

Restoration, Israel's Future – Part 1

Romans 11:1-10

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I want to look at two verses before we get into this chapter. The first is verse 1. I want you to notice this. Paul says, “I say then, Hath God cast away his people?” The first question is in verse 1: Has God cast away His people? If I were going to interpret that question, I would put the word “completely” next to it. It will shed a whole lot of light on that—has God completely cast away His people? The question is: Is God finished with Israel? Is God finished with the Jews collectively as a nation? Has God put aside His promises, His plan, and His purpose for the nation of Israel? Is He no longer dealing with the nation of Israel? They're kibbutz. They've fallen. They will never be restored. That's the question that is asked and then answered in this chapter.

Notice the second question in verse 11. Paul says, “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall?” By that second question you'll want to put the word “forever.” The first question is: I say then has God cast them away completely? Secondly, have they fallen or stumbled forever? Is there no hope for the future of Israel? They rejected Jesus as their Messiah. They've been put aside. In God's temporary program, will there be a restoration of the nation of Israel? Without even reading the entire chapter, I want you to know what Paul's answer to those two questions are. Look back at verse 1, “God forbid.” Pretty good, right? We can close our Bibles and that's the end of the evening, right? The answer is no. Then notice in verse 11. Again, “God forbid.” When he asks the question: Has God cast away His people completely? No way, God forbid. Have they stumbled or fallen that they will never be restored? God forbid. The word in the Greek means perish the thought. The theme of chapter 11 is, God is not through with the nation of Israel.

I forgot to have you turn not only to Romans 11, but I want you to turn back with me to Jeremiah 31:35. Follow with me. “Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts...,” or Jehovah Sabaoth, or the Lord of Armies, “...is his name.” Notice verse 36, “If those ordinances...,” that is, ordinances of the sun for the day, the moon and the stars for night, and the dividing of the land and the sea, these natural ordinances that God has established in creation, “...depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.” (You guys couldn't find it? What's wrong with you guys? Chapter 31, I'm sorry. I hate that when I'm wrong.) Basically, Jeremiah is saying if the sun stops shining, if the stars stop shining in the heavens, and these ordinances stop, then God will do away with Israel or Israel will cease to exist. Every morning when you get up and the sun rises, it's a reminder of God keeps His promises. In context here, God keeps His promises to the nation of Israel. This may seem like a dusty history lesson, and “Who cares about Israel when I'm trying to pay my bills, resist

temptation, and I want to have a better marriage?” But, we are here tonight to study the Bible. Amen? (If we can figure out what chapter we’re in.) We’re here to hear all that God has to say. We want all the counsel of God. I believe that an understanding of this chapter helps you to piece together the puzzle of what’s called God’s mega-narrative—how God deals with man in redemption, salvation, and in the future for what God has planned for the world. We’ve got to understand the relationship of Israel as a nation in this whole picture.

Go back with me to Romans 11 (I’m pretty sure that’s what I want to say). We’re going to be looking at the fact that God keeps His promises to Israel. Pharaoh, in Exodus 1, tried to destroy the Jews. Haman, in Ester 3, tried to destroy the nation of Israel, the Jewish people. Herod, in Matthew 2, tried to destroy the Messiah, Jesus, at His birth. Hitler, as recently as WWII, tried to destroy the Jewish people. Amazing all the Jews Hitler had put to death in The Holocaust trying to eradicate God’s witness on planet earth. One of the greatest evidences for the existence of God and the historicity and reliability of the Bible is the Jew. Simply stated, the Jew. You do a little study and research on the marvelous Jew, the amazing Jew, the wandering Jew, and it’s amazing the Jewish people and God’s preservation of them as a people. It tells us that God is not through with Israel, and God’s promises to Israel are unconditional. I’m going to be giving you some foundational truth tonight. I hope you will write some of these statements and points down because they will help you in years to come piece together the Scriptures prophetically and what we call dispensationally—trying to understand how God deals in different periods of time with people.

Make a note of this, God’s promises to Israel in the Old Testament were unconditional. Underline that. This is something that is forgotten and because it’s forgotten, Scripture is misinterpreted and thus misapplied. When God made a promise to Abraham, it’s called the Abrahamic covenant, the promises were unconditional. When God gave to the Patriarchs what is called the Palestinian covenant, which is the promise of the land from the Euphrates River all the way down to the River of Egypt, which they don’t possess right now but God promised that to them. It was unconditional. When God made the Davidic covenant, the promise that God made to King David that through his seed, his lineage, would come the Messiah, and that Messiah would literally sit upon His throne and would reign forever and ever and ever and ever, that promise was unconditional. If those promises had been broken or put aside then God does not keep His promises. If God does not keep His promises, we can’t be sure we’re going to go to heaven. We can’t be sure that our sins are forgiven or that there is hope in the future in Jesus Christ. I believe this is very important stuff to see that God always keeps His promises, what God has spoken cannot be broken, and God never fails. If God has made a promise unconditionally to Israel, God will keep that promise as He has made promises to us—He will keep those promises.

Let me give you another foundational truth. When trying to interpret Biblical prophesy and what the future holds, always keep three groups distinct, separate, and clear in their roles. Those three groups are: Gentile nations, Israel as a nation, and the church. God has a role, God has a plan, and God has a purpose for these three groups. They’re distinctly separate and different, and you need to keep them in their proper category. These are the Gentile nations of Babylon

and the different nations that ruled in Rome, Egypt, and Greece. You need to keep all these Gentile nations in that category. They are Gentile nations. Then, God has a different plan and purpose for Israel as a nation. God also has a plan for the church, made up of Jews and Gentiles, that began at the day of Pentecost and will end on the rapture. You need to keep those distinctions in mind.

In our passage tonight, Paul calls four witnesses to prove that there is a future for Israel and Israel's rejection is not total but only partial; it's not final but only temporary. By the way, that really is a summary of Romans chapter 11—Israel's rejection of Jesus Christ is not total only partial, and it's not final only temporary. Let me give you these four witnesses that Paul sets forth as proof. The first is a personal proof, himself, his own testimony that he believed in Jesus and was converted. This is seen in Romans 11:1. I call it the personal proof. Go with me to Romans 11:1. Paul says, "I say then, Hath God cast away his people?" That is, the Jewish people, the nation of Israel. "God forbid," perish the thought. Why? "For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." Proof 1 - Has God cast away His people? Well, Paul would say, "I'm His people. I'm from the seed of Abraham. I'm of the tribe of Benjamin. I'm a Jew." You might say, "What proof is it that God is not going to completely cast off Israel just because a Jewish man by the name of Saul was converted?" In 1 Timothy 1:16, Paul makes a statement that his conversion was set forth as a pattern of salvation. I believe that his conversion is a pattern of the salvation of Israel as a nation not just as a salvation of an individual sinner saved by grace but also a picture of how God is going to save the Jewish people. When the Lord came the first time in His first advent, the Jewish people were blinded. They didn't see Christ. They didn't recognize Christ. They didn't receive Him; they rejected Him. They will see Him, they will receive Him, they will understand Him when He comes back in His second coming, in the second advent. They missed Him at His first coming, but trust me, they won't miss Him in His second coming. Amen?

The Bible says as the light that shines from the east, even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be and every eye will see Him, and the Jewish people will look upon Him whom they have pierced. They will wail and they will mourn and say, "What are the meanings of these wounds in Your hands?" He says, "These are the wounds that I received in the house of my friends." The time of greatest Jewish evangelism is still future for our world. Thousands upon thousands of Jews will come to saving faith in Jesus Christ when He comes back in power and great glory at the end of seven years of tribulation known as a time of Jacob's trouble. One of the primary purposes for the seven years of tribulation is to bring Israel to repentance and faith in their Messiah. That's one of its purposes. Paul is saying, "As I rejected Jesus initially," Saul of Tarsus, hating Christians, going to Damascus to arrest believers who call on the name of Jesus, "I was encountered." He had an encounter with the Lord. He saw a great light and was struck to the earth. He heard an audible voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Isn't it hard for you to kick against the goads?" Saul said, "Who art thou, Lord that I might serve thee?" And, oh man! The voice came back from heaven, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." And he thought, "I am dead meat because I've been hating You and I've been persecuting people that call upon You, and I thought that You were a phony." All of the sudden his realization is Jesus is God! I believe that's kind of a picture of how the Jews are going to come

to salvation.

If God can save Saul of Tarsus, God can save anyone. Amen? You have a husband that you think is obstinate, stiff-necked and hardcore and he doesn't want you to be a Christian. Well, God saved Saul, God can save your husband, Ladies. You have a friend that doesn't like God and Jesus and puts down Christianity. If God can save Saul, God can save that friend of yours. There's hope.

Let me give you the second proof. It's historical, verses 2-6. There is a lot from the Old Testament in this chapter, and I'll do my best to explain where it's from and how it pertains. From verse 2 down to verse 6, we see that Paul is arguing from history in the Old Testament that Israel's rejection wasn't complete or total, God always had a remnant. Notice beginning in verse 2. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew..." or God chose or set His love upon, "...Wot ye not what the scripture saith..." he's quoting from 1 Kings 19. "...of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. 5 Even so then at this present time," notice the phrase, "this present time," "...also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Their rejection wasn't total, there were Jews who believed. As a matter of fact, the first Christians were all Jewish and were believers in Messiah. Notice verse 6, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." I'm going to ask you to quote that to me after church tonight. He goes back to 1 Kings 19, if you know your Old Testament, when Israel had apostatized—they turned away from God. The wicked king Ahab was ruling, and he had a wife named Jezebel. Not a good name for a daughter, okay? If you're going to have a little girl don't name her Jezebel. She was one of the most wicked women in the Bible. She threatened Elijah, "I'm going to kill you! I'm going to wipe you out!" Elijah just destroyed all of her prophets, and she said, "God do so more to me if by tomorrow by this time you're not like those prophets which you had slain." This man of fire, this man of courage, this great man of God, hearing a threat from this woman, ran for his life. He ran out into the wilderness and crawled under a Juniper bush, a little scrubby tree, and just lay there. He began to pray and said, "God, kill me." Can you imagine that? You say, "Yeah, I've prayed that today. Lord, I just want to die." Then, Elijah, in his despair and depression said, "God, I'm the only one in Israel..." making a long story short. "...I'm the only one who loves You. I'm the only one who follows You. I'm the only one who obeys You. I'm the only truly spiritual person in Israel." What did God say? "Elijah, you don't know what you're talking about. I've got 7,000 who have not bowed their knee unto Baal."

Let me give you some lessons. In verse 3, we learn that things are not as bad as they seem. "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." Elijah, cool your jets. Things aren't as bad as they seem. I need this tonight because as I look at the world sometimes my wife will say, "You want to watch the news?" I'm thinking, "Oh man! I don't know. It's just going to bum me out. It's just going to depress me. It's just going to anger and frustrate me." It's hard for me not to be preaching at the television

when I'm watching the news. My wife actually has to stop it and say, "I can't hear, you're talking too much." There are times where I'm like, "Lord, is there anyone that loves You? Are there any Christians left in America? Are there any churches preaching Your Word? Are there any really truly godly people left here?" It looks so bad. God said to Elijah, "I've got 7,000 people that are on fire for Me. You don't even know about them, so you don't know what you're talking about, Elijah." I think that we do well to remind ourselves that as we look at this world and we think of it as so bad, it's not always as bad as it seems. God is still on the throne and there are people who love Him.

Do you know that you can go to anywhere in the world, and I've traveled the world, you can go to any wicked city of the world, and I've been in some big wicked cities, everywhere you go you're going to find people who love Jesus Christ. Amen? You're going to find people who are committed to God, love the Lord, and are serving the Lord. You get this idea, "I'm the only true Christian." I remember years ago, I'll never forget, this person came to me and said, "Can I talk to you, Pastor John?" I said, "Sure." We sat down and they said, "Why am I the only spiritual person in this whole church?" I can't believe they said that. I'll never forget that. "Why is everyone in this church so carnal, and I'm the only spiritual person?" I just was dumbfounded. "You're the only one that reads their Bible? You're the only one that prays? You're the only one that serves? You're the only one that gives anything to God?" You know, "Why am I the only true devoted servant of God?" Why are you so stuck on yourself? Can't you see past yourself? The unholy trinity—me, myself and I. It's so crazy. When I read this, I remind myself, "You know, it's not as bad as it seems."

Here's another lesson, verse 4. Remember, God knows more than we do. He is at work even when we can't see it. God knows more than we do. Elijah didn't know there were 7,000 men who had not bowed their knee to the image of Baal. For all we know, God is doing a work that we can't even imagine, that we couldn't even fathom in our nation today, in our community, in our world, in our state. As I've mentioned, the election coming up, we look at it and are filled with despair. We wonder, "What's the future for America?" You know what? It's not as bad as it seems. God is on the throne, God has a plan, and the church is still alive. The church is not going to be wiped out. God has a purpose and a plan, and His promises will come true. We need not despair. God is at work even when we can't see it.

Thirdly, notice in verse 5, God always has a witness, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." There are Jews that are saved by grace. I want you to notice something, verse 6, remember it is God's grace by which we are saved whether we are a Jew or a Gentile. You got that? Whether Jew or Gentile, how are we saved? By the grace of God, not by our works but by His grace. What he is saying in verse 6 is that you cannot mesh works and grace. Another really fundamental important thing to make note of is that grace and works are mutually exclusive completely. I had a woman once come to me too that said, "Hey, you know, I believe that you need both grace and works. You need both grace and works to get to heaven." There are a lot of cult groups that believe the same thing. She said, "It's kind of like a rowboat. You need two oars to get the rowboat to go anywhere. If you just had one oar, which would be works, it goes around. If you just had one oar of grace, the

rowboat won't go forward." You know what the problem is with that, right? No one is going to heaven in a rowboat. That's just flat out stupid. How's that for a deep theological response. All our illustrations break down somewhere. It's like, "Excuse me, but no one is going to heaven in a rowboat." The Bible is very clear. You cannot mix works and grace. The moment you say that you have to do something to be saved then you completely annihilate grace. It's either all of grace or it's all of works, not both, one or the other. The Bible is very clear that we are saved by grace through faith.

I'm going to do something right now that I don't normally do. It's kind of even scaring me for just a moment. I'm going to show you a little 5-minute video. I stumbled on this a couple of weeks ago. I had Aaron pick it up off YouTube today, and it really illustrates what this passage is actually saying, that even right now God has a remnant. There are Jews who believe in Jesus and are being saved, and it's evident that the rejection is not complete and their rejection won't be final. So, fix your focus on the screens for just a few moments.

Even as Paul makes clear here in Romans, I want you to go back to verse 5. He said, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." That's actually what we saw just then in that video. There is a remnant according to the election of God's grace. There is the personal proof, God saved Paul; there is the historical proof, Elijah the prophet who thought he was the only one and yet God had chosen 7,000 who had not bowed their knee unto Baal. Then, there is the third proof tonight, verses 7-10. We may wrap it up at this point. There's a section, the fourth point in verses 11-24, that is so important, and I don't want to have to try to rush through it tonight. I want you to look at verses 7-10. Follow with me as I read it.

Paul says, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it," that is, the Gentiles, "...and the rest were blinded..." that is, the elect out of Israel, but the rest were those who rejected the Messiah and were blinded. We are going to learn that blindness has happened in part to Israel until the church is complete, the fullness of the Gentiles, and then once again God will begin to deal during the tribulation with the nation of Israel. I want you to notice this parenthetical statement in verse 8. It is taken from Isaiah 24:10, a lot of references from Isaiah. Paul says, "(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber," that is, the nation of Israel or the Jewish people, "...eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day." He's quoting from Isaiah which prophesied that there would be this spiritual blindness that would come upon the nation of Israel that they would not see. The second prophecy was from the Psalms, Psalm 69:22. It's quoted there in verse 9. "And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: 10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway." He quotes two prophecies from Scripture. He goes through the Old Testament and quotes from the book of Isaiah, that they would have a spirit of slumbering eyes that they should not see, that they would have ears that couldn't hear unto the very day that Paul was penning this epistle to the Romans. Then he quotes from the Psalms in verse 9 that says, "their table be made a snare." Psalm 69:22. In the English Bible, that phrase is the same in the Old Testament translated into English, "their table be made a snare." The

word “table” is a reference to their blessings—the spiritual blessings, privileges, and benefits that they had received. We think of a table being set. We think of the blessings of the Lord. He sets a table before me in the presence of my enemies. He fills my cup, it runs over. The table is the idea conveying the blessings. In context here, it's the privileges and the blessings that Israel had and possessed, but their blessings actually became their downfall. Their privileges became their stumbling block.

This is kind of a stretch of application, but the same thing can happen to you and me. God has saved us by His grace. He's given us His Word. He's given us the church, the family of God, the blessings that we have. Don't take them for granted. They can become either something to drive you in humility closer to God or you can stumble over them and be stumbled by the very goodness and the blessings of God. Paul quotes the Psalm again in verse 10, “Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back away.”

So, we've seen three of the four proofs tonight. The personal proof, the historical proof and then the Scriptural proof. Let me just mention this next section, and you'll see why I'm not going to be able to finish it off tonight, that is from verses 11-24. In this section, Paul is going to actually show them that there will be a future restoration for Israel. There is coming a day when God will restore Israel. In the meantime, he says that God's rejection of Israel temporarily and partially was part of His divine plan and purpose so that salvation could be offered to the Gentiles and we could be saved. He does that by using an analogy of grafting in a wild olive tree unto a good or natural olive tree. I think it will be good for us to go into it more next week because I'll be able to do something I didn't get done today, that is, draw you a graph or picture of this illustration that Paul uses of the olive tree. The roots represent Abraham and the Patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob. The natural branches of this olive tree, which are broken off, represent Israel. The wild olive branches that are grafted in and become partaker of the root, which is still alive, is a picture of the Gentile nations.

Again, I've probably lost you and you're probably thinking, “This is crazy.” You need to understand that God is on the throne, the Jewish rejection of Jesus as the Messiah was not an accident. It wasn't a mistake. God wasn't sitting in heaven going, “Oh, no. What am I going to do? They killed My Son.” But, before the foundations of the world, God knew what He was going to do. He was going to send His Son, and the Jewish people would reject Him. In John 1 it says He came unto His own, that's Jewish people, and His own, that is, the created world, received Him not. He knew that by that rejection the door would then open to the Gentiles which, God had prophesied in the Old Testament, would come to faith in Jesus Christ. This period of Gentiles and Jews coming to faith in Jesus by the grace of God is known as the church age. It's this period of God's grace when in the church there is Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free, but we're all one at the foot of the cross. There is no distinction. It doesn't matter whether you're a Jew or a Gentile tonight, you're saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. There's only one way to be saved and that's by grace and faith in Jesus Christ, not by your good works but by taking the hand of Jesus who died, was buried, and rose again from the dead.

This whole history of the rejection of the Jews is God's story, His story. What's going to happen, and we'll get it next week in our text, is called the fullness of the Gentiles is going to come in, that's when the church is complete. When it's complete, it's going to be taken up to heaven to meet the Lord in the air in what is called the rapture. After the rapture of the church, the antichrist is going to be revealed. He is going to make a covenant with the nation of Israel, who just so happens to be back in the land. Isn't it amazing that after almost two thousand years the wandering Jew, the persecuted Jew, the rejected Jew, the hated Jew, the despised Jew, and we're seeing antisemitism on the rise in the world today radically, and a hatred for the nation of Israel, but he will make a covenant with the nation of Israel for seven years. This is going to be a time of Jacob's trouble when God's going to prepare Israel for the second advent, the second coming of Jesus Christ. Now, if at His first coming, and I'm kind of drawing from what I didn't read and go into tonight, it meant salvation for the Gentile world, what is it going to mean at His second coming when the Jewish nation receives it? It's going to be the millennium, the kingdom age. He is going to sit on the throne of David because God made a Davidic covenant that David's seed would sit on the throne, and He would reign forever and ever—that happens to be Jesus Christ, and remember God keeps His promises! If the sun stops shining then there will be no more Israel, and that's then possible to happen. So, God's going to bring the Messiah back, He's going to sit on the throne of David, and there is going to be righteousness on earth. The world is headed for the time of tribulation, but it's going to usher in a new age. There's going to be peace on earth. There's going to be righteousness on earth. Do you want to know why? Because Jesus Christ will reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. What an awesome time that will be!

We've just barely got our feet wet in Romans 11. It looks like now we're going to be taking another two weeks to get through this, but trust me as you go through this eleventh chapter, it's amazing because you're then able to fit all the pieces of the puzzle together that God has a plan, God will restore Israel, and God is not finished with the nation of Israel. You need to be warned about a false teaching that is known as replacement theology. It has become quite popular today with the assurgence of the reformed movement and what is known as Amillennialism—the denial that God has a future plan for Israel. They do that by saying the church has taken the place of Israel, all the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to David and the Palestinian covenant are spiritually fulfilled today in the church, and there's no future for the nation of Israel.

Israel is God's time clock. History revolves around that people. It started with the call of Abraham. The Bible is very clear. I don't know how they can come to the conclusion that we are spiritual Israel and we've taken the place of Israel unless you take all the promises God made in the Old Testament and you spiritualize them, which I don't think we should do. Just as literally as Christ came the first time, He'll come the second time. I believe in the rapture. I believe in the second coming. I believe in the thousand-year reign of Christ, and I think it's going to be a wonderful time on earth simply because Jesus Christ will reign on the earth. What a glorious thing that is! The Bible says that the nations of the earth will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and there will no longer be anymore war. Can you imagine a world with no war? No hospitals? No police departments? No cancer? No

sickness or disease? And, Jesus Christ reigning on earth in righteousness, covering the earth as waters cover the sea? God has a purpose, God has a plan, and God has a future for the nation of Israel. Let's pray.