

Romans 11:1-15

“Jealous For Jesus”

You recall that Ch’s 9-11 spin off of the fact found at the end of Ch 8 whereby the apostle assures us of the fact that *nothing* can separate us from the love of God. The natural question that would come up in that context would be, “Well than what do you do about the nation of Israel? God’s chosen people who seem to be cast off, thrust away from God, how do you factor them into the equation?” and To that Paul has responded to us, and explained *for* us the fact that God has a plan, and that Israel made a choice, God didn’t reject Israel as it were but Israel rejected God in the rejection of His Son, and God has honored that.

Now having said that Paul has also dipped slightly into the reality and has sought to open our understanding to the fact that not all are Israel who are *of* Israel. Which is to say, simply being a physical Jew doesn’t guarantee, nor has it *ever* guaranteed general amnesty from God’s judgment and assure one of salvation, Ab has physical sons and he also has spiritual sons. and The bible is clear, “...*that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*” Gal 3:7 and In that it doesn’t matter if you’re Jew, Gentile, white, black, brown, yellow, male or female, slave or free, if you’ve given your heart to Christ, and have received Him in faith, you’re a son, a daughter of Ab (spiritually speaking). But really that was just a quick side note in the beginning of Ch 9, *generally* speaking these 3 Ch’s deal more with Israel *not* in a spiritual sense, but in a very real and literal sense, God’s dealing with them as a nation.

Ch 9 speaking of God’s dealing with them in the past, even from their inception as a nation, Ch 10 speaking of God’s dealing with them in the present, how they’ve rejected Jesus Christ and God has in turn been found by us who have not sought Him, and He’s made Himself manifest to those who haven’t asked for Him. The Gentile nations weren’t out there seeking after God, but God in His mercy manifested Himself to us. Now Ch 11 picks up on that thought still speaking in the beginning of God’s relationship to Israel presently, but then making its resolve with regard to God’s promised restoration of Israel ultimately.

So Ch’s 9-11 God’s dealings with the nation of Israel, past, present, and promised future, how it all fits perfectly into God’s plan *globally*, how that translates into our lives *personally*, and how it’s all going to come together *ultimately*. God’s not finished with the nation of Israel, 2 things that Ch 11 makes known to us regarding God’s present rejection of Israel in response to their rejection of His Son is A) That it’s only partial, and B) Even at that it’s in no way permanent.

The way the facts have added up so far one might be tempted to think that God was simply finished with Israel period. God has extended Himself to them over and over and over again, and they’ve continually resisted, refused, and rejected His will, His Word, and His ways ultimately culminating in the crucifixion of His Son. Ch 10 ends with a quote from Isaiah, “All day long I’ve stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.” So what’s the deal? Is God fed up and finished with them?

Vs1

The idea behind the words “Cast away” is a *thrusting away from oneself*, “Has God pushed permanently away from Himself His own people?” He’d already called Israel His own, the idea here being, “Has God reneged on that? Pushed His people permanently away?” Paul responds, “Certainly not!” “God forbid,” “Bite your tongue,” it’s the strongest negative the Greek language can muster up.

Don’t think that God didn’t know what He was getting into when He called the nation of Israel His own. It wasn’t like He made them His own, and then went, “Man, if I knew it was going to turn out *this* way I’d have done something different altogether.” No, God knows the end from the beginning, calls those things that don’t exist as though they’re a done deal, Israel didn’t catch God off guard.

It wasn’t a surprise the way things went down, and God has not changed His mind, Mal 3:6, “*I am the LORD, I change not;*” The bible says, “*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*” Num 23:19 The psalmist tells us of God, “*You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*” Ps 138:2

I love that scripture there in Numbers, God’s not a man that He should lie, translation; unlike us He keeps His Word. and Despite the fact that Israel has been obviously disobedient and contrary to the Word and will of God for their lives, scripture is replete with God’s Word to them that He will never forsake, desert, or *abandon* them. Samuel told them, “*For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people.*” 1 Sam 12:22 Again the Psalmist writes, “*If they break My statutes And do not keep My commandments, Then I will punish their transgression with the rod, And their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, Nor allow My faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me; It shall be established forever like the moon, Even like the faithful witness in the sky.*” Ps 89:31-37 I’ll give you just one more, “*For the LORD will not cast off His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance.*” Ps 94:14 God will not go back on His Word to Israel, it’s not about them and who they are, it’s about the Lord and who *He* is, He’s made a covenant *with* them, given several promises *to* them and God will always keep His Word.

We’re thankful that we serve a God who is true to His Word, because what that means to us is that just as sure as God will keep His Word pertaining to Israel, so to He’ll be true to His Word to you and to me. Maybe you’re wondering if when it comes to this whole Christianity thing you’re going to make it thru, perhaps its more difficult than what you’d originally perceived and you’re not sure that you’ve got what it takes. Well, let me settle it for you once and for all, you don’t, none of us do, apart from Christ we can do nothing. But you need to

rejoice in the fact that it's not about what you can do in your strength, but rather it's about what He can do through you in His.

The bible says, "...that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil 1:6 How many of us have uncompleted projects perhaps laying around the house, or something we've started but never really finished? God's not like that, if He begins a work, He'll finish it, that's why the book of Hebrews refers to Christ as, "...the author and finisher of our faith," Heb 12:2 Because He's able to complete that which He begins. Aren't you glad that He didn't just *begin* the work of redemption and then decide it was just too much hassle to follow thru with? But having begun the work what was His cry there upon the cross before He released His spirit into the Father's hands? "It is finished!" John 19:30 God is true to His Word, but even before His faithfulness in finishing the work is the promise of His Word to even *begin* it. The promise of God's Word, "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." If you don't know the Lord, put His Word test, see if it be true, cry out *to* Him, call *upon* Him, lay your life *before* Him, surrender your heart *unto* Him, invite Jesus into your heart and you'll find that He keeps His Word, you'll be forgiven of your sin, made a new creation in Christ. We could spend the remainder of our time looking *at* and commenting *on* scripture that God has breathed with a promise attached to it for you or for me but the bottom line that I want you to receive in this is the assurance of the fact that God keeps His Word.

He hasn't cast Israel away from Him, He has a plan that still very much involves them, He's assured them of that in His Word. But not only does Paul have God's promise, he also has his *person*. He says, "Hey, if you think God has cast away His people (Israel) than I have a personal problem because *I'm an Israelite!* I'm of the seed of Abraham and of the tribe of Benjamin, so if God has cast us away apparently I never got the memo." He's pointing to his life as an obvious record of the fact that God is still changing the lives and saving the souls of the people of Israel."

Now with Paul *he's* pointing to himself as evidence that God hasn't cast Israel away from Him or else God wouldn't be using him. But the fact that he wants everyone to see is how God has changed his life, and how he can point to himself as proof that God is in the business of changing lives. When you're speaking to someone about the love of God, how God wants to forgive them, change them, make them a new creation in Christ, do you point to yourself as proof of the fact that God can do that. Does your life serve as evidence that God changes lives? Or if you were to say, "God can do for you what He's done for me, just look at how I *lead* my life, see how God is *using* my life, this is where I've been, but in Christ this is where I'm at." Would people say, "Man that's awesome, there's no denying the fact that God has done a work in your life." Or would it be more like, "Um, no thanks, I'm pretty much altogether where you're at with out God, I can't see a tangible difference, no real distinction between your life and mine." Paul says here, "Exhibit A, myself, I also am an Israelite, examine at my life, God hasn't cast us off." Oh there's been times in their history that are darker than others, but God has never utterly abandoned them, even at their darkest point, Exhibit B.

Vs2-5

Paul presents one of the lowest points of their national history, when it seemed as though the entire nation was given over to Idolatry. and It seemed to Elijah they were all out to lunch, God forsaken, he himself was being pursued and persecuted, after he had 450 prophets of Baal put to death, Jezebel said, “That’s it, you’re a dead man,” and Elijah fled for his life. and Perhaps Paul felt some sort of special connection with Elijah, being himself under the persecution of the Jews, feeling at times all alone. But he realized even in the days of Elijah God had a remnant, God had reserved 7,000 who hadn’t compromised, who were seeking after the Lord with all their heart, all their mind, and with all their strength. Elijah felt like he was the last of the Mohicans, none left like him, he alone was sold out to God. God in essence said, “Get over yourself Elijah, you’re not the super spiritual Lone Ranger that you think you are.” Sometimes we feel that way don’t we, “God no one else is willing to buckle down and serve you like I am, they’re all carnal and I alone am spiritual...” God says, “Get over yourself; I have thousands and thousands (in our case) if not millions who are completely sold out to Me.”

But Paul is pointing out here that even when things seem to be at their worst, God has never, *nor will He ever* utterly abandon Israel, He always has His remnant. Just like there was a remnant in Elijah’s day, so to there was a remnant in Paul’s day, and even still there’s a remnant of Israelites in our day who love the Lord Jesus and are being used radically *by* the Lord Jesus. As a matter of fact I would almost venture to say that there are more Jews who love Jesus today (percentage wise,) than Gentiles. How many Jews are in the world today? I ran across a statistic from 2001 that said approximately 13.3 million, let’s up it to 14 million. Now the other 5.95 billion or so people on the earth are Gentiles, it wouldn’t take too many Jews percentage wise to outweigh the Gentiles as far as the true remnant sold out to Christ.

It’s not uncommon for God to substantial work through a relatively small remnant, nor is it something foreign to the teaching of scripture. We often think it takes a great amount of people for God to do a great work; couldn’t be farther from the truth. Think with me if you will, how many men did Jesus have with Him? 11 if you don’t include Judas, yet look at the multitudes that were impacted through those men. Bring it back up to 12 when Paul comes into the picture and look at the magnitude with which God impacted the world, He doesn’t need a lot of people to do a great work, just a *few* who are truly sold out to Him.

Often times big #'s are simply the result of just a few who are whole heartedly given over to Jesus, a faithful remnant. God rarely starts with a large #; He starts with a small #, a remnant, and does a great work, so there’s never a reason to be discouraged by a small #, that’s often where God begins a great work, with a faithful remnant.

Notice in Vs 5 that the election of the remnant is according to grace, this just takes us back to what we’ve heard over and over again throughout this book, the reasons for God’s

choosing one over the other aren't with in us, they're with in Him, its according to grace, not works. (Notice)

Vs6

Or to put that real plain, grace and works are mutually exclusive avenues towards attaining righteousness (a right standing before God) it can't be (as some teach) do as much work as you can and from that point God's grace will cover the rest. It's either all grace, or it's all works. Because if righteousness could be attained on the principle of law, then why did Jesus even come here? You see you've got to be real careful when you start requiring of people something of themselves to be made right before God, be it baptism, church membership, saying so many prayers, knocking on so many doors, or anything else, because in so doing you belittle, and demean the work of the cross. If you can do something to make yourself righteous, than Christ died in vain, that's what the bible says. Gal 2:21 "*I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.*" So the salvation of any who believe, Jew or Gentile is by *grace* through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.

Vs7-10

Now I'm not going to comment too much on these Vs because they're similar in point to Vs 17-23 of Ch 9 where we discussed the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, and how God honored the fact that he resisted God's Word *to* his life and God's *Work in* his life, Pharaoh purposed to resist God, so God honored that, established him in that. Here we're given much the same point, those who were open to Jesus Christ, received Him by faith as their righteousness before God were the elect of God's grace. Those who sought to establish their own righteousness, not willing to receive God's gracious provision of righteousness were given over to blindness.

As David said, (there in Vs 9) their table, all that had been given *to* them, provided *for* them, should've served as a *benefit* to them, but instead they allowed what was given to them as a blessing to turn into a burden. The law, the feasts, the various sacrificial rites that they observed, those are the things that were meant to lead them *to* Christ, but instead they became the very things that kept them *from* Christ. Rather than seeing the fulfillment of those things in Christ, they leaned *on* those things, and trusted *in* those things for righteousness *rather* than Christ. and Sadly many fall into the same snare today, they trust in their religious rituals for righteousness, rather than a personal relationship with Jesus, but it's not about religion, it's in having a relationship with Jesus, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Vs11

Notice here that there's a difference between *stumbling* and *falling*, if you're stumbling you may be wobbly, obviously not walking right, and in *danger* of falling, but when you fall you're down. and The idea here is that a fall would constitute the impossibility of recovery, "down" would mean "out" remember Jesus said that He saw Satan "Fall like lightning" to the earth. There's no going back for Satan, his fate has been sealed, is that the way it is with Israel?

Again Paul says, “No way, bite your tongue” but through their fall (which is another word in the Greek meaning “Offense” or “error” so I don’t know why the translators confused the Vs like this) to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

We were challenged in Vs 1 regarding our lives, does my life serve as evidence that God is at work in the world today. Here we have a similar frame of mind, and probably on a couple of levels we should be convicted. Because what we’re reading here is that God intended the church of Jesus Christ to be such a grand and glorious beacon of light that the Jewish people would look in on a gathering of Christians and the way that God was just pouring out His grace, saving by faith, and say, “Man, I want some of that,” the gracious provision of God’s salvation in our lives was intended to provoke Israel to jealousy. Here they are with such rigid legalism, stringent traditionalism and still falling short of God’s desire, and here we are having done nothing to merit it, are in no way deserving of it and yet God is just pouring out His grace upon us. That was meant to provoke Israel to jealousy, so that they might come to Christ and be saved by grace. But sad to say that much to the opposite, rather than being a beacon of light to Israel, much of church history has been an object of persecution *against* Israel. and It’s absolutely shameful, I make no excuses for the shameful blights on church history, there’s no room in Christianity for anti-Semitism, the Jews have given us the scriptures, and the Savior of the world Himself was the Seed of Abraham. A Christian Anti-Semite is an oxymoron, someone who doesn’t know the scriptures, the heart and mind of God, and obviously has no real working relationship with God.

But not only are we convicted historically on this point, but also in our own lives personally. How many people peer in on our lives and think with in themselves, “Man, if God can love me, like He loves them, if God’s grace and forgiveness is actually that real, and that powerful, I’ve gotta get in on that.” Our lives should make others jealous, oh not because of the money you may have, or the car you may drive, or the career in which you excel. As a matter of fact our relationship with the Lord should be such to the extent that even when circumstantially our lives are falling apart people can still look in on it, and be jealous over it. Saying, “You know I don’t understand it, they lost their job, or that loved one died, this other crisis is crashing down around them and yet they still have the peace and joy of the Lord ruling in their lives, I need some of that in my own life.” Our lives should be salt, making others thirsty for the living waters of Jesus Christ to quench their thirst.

How many of us could potentially stand before a room of non-believers, perhaps you don’t know them, but they know you, and you say, “Don’t you all want, what I have in Jesus?” How would they respond? “Well, if I got what you have, forget it! I see the way you always complain, are never satisfied, you’re always in a bad mood, snapping at people, you’re always sharing in the same lewd humor, and dirty jokes, if that’s *life in Christ* count me out. Got plenty of that on my own.” Our lives should be light, not under a basket, but shining brightly on a hill for all the world to see what it means to have the grace of God at work in our lives, the mercy of God overflowing *from* our lives, and the richness of God’s salvation as a reality coursing

through our lives. That they might be jealous of Jesus in our lives, now to the other extreme is the “Holier than thou” jerk, they don’t need to see that either, just Jesus, that’s all they need.

Vs12-15

Paul is saying here, “I’m anxious to see Israel fully committed to Christ, because if in their faithlessness and failure, the richness of the gospel has been given to the world, how much more in their *fullness*.” In other words if God has done such a grand and glorious work even as the result of Israel’s failure, when He has them in their fullness it’s going to be off the charts. If their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? and That my friends is what God is all about, life from the dead.

The bible says, “*God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),” Eph 2:4-5 Resurrection life, the power of Christ in your life, out of the death of Christ, comes life for you, life for me, and it’s not about earning and deserving, it’s believing and receiving freely by grace. May God have such a grip on your heart, that you can’t help make people jealous for Jesus through the reality of your relationship with Him.*

Prayer Points: Lord God we thank You that You are a God who brings life from the dead, that though we were dead in sin, yet in Christ You’ve made us alive, saved us by grace. I pray that any here who may need that same work, might be willing to receive it today. Forgive us God for so often being anything but provoking people unto jealousy *over* You, that they might long for a relationship *with* You. So often we’re such poor examples, help us, have Your way *in* us, we praise You that You’re true to Your Word. and I pray for anyone who may be struggling, even stumbling in their walk with You, God that You might uphold them by Your righteous right hand, we cleave to the promises of Your Word and we thank You that having begun the work in our lives, You’ll be faithful to complete it.

If you’re here today and God is calling out to you, wanting to just begin that work, I want to encourage you to respond. Jesus laid His life down on the cross as a sacrifice for the sin of the world collectively, and your life specifically, you can be forgiven of your sin, by simple faith in the work of Jesus Christ on your behalf. If Jesus is knocking on the door of Your heart, just open it, and let Him in, and though your sin be as scarlet, He’ll wash you white like snow.