

GOD HAS NOT REJECTED ISRAEL (PT 3)

Romans 11:25-36

Introduction: What is the Future of Ethnic Israel?

I. God's Plan for Israel (v.25-26a)

- A. Paul Refers to the Future of Israel as a "Mystery" (v.25a)
 - o This doesn't mean that the future is unclear, it a reference to the fact that it is specially revealed by God
 - o Paul reveals this mystery so that the Gentiles don't "become wise in your own sight"
- B. Israel Experiences "partial" hardening so that the Gentiles Might Come In (v.25b)
 - o Paul revisits the point he made in 11:7-10, namely that God has chosen to hard some Israelites to the truth of the Gospel
 - o But, this hardening is only "partial." Elect Israelites—what Paul calls a "remnant" (11:5) will be saved.
- C. In This Way, "All Israel" is Saved (v.26a)
 - o Option #1 : All Israel being saved is referring to a mass conversion of ethnic Jews at the end of history
 - The word "until" seems to suggest that something will happen after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in
 - o Option #2: All Israel being saved is a reference to the remnant of ethnic Jews who are saved both in Paul's day and throughout the rest of human history
 - This option fits with the "remnant" theme Paul began in 11:5
 - This option fits with the fact that jealousy of the Jews, and the conversion of some of them, is *already happening* in Paul's day (11:13-14). Paul also implies that Jews *in his own day* "will be grafted in" to the tree again if they believe (11:23).
 - The word "until" does not necessarily imply some mass conversion happens afterward. It may just mean Israel's partial hardening lasts as long as it takes for the full number of Gentiles to be brought in.

****Conclusion:** I probably lean to #2, but #1 is still a possibility. Paul might even imply that *both* would happen!

II. The Basis for God's Plan for Israel (v.26b-32)

A. It is rooted in Scripture Itself (v.26b-27)

- o Paul cites an OT passage (Is 59:20-21) that promises Israel will have a "deliverer" that will "take away their sin"
- o Key Implications:
 - Israel's redemption only comes through belief in Jesus
 - Israel's redemption is spiritual not national/political.
 - There is no mention of mass conversion at the end of history

B. It is rooted in God's Promises to Israel (v.28-29)

- o On the one hand, due to their unbelief, Jews are "enemies" to the gospel
- o On the other hand, "as regards election," they are beloved
 - The use of the term "election" here is not referring to the election of individuals but God's choice of the nation of Israel as a whole
 - This doesn't mean that Jews are saved because of their ethnicity. It simply means God is not done working to save Jews because God made promises to their "forefathers" that he intends to keep

**** Key Point:** God stubbornly keeps his promises

C. It is rooted in God's Mercy and Compassion (v.30-32)

- o The Gentiles were shown mercy: "For just as you were at one disobedient to God but now have received mercy"
- o How much more should Israel receive mercy: "so they [Israel] too have now been disobedient in order that...they also may now receive mercy."

****Key Point:** No One is Beyond the Reach of God's Mercy and Compassion

III. God's Plan for Israel Reminds Us to Trust His Wisdom Over Our Own (v.33-36)

A. Paul Admits the Depth of God's Wisdom (v.33)

- o Paul fittingly includes this section at the end of chapters 9-11, which contains some challenging teaching
- o But don't misunderstand his point. Paul is not throwing his hands up in frustration, as if God's ways are unknowable.
- o Rather he is acknowledging God's wisdom is best, even if we struggle to accept it

- B. Paul Admits the Shallowness of Man's Wisdom (v.34-35)
 - o Some of us may think God could have done things differently or better.
 - o But Paul says, "Who has been his [God's] counselor?"
- C. Paul Praises God in Light of this Difference! (v.36)
 - o The heart of worship is an acknowledgement that God is God, and we are not

Discussion Groups

1. What does God's diligent pursuit of Israel teach you about the way he keeps his promises? How does this encourage you today?

2. Who do you know you in your life that you have written off as outside of God's reach? How does this passage change your thinking about that person?

3. How does a passage like this (and all of chapters 9-11) humble you and remind you that you are not God?
