." **(JMSB)**

Peter exhorts those in the church, *"Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to **confirm your calling and election**, for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall."* See the full context in **2 Peter 1:5-11**. The Lord provides numerous examples and admonitions in Scripture to motivate us—sometimes those are warnings of the possibility of judgment, and other times they encourage us

toward confidence in our faith, only through His promises and provision, sometimes all within the same passage!

21. What are the encouraging motivations found in these Scriptures? (Romans 11:17-22, Hebrews 6:4-9, Hebrews 10:22-27, 2 Peter 1:5-11)

22. In summary, what is the proof/evidence of our salvation?

"Genuine saving faith always perseveres." **(JMSB)**

As we move back into Romans 11, many, if not most, of the "if clauses" we have encountered are not true "if-then" (cause-effect) conditions; they are instead the types of structures that **presume** something is true, therefore the second 'something' must also be true. In verse 23 the "if clause" is also a **true conditional statement**—**IF** unbelieving Jews *"do not continue in their unbelief…"*—whether they will turn and believe the gospel is not clearly known; it is hypothetical (possible), but not guaranteed. Paul still holds out hope for his fellow Jews because God is able to bring them back; salvation is **totally** the work of God. Apart from His grace, no one can be saved. **(NIVSB)** It **IS** clear that if/should they turn to Christ in faith, they **WILL** be grafted back into the olive tree of His covenant blessings, which was originally theirs. (**Mark 10:27, 2 Corinthians 3:16, Zechariah 12:10**) **(RSB, JMSB)**

Read Romans 11:25-32

Paul reiterates his admonition to the Gentile believers to not be arrogant concerning their elect status; additionally, he wants them to be aware of a ***"mystery"*** that he is sharing with them. The Greek word (mystērion) does **not** mean something incomprehensible. This word was used by so-called "mystery religions" of Paul's day in the sense of some secret doctrine or knowledge that was revealed **only** to the initiated—"special" people in a select group who have received secret knowledge. [Think modern charistmatic/Pentecostal groups.] Paul often uses this word in his writings, a total of 20 times, to mean something that **had been kept hidden** (by God), but **only now has been fully disclosed and revealed by God in the Gospel for all to know and understand.** (**Romans 16:25-27**) **(LW, NIVSB)** Jesus used this word in only one circumstance, translated into English as *"secret"* when His disciples questioned Him about using parables when speaking to the crowds. (Matthew 13:11-13, Mark 4:11-12, Luke 8:10) He said, *"To you it has been given to know the **secrets** of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that **'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'**"* Compare this to 11:8.

23. What is the *"mystery"* that Paul wants them to understand? (25) (2 components)

The *"hardening"* (rejection and spiritual blindness) of the nation of Israel, **does not include every individual Jew**; throughout history we have seen that God has always preserved a believing remnant of His people, so the hardening is only **partial**, not total, and is also **temporary**, not permanent. At a specific time, known only to Him, His plan will be completed. The full number of elect Gentiles who come to faith in Christ shall be united with the "remnant" of believing Jews—the *"full inclusion"*

(11:12) of elect Jews who have embraced the truth of the Gospel. This will bring together ***"all Israel,"*** true Israel, spiritual Israel. **(NIVSB)** John MacArthur further explains that the *"full inclusion"* of elect Jews refers to "all the elect Jewish people **alive at the end of the tribulation**, not the believing remnant of Jews within the church during this church age …. since the remnant has already embraced the truth of the gospel …. and no longer needs the salvation this verse promises." **(JMSB)**

In Romans 11:26-27, Paul points us back to the prophecies of Isaiah (**59:20-21**), focusing on the source of the promise and hope for that completion. (**Psalm 53:6, Isaiah 46:13**)

24. Contrast Romans 11:26 and Isaiah 59:20. What are your thoughts about these differences? (Pay attention to the **context** of the times in which these were written.)

25. What is "Zion" referring to?

26. Contrast Romans 11:27 and Isaiah 59:21 (also **Jeremiah 31:31-34**). What are your thoughts about these differences?

27. To which covenant were Isaiah (and Paul) referring? (See Chapter 9, page 105 for a list of the covenants.)

28. Who is "them/their" in verse 27 and continuing forward?

Isaiah prophecies were originally written to those suffering during the Babylonian exile and looked forward to a Deliverer or Redeemer who would bring them out, but also ultimately, and more specifically, the Messiah who would redeem Zion and all faithful Israelites in the very distant future. **(NIVSB)** The Hebrew for *"Redeemer"* refers to a protector who is obligated to a family—The Lord is the family protector of Israel since He is related to Israel as father and husband; He redeems His people's land, guarantees their freedom, avenges them against their enemies and secures their future through their offspring. **(JMSB)** Paul is clearly referencing the Messiah who has **already come**, banishing the *"ungodliness"* of the believing Jews, and establishing His New Covenant with them. However, he is also likely pointing toward Jesus' return at the end of the age when, **finally and forever, *"all Israel will be saved!"*** **(RSB)**

29. Who is "your"(you) in verse 28?

30. Pay attention to the parallel ideas in verse 28. Fill in the blanks; compare and contrast.

As regards the _____, they are _____ for _____ sake.

But as regards _____, they are _____ for the sake of _____.

31. **To whom** are they considered both *"enemies"* and *"beloved"*?

From the perspective of **God's eternal choice**, Israel will **always be** His covenant people (*"all Israel"*). (**Deuteronomy 7:8, Deuteronomy 10:15**) **(JMSB)** Even though excluded and severely disciplined for a time, God demonstrates His constant care, patience and love toward them, and will finally restore

them to their rightful place through His mercy. **(MHC)** **God's blessings/gifts** (pardon, peace, joy, sanctification, eternal life, His sovereign adoption of Israel, etc.) are **unconditional** and **unchangeable** (*"irrevocable"*), so too **His calling** (His divine invitation to salvation). **(JMSB)** He does not **EVER** change His mind! (**Romans 8:28-30**)

> "God never draws or invites sinners to himself without being willing to bestow pardon and eternal life." **(BNB)**

32. Notice the parallel ideas in the next sentence (30-31). Fill in the blanks; compare and contrast.

For just as _____ were at one time _____ to God but now have received _____ because of _____ _____ ,

so _____ too have now been _____ in order that by _____ shown to _____ _____ also may now receive _____ .

33. What do you think is the purpose of the contrast seen in these parallel ideas? (Don't forget about the context of what Paul had just said and the connecting words.😉)

Paul's explanations and arguments from these 3 chapters regarding Israel's unbelief and rejection of the Gospel are winding down. He has methodically demonstrated that Israel, though presently in a state of unbelief, **has always had** and **will always have** a place in God's sovereign redemptive plan. At just the right time, His plan will be fully accomplished, and *"all Israel will be saved."* Verse 32 is a great summation. The NIV says, *"For God has bound everyone* [Jew and Gentile] *over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all."* In NO WAY is Paul teaching universal salvation, but reiterating that **everyone** [Jew and Gentile] has been bound over to disobedience—**given over entirely to rebellion against God**—in order that God may have mercy on them **all** [NOT everyone without distinction, but **both Jews and Gentiles who will believe**]. **(NIVSB)** All of humanity is imprisoned in sin so that salvation would be only of grace and never of works or merit. Jews and Gentiles are united in **two things**—**the disobedience of sin**, and the **offer of the mercy of God** leading to salvation. The **wisdom** and **sovereignty** of God's **grace** are displayed in the way in which He **fulfills His purposes**—the disobedience of the Jew leads to the Gentiles receiving God's mercy; the mercy of God to the Gentiles leads to the Jews also receiving His mercy. There is no difference—**ALL** (Jews and Gentiles alike) have sinned (**3:23**), and God has mercy on **BOTH** (**1:16**). **(RSB)** (**Ephesians 2:13, Colossians 1:21-22, Romans 5:8, 1 Timothy 1:12-14**)

> "God has allowed humanity to pursue their sinful inclinations so that He could receive glory by demonstrating His grace and mercy to disobedient sinners." **(JMSB)**

Read Romans 11:33-36

Paul began Romans 9 with *"great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart"* for his fellow Jews *"according to the flesh"* who were *"accursed and cut off from Christ."* (9:1-3) Yet now, having laid out his argument in great detail, his heart and voice erupt in a song of praise that reaches heights that correspond to the depths of distress from which he began. **(RSB)** Several commentators have called this a doxology (*doxologia*—from *doxo* 'glory' and *logia* 'saying'), a short hymn of praise to God. Paul

pours out his praise for the majesty, grandeur, and wisdom of God's plan which brought about His great plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. **(NIVSB)**

Paul knows that no man can understand God; there are many things about God and His creation which are far beyond any man's comprehension. The word *"riches"* points to the lavish blessings and mercies given to sinful man by the Gospel—the pardon for sin, the atonement, the hope of heaven, the peace of the gospel. These are so far beyond, even impossible, for the limits of language to express; all the Christian can do is to follow Paul's example of awareness and deep gratitude for the rich grace of God. (**Colossians 2:2-3, Psalm 139:6, Ephesians 3:8-10, Psalm 104:24, Revelation 7:12**) **(BNB)**

The **judgments** of God, His purposes decisions, and commands, are beyond human understanding. His **ways**, the path and methods He chooses to accomplish His purposes are incomprehensible and inexplicable. **(JMSB)** We must absolutely trust Him to be God of all that we see and experience. We cannot begin to fully understand Him or His ways, and our attempts to explain Him are inadequate at the very least. However, He has revealed to us everything we need to know about Him through His Word, so we can confidently praise and worship Him for all that He has done and all that He is doing. (**Deuteronomy 29:29**)

As Paul brings this lengthy passage on God's plans and purposes for Israel to a close, he draws us back once again to two Old Testament prophets to express the unfathomable wisdom and knowledge of our God. Romans 11:34 is referenced from Isaiah 40: 13. Earthly rulers and leaders have advisors of many kinds, whom they may consult in times of confusion or danger, but God neither has, nor needs, such counsel. He stands alone as the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent One who needs nothing, nor no one. (**1 Corinthians 2:16, Job 15:8, Job 36:23-24, Deuteronomy 10:14, Psalm 24:1, Psalm 50:12**) **(BNB)**

Romans 11:35 is quoted from Job 41:11. Job, more than probably any human who has ever lived, knew first hand that he was not in charge of ANYTHING! Contrary to the presumption of the unbelieving Jews of Paul's day, he and Job remind them that there is no one who can plead his own case, or reason with Almighty God. Salvation can only be attained through the incredible mercy and grace of God. God owns everything and everyone; He owes no one. He needs nothing and no one. Yet in His absolute sufficiency, He created a universe and world specifically for man, revealed Himself to us, provided and cared for us, and sacrificed Himself so that His elect could be with Him for all eternity. How could we NOT be in awe of Him and give Him the praise and glory of which He is due?

> "God is the source, the sustainer, and the rightful end of everything that exists." **(JMSB)**

34. What did you select as the Key Verse(s) in Romans 11? Why?

35. Create a **basic** outline for Romans 11.

36. Write a summary of Romans 11.

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