

Romans

Romans Chapter Eleven

Romans 11:11-15

May 8, 2011

This is lesson number **88** in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God is revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

Title: Good Out of Evil

My breakdown of Chapter 11 is as follows:

- Vs. 1-10 The election of grace.
- Vs. 11-15 How God brings good out of evil.
- Vs. 16-24 The single olive tree.
- Vs. 25-32 The covenant.
- Vs. 33-36 The Doxology.

Chapters 1-8 teach actual guilt of all men both Gentile and Jew and presents the Gospel; how God saves sinners.

Chapters 9, 10, and 11 answers the question, “What about the Jews?”

My burden in these lessons on Romans Chapters 9, 10, and 11 has been to demonstrate to anyone who “has ears to hear” that “all Israel” in Romans 11:26 was not, is not, and will not be national Israel, i.e., Israel restored.

In the face of an overwhelming majority of preachers and Bible scholars who insist that God is going to again restore the nation of Israel or at least save a vast number of Jews in regard to their **birth certificate** I say that the Scripture does not teach any such thing.

That sounds like a brash claim Jim, how can you support such a view?

It is not all that difficult to understand my view if you take Romans Chapters 9, 10, and 11 together and then look at the whole of Scripture and see that God justifies **individuals** and not nations.

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God does not justify [declare not guilty] a person because they belong to a certain group of people be it a local church or an ethnic group.

So I began my exposition of Chapter 11 by going directly to Romans 11:26,

“And so all Israel will be saved”,

and I explained that there are **two Israel’s** in Scripture.

One “Israel” is national Israel and the other “Israel” is the “Israel of God.”

Now “all Israel” in Romans 11:26 is either one or the other and it cannot mean both. If you insist that “all Israel” means the nation of Israel, then you are saying that God is going to justify a people on the basis of their birth certificate.

I want to be fair in my opposition to those who say “all Israel” must be national Israel by acknowledging the basis for their view. They come to their view by believing that the OT promises made to Abraham and Moses and David of a land are yet to be fulfilled. Then they look at modern Israel in the Middle East and say “doesn’t that prove that God is going to restore Israel?”

Of course God keeps His word but all the promises to national Israel have already been fulfilled or forfeited because of their unbelief and idolatry. I will have more to say about the promises and their fulfillment in a later lesson.

So one view is that “all Israel” means national Israel.

The other view, and what I believe is consistent with the entire Bible, is that “all Israel” means the “Israel of God” as Paul calls the church in Galatians 6:16, the church made up of all believers both Gentile and Jew. “All Israel” means the elect of God comprised of both Gentiles and Jews, and justification is by grace through faith alone.

That is what Chapter 10 teaches, Justification by faith alone based on what Chapter 9 tells us who will come to call on the Lord.

“For whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” [10:13]

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We saw that the Scriptures over and over again say that God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the matter of **justification**.

Did God bless the Jews above any other people on earth? Of course!

Did God ever justify anyone based on who his or her parents were?
Of course not! Not if Romans Chapter Nine means anything.

That was Paul's point in Chapter 9: Isaac and Ishmael had the same daddy and God chose Isaac and passed by Ishmael. Jacob and Esau had the same mother and daddy and besides that they were twins and God chose Jacob and passed by Esau.

“For the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls...” [9:11]

The election of grace is based on “Him who calls” and not on anything else!

Then immediately Paul reminds his hearers that God told Moses:

“I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.” [9:15]

“Whomever's” are individuals not nations!

Then to continue that theme, after going directly to 11:26, I explained that the first 10 verses of Chapter 11, deal with **the election of grace**, and we saw how Paul answered the question,

“Has God cast away His people?” [11:1]

You see back in Paul's day and continuing in our day the majority of people who even think about the question of national Israel believe that God promised to restore the nation of Israel.

Well, God did promise to restore Israel and He did restore Israel but they rejected their God just as their fathers before them had done when they killed the prophets. They rejected their Messiah by killing the Son of God and hanging Him on a tree as a curse!

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The Jewish rabbis in Paul's day taught that the OT prophecies concerning the land as an everlasting possession were **yet future** and refused to consider that the promises of God to national Israel had either been fulfilled or forfeited because of disobedience.

We will deal with the everlasting aspects of the promises in a later lesson. Just be satisfied that God keeps His Word, sometimes in ways that men refuse to understand because it doesn't fit their preconceived ideas.

Let me remind you of that with a familiar example.

What kind of a king were the leaders of the Jews expecting? They expected an earthly ruler that would deliver them from the power of the Romans.

What kind of a King is Jesus?

His kingdom is not a worldly kingdom but He is King Jesus in the hearts of His people!

Will you also be disappointed to learn that Jesus is already King and that you do not need to wait for a so-called millennial reign of Christ?

So Paul answers the question,

“Has God cast away His people?” [11:1] by saying **“Certainly not!”**

Look at me, says Paul, I am as Jewish as anyone can be, and God called me.

“God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.” [11:2]

The reason that there was so much confusion and error in Paul's day about national Israel and the reason so much confusion and error continues in our day is because the “experts” have assumed that God's people are the Jews.

The Bible tells us that God's people are those **whom He foreknew** and they are the **“whomever's”** to whom He shows mercy, they call on the name of the Lord because they are the **election of grace**, and when it comes to the ones He foreknew and the ones to whom He shows mercy, **they are always individuals.**

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Then Paul proves that God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew with the story of Elijah who thought he was the only one left in Israel who believed in Jehovah God and God told him that He had reserved seven thousand men who had not “kissed toward” or worshiped Baal.

Then Paul concludes that **“Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”** [11:5]

In verses 6-10 Paul explains that it is grace and not works or birth certificates, and that the OT prophets had warned that God would harden those who continued in unbelief. Paul uses Isaiah and the Psalms to show that from among national Israel God, in sovereign grace, chose some, a remnant according to the election of grace, and the others He hardened.

Today we will consider **How God brings good out of evil**, vs. 11-15.

Romans 11:11-15

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. 15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Several times I have pointed out how it is Paul’s style to introduce a theme and deal with it but then come back to the same theme later.

Let’s take another look at **How God brings good out of evil**.

Remember Romans 8:28-30?

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28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Good out of evil: God's eternal purpose, election, calling, justification, and glorification.

In my daily personal Bible reading I often come across passages that relate to the Scripture that I am preparing to teach on that same week. I find certain texts that have a direct application to compare Scripture with Scripture.

I want to read two such Scriptures to you that I don't believe I would have otherwise thought of in support of Romans 11:11-15, the passage that we are dealing with today, with the heading, **How God brings good out of evil.**

After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the grave we read in John 11:45-52:

Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. 46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." 51 Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

Now I am not going to expound that text but will only point out how perfectly it supports the idea of **How God brings good out of evil.**

Notice especially that Caiaphas **did not understand** the meaning of his prophecy. Caiaphas was blinded and hardened to the OT Scriptures that said that through the

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death of the Messiah “that He would gather together **in one** the children of God,” Gentiles and Jews together in the church!

The other passage that I happened to read was Luke 13:22-30:

And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' 27 But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. 29 They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And indeed there are last who will be first [Gentiles], and there are first who will be last [Jews]."

The question was: "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

The answer: If you are trusting in your birth certificate and ignore what the prophets have said you will miss the kingdom of God. Yes, there are few that will be saved and they are the elect of God.

Paul says the same thing in 11:7, “**What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it and the rest were hardened.**”

Let me ask you a question. This question is to everyone who hears me today in this room or later on Sermon Audio.

Does it offend you to be told that God chose whomever He wills to save and He hardens the rest in their rebellion? Are you willing to go to hell trusting in your “decision” instead of trusting in Christ alone?

I want to be understood. Justification is by grace through faith alone and you will make a decision to follow Christ. But if you believe that God saved you **because** you made a decision that is works and not grace. That is “decisionism”.

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That is a denial of the sovereignty of God and God will use your rejection of His sovereignty to harden you.

God will share His glory with no one. You will either give God the praise for saving you or you will go to hell believing that God saved you because of some religious act that you performed or because you joined the “right” church, or because you have been baptized.

This is “subtraction by addition”? The Judaizers were saying that a man must be circumcised before he could become a Christian. That adds to what Christ has already done. Anything that you add to what Christ has already done subtracts from His sufficient and perfect atonement for sin.

That is exactly what is going on in this passage before us today, vs. 11-15.

This is the provoking of a stiff-necked and stubborn people.

Something else that I will no doubt repeat in subsequent lessons is that in Chapters 9, 10, and 11 Paul is writing about the situation, as it existed in his day [11:5]. He is not writing about a future restoration of Israel. You have to bring that preconceived notion to this text and force it to fit. Just stay in the context and you will see what the Apostle is saying.

“For they are not all Israel who are of Israel.” [9:6]

There is the election of grace.

Paul is grieving over the hardness and unbelief of his kinsmen according to the flesh and he prays that some of them will be saved.

But the situation that he is writing about is their rejection as a nation and the blessing that their rejection brings to the Gentile world.

How God brings good out of evil.

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

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“Have they stumbled that they should fall?”

Is it the only purpose of God that Israel should fall?

Is there nothing good to come from the judgment and destruction of this nation?

Certainly not! By no means! The result of their fall is the riches of the world. The Gospel is open to sinners of every nation, tribe, and tongue.

Now there are **two cases** of provocation of the Jews in these verses.

One is here in vs. 11 and it is the judgment and **hardening** already mentioned in 10:19. God says He will harden them through jealousy of a “No-Nation.”

They worship a “no-god” and God will provoke them with a “no-people.”

The other case of provocation is in vs. 14, which we will look at in a moment.

But here in vs. 11, God provoked the nation to jealousy and He hardened those in unbelief, not simply that they should fall but that the Gentiles should reap the benefit. **Good out of evil!**

12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

Those who believe there will be a future restoration of the nation of Israel love this verse because it says, “their fullness.”

Their interpretation is that when the nation of Israel is restored in all of its former glory the Gentiles will reap great blessings and according to their interpretation of “all Israel” it says that “their fullness” means a national restoration.

But the text does not say that at all.

Paul is not referring to a future race of Jews, **but to himself!** Is that not the context of vs.1-5? Has God cast away His people? How did Paul answer that question? I am one of God’s people **whom He foreknew.**

And Paul himself is part of “their fullness” not some future nation of Jews!

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Here is what Paul is saying. If the rejection of national Israel has meant a blessing to the world at large, how much more blessing will it be when out of the wreck of national Israel there comes a steady stream of Jewish converts by the election of grace to join with the elect of God from the Gentile world to form one body in the church!

Is not this “life from the dead”?

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles and magnifies his office. What has been the blessing to the Gentile world through the ministry of a single Jew? How many have come to the knowledge of the Gospel through the Holy Spirit’s use of a single Jew? “**I magnify my ministry.**” **Thirteen books of the NT.**

In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus Abraham answered the plea of the rich man in hell for Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers about the place of torment that he was in and where he would be forever.

Abraham told the rich man in hell if his five brothers do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.

If Jew or Gentile does not believe the Word of God and the Gospel there is no hope for them in a future restoration of a nation based on their birth certificates.

14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.

I said there are **two cases** of provocation of the Jews in these verses. The provocation verse 11 is the hardening of and the rejection of the nation.

In vs. 14 it means that Paul by being a good example as a Jew who believes the Gospel that he might provoke them to jealousy and “save some of them.”

Paul loved to tell his brethren according to the flesh how that even though he had persecuted the church that God had called him and made him an apostle!

Saul of Tarsus, the chief of sinners, is called by God and becomes Paul the apostle of Christ! **Pure grace!**

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There is nothing here about a future restoration of a nation, just the election of grace, and the sincere desire that God would “save some of them.”

15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

There are those who are cast away, rejected, and hardened.

At the present time a remnant of the Jews is being called, some of them are being saved and Paul is an example. **Is not that “life from the dead?”**

Please notice that nowhere does Paul write about a future event. Everything here is in the present for Paul. The only way a person can make this chapter apply to a future restoration of the nation of Israel is to bring that preconceived idea to the text and force it in. It simply is not in the text!

So far we have examined:

Vs. 1-10 **The election of grace.** And
Vs. 11-15 **How God brings good out of evil.**

God willing in the next lesson we will take up,
Vs. 16-24 **The single olive tree.**

As challenging and as intellectually stimulating as the interpretation of “all Israel” may be, it will not matter at all if you do not personally repent and believe the Gospel.

You must call on the name [power and authority] of the Lord.