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Romans 11

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Romans 11.

Topics.

- Has God rejected His people?
- What will Israel's full inclusion into the Kingdom of God mean?
- Jewish branches broken off and Gentiles branches grafted in.
- The kindness and severity of God.
- The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.
- God has consigned all to disobedience.
- Who has repaid the LORD by giving Him a gift?

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul spoke about Jews who had zeal for God, but not according to knowledge and stated that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. He asked, "Who will ascend into heaven and who will descend into the abyss to bring righteousness to us?" and said that Salvation is in our mouth and in our heart. The chapter ended with God saying, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me but, all day long I have held out my hands to Israel a disobedient and contrary people."

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

ROMANS 11:1-6

Has God rejected His People?

- **Romans 11:1-6:** 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. ²God 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." ⁴But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." ⁵So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.
- Remember this is a letter Paul is writing to the Christian brothers in Rome.

Foreknew: means to know or foresee beforehand.

Chosen: means to select or choose out of and by implication favourite.

Grace: in this context refers to a gift given to one who has done nothing to earn it.

Remnant: means a remainder.

The words, "I ask, then" (v1) link back to the previous chapter in which Paul stated that the Jews were ignorant of God's righteousness and tried to establish their own. Paul is now doing what he often does he perceives the questions those reading his letter may ask and then raises the question himself. After telling the brothers at Rome that the Jews by trying

to attain righteousness through self-effort have totally missed God's eternal plan Paul understands that they will be thinking that God has rejected the people of Israel, so he takes their minds back to Elijah who felt the same way. At this time in Elijah's life King Ahab of Israel had told Jezebel his wife that Elijah had killed all the prophets of Baal, so Jezebel in fury sent a messenger to Elijah to tell him she would have him killed and Elijah fled to a cave in fear, at this point Elijah said:

- I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away (1 Kings 19:10-14).

Elijah feels he is the only Israelite left that has remained faithful to God, but the LORD tells him that there are still, "Seven thousand in Israel that have not bowed to Baal" (1 Kings 19:18). Paul uses this story to put a floodlight on the reality that God has not rejected his people, he is highlighting the fact that just as in Elijah era there were those who remained faithful to God so to at this present time God has a remnant who accept the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace and works: the words, "If it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace" (v6) should put a silence to anyone who thinks they can attain to righteousness that leads to eternal life and salvation by self-effort and good works since Paul is telling his Jewish brothers once they feel they have to earn righteousness they are denying grace and no one can be saved without God's grace. Grace is granted to us not because of anything we do, but because of our faith in God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ. The following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote:

- I do not nullify the *GRACE* of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value. Equally as horrific as this Paul states:

- When we forsake *GRACE* we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by *GRACE* that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that:

- It is only by *GRACE* that any brother or sister has been saved (Ephesians 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, Grace and Faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them.

This is the reason the author in the book of Hebrews spends so many chapters brilliantly and skilfully explaining to the Hebrews that they must stop their sin of trusting in religious works, the Levitical Law and their priesthood to be counted righteous before God and start trusting in the grace of God that is in Christ and in his righteousness to be saved to eternal life. By extension this means that Christians must stop trusting in attending a church building every week, strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved. Though the practise of some of these maybe good in themselves they become grossly sinful when believers trust in them for their salvation since not one of them has any power to save to eternal life.

What will Israel's full inclusion into the Kingdom of God Mean?

- **Romans 11:7-12:** What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, ⁸as 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." ⁹And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; ¹⁰let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever." that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. ¹²Now 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!

NOTE: their trespass in this context refers to their rejection of their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's words are cited from the book of Isaiah in which he wrote:

- The LORD has poured out upon Israel a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes and covered your heads and the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed" and when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read" and the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men (Isaiah 29:10-24).

The reason they are unable to perceive the word of God is because they were indifferent to the LORD, they were rebellious, foolish, senseless and their heart was so hardened that they were ignorant to God's will and therefore alienated from Him (Ezek. 12:1-2) (Jer. 5:21) (Ephes. 4:18). They were not reading the Scriptures to know God or His ways, but simply to gain prideful knowledge while they continued in their own rebellious ways and unbelief. Had Israel remained faithful and accepted their Messiah the Christ they would have become the head nation of the world and God would have fulfilled His promises to their fathers, but their rejection of their Messiah the Christ means that salvation has been granted to the Gentile nations because they did listen and they did believe (Acts 28:28). David prayed that God would darken their eyes so they cannot perceive forever (v10) (cited from Psalm 69:22-23). Paul knowing the Jews held David in high esteem tells his Jewish brothers that this is not God's intention since there is a faithful Jewish remnant who do believe and the words, "How much more will Israel's full inclusion mean? Clearly show that a time is coming when the people of Israel will turn in repentance and in faith to their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ.

Israel's full inclusion into Christ: Zechariah in prophecy speaks of this majestic and glorious day saying:

- When Israel's enemies surround Jerusalem to destroy the city, the LORD will protect the inhabitants and destroy the nations that have gathered against Israel. When this climatic event takes place God will pour out on the people of Israel a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy so that when they look on him whom they have pierced they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be great each family and their wives will mourn by themselves (Zech. 12:9-14).

This climatic event will take place when the Lord returns in spectacular and awesome power and glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy city Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom

of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

ROMANS 11:13-16

Israel's acceptance of Christ will mean life from the Dead.

- **Romans 11:13-16:** Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry ¹⁴in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. ¹⁵For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? ¹⁶If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump and if the root is holy, so are the branches.
- The dough and the root refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The lump and the branches refer to all those in Christ.

Paul is saying if Israel's rejection of Christ means salvation came to the Gentile nations then their acceptance of Christ will result in the resurrection of the dead and since Christ who was offered as the firstfruits from the dead was holy so too will those in Christ be holy

ROMANS 11:17-21

Jewish Branches Broken Off and Gentiles Branches Grafted In.

- **Romans 11:17-21:** 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, ¹⁸do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches neither will he spare you.

Paul symbolically pictures God's Kingdom as a majestic olive tree, its natural branches being the people of Israel and their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ symbolised by the root that nourishes the branches. Some of the trees natural branches have been grafted out because of unbelief while unnatural branches have been grafted in because of belief so that the root of the tree is now nourishing both natural and unnatural branches. Though the tree is being nourished by the same root it is taking on a totally different appearance since there are now not only natural branches growing on the tree, but unnatural ones that God is grafting into it.

Paul is simply saying that the nation of Israel symbolised by the tree is taking on a new appearance since whoever (Jews or Gentiles) believe in Israel's Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ is now by faith united together in Christ as spiritual citizens of Israel.

Do not to become Proudful or Arrogant toward Unbelieving Jews.

Paul warns the believing Gentiles not to think they are superior or become prideful, arrogant, conceited and egotistical toward the unbelieving Jews, since it is only by faith that they stand righteous before God and not because of any great works or self-effort they have done, he is basically telling the Christian Gentiles rather than mock and demean the unbelieving Jews show respect and stand in overwhelming awe, wonder and gratitude that they themselves have been accepted into God's eternal Kingdom. When the following words of Jesus are considered:

- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

The attitude Paul is teaching the Christian Gentiles should by extension be extended to whoever is outside of God's Kingdom

ROMANS 11:22-24

The Kindness and Severity of God.

- **Romans 11:22-24:** 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. ²³And even they if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. ²⁴For 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.

The kindness and severity of God refers to eternal life and eternal death. Eternal life is granted to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ so it is to those who believe that the kindness of God falls upon. In contrast to this are those who deny the Lord Jesus Christ they are judged to death so it is to those who do not believe that the severity of God falls upon.

Two trees: here Paul symbolises the nation of Israel as a cultivated olive tree and the Gentile nations as a wild olive tree and branches being cut from the wild tree and by faith grafted into the cultivated tree. Jews and Gentiles who do believe are united together in Christ they are the true offspring of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the true descendants of David and brothers and sisters of Christ and the children of God.

NOTE: these verses clearly show that the expression, "Once saved always saved" is simply not true. If a Christian, chooses to deny Christ they would obviously be grafted out of God's Kingdom, but the Good News is that nothing else can separate us from the love of God as Paul so beautifully states with the following words:

- Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:35-39).

ROMANS 11:25-33

The Gifts and the calling of God are Irrevocable.

- **Romans 11:25-33:** Lest you (Gentiles) be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; ²⁷and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." ²⁸As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. ²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. ³²For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all. ³³Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Elect: means to select or choose out of and by implication favourite.

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The mystery in this context refers to the partial hardening of the Jews, Paul warns Gentile Christians not to become conceited because this hardening is not forever, there will come a moment when God's calling of the Gentiles ends and all Israel will be saved referring to all those (Jews and Gentiles) in Christ. The fullness of the Gentiles will be at it end when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. For further information see the title:

- Israel's full inclusion into Christ (following Rom 11:7-12 above).

The gifts and the calling of God are Irrevocable.

Gifts: in this context refer to righteousness and forgiveness of sins, God's favour and eternal life. The words, "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (v29) mean that the promise God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David cannot be broken, reversed or changed nevertheless because of Israel's unbelief they are enemies to the Gospel of Christ, but as a nation they are loved by God for the following two reasons:

1. The promise God made to their fathers.
2. God gave birth to the nation so in this sense they are the LORD'S child.

Because of these two reasons there has always remained a faithful remnant amongst the people of Israel.

Israel has always been God's Special and Unique people.

Israel has been God's special people, the LORD has always dealt with Israel differently to any other nation, He declared His word, statues and His rules to Israel (the LORD has not done this with any other nation). They are children of Abraham the father of faith and because they are his offspring they were entrusted with the oracles of God and to them belongs

the adoption, the glory and the covenants. God says he gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age (Isaiah 46:3-4) and loved them when they were a child, and out of Egypt He called Israel His Son. (Hosea 11:1). They were given the law, the worship and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs and from their race, came the Christ who is Lord over all that God created (Rom. 3:2) (Rom. 9:4-5, 7). Added to this; the LORD called Israel His treasured possession and the apple of the LORD'S eye, his allotted heritage and a people holy to Him.

(Exod. 19:5) (Deut. 7:6) (Deut. 14:2) (Deut. 26:18) (Deut. 32:9).

This is why the Jews (especially the religious leaders of Jesus generation) considered themselves to be the holy and righteous race with God and the Gentile nations to be the unclean race without God. It is true that Israel has been and still is a special nation to God, but since Christ death and resurrection salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Israel remains a clear sign of where we are in prophecy concerning Christ's return. It could be said that they are the thermometer of God's prophecy, much like the mercury on a natural thermometer measure the heat of the day and moves up the vertical red line warning us of impending danger when the sun's heat is reaching temperatures that are dangerous for the good health of the skin. Likewise, Israel can be seen as the mercury of Bible prophecy in the sense that world events that come upon the nation of Israel (especially Jerusalem) are signs that give us some insight as to how close we are to that glorious breathtaking and world changing day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. But God's focus now for eternal salvation is upon creating a new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. This new nation is also called a new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God.

God has consigned all to disobedience: (v32) means that both the Jews and the Gentiles are counted as disobedient which means everyone is on a level playing field, no-one on earth has advantage over another in regards to eternal salvation since God does not count anyone righteous simply because they are a descendant of Abraham all have to enter God's eternal Kingdom in the same way, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The depth of the riches, wisdom and knowledge of God: Paul is overwhelmed at God's eternal plan for all mankind the LORD created a nation and chose it to be a lighthouse to all other nations. Throughout Israel's history we see not only God's love, kindness, grace and mercy but also His judgments and discipline toward the wicked and rebellious. God through his chosen people shines a light on His character, the things He loves and His eternal plans and purposes for all mankind and gives no-one advantage over another since eternal life is not dependent on birthright or human talents and skills all must come to God through faith. This is the reason for Paul's expression "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (v33).

ROMANS 11:34-36

Who has known the Mind of the LORD.

- **Romans 11:34-36:** 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?" ³⁶For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Paul in declaring the majesty and awesomeness of the LORD God alludes to the following words of the prophet Isaiah:

- Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? (Isaiah 40:13-14).

The moment anyone thinks they know God, in the sense that they have a clear picture of God's mind and His form is the moment they have made God very small indeed. This type of thinking is fitting the Awesome and Almighty God into the space of our sinful, limited mortal mind, when it comes to understanding God there will always be a certain amount of mystery and questions that will never be answered until Christ returns, thus the reason we all believe in God by faith and not by science.

Who has repaid the LORD by giving Him a Gift?

The words, "Who has given the LORD a gift that he might be repaid?" Means the following two things:

1. No-one can give to God or do anything for Him in anyway that will add anything to the LORD since everything that exists comes from God.
2. No-one can give God a gift so that God is indebted to repay them with a reward. Nothing we do-good or bad affects God.

Job states it this way:

- If you have sinned, what do you accomplish against the LORD? And if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to God? If you are righteous, what do you give to the LORD? Or what does he receive from your hand? Your wickedness concerns a man like yourself, and your righteousness a son of man (Job 35:6-8)

These words of Job shine a spotlight on the truth that whatever we do, good or bad only affects mankind, even the LORD Himself states:

- Who has first given to me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine (Job 41:11).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace