

Romans – Justified through faith

Week 19 – Romans 11 (Israel’s Future: God’s long-term design)

1. The situation at the time of Paul’s writing (v1-10)

Paul explains how God always preserves for himself a remnant – this has happened several times when Israel ‘as a whole’ has turned away from Him. This remnant is saved, as we are, by grace NOT through their observance of the law. The rest of Israel has hardened their hearts so God gives them over to the consequences of this hardening as a just judgement.

2. The future prospect (v11-32)

Paul now explains how we Gentiles have benefited from Israel’s rejection of Jesus, but that God plans to use envy to once again bring Israel back to him. He then uses the metaphor of the Olive tree and it’s branches to explain how although we’re grafted in we must look down on Israel or consider ourselves superior. Faith and belief are all that matter not being an original branch or a grafted branch. The removed branches can be re-attached should they find faith and the grafted in branches can be removed if we succumb to unbelief.

Paul then states that so long as Israel rejects Jesus, the gospel will be preached to the Gentiles – this was Paul’s standard practice; to go to the synagogues first and when rejected there to go to the Gentiles in whatever town he was in. The ‘all Israel will be saved’ does not necessarily mean every single Jewish person – but does mean the vast majority. This phrase is consistently used this way in Jewish literature. The deliverer (v26) is of course Jesus. There is no other way of salvation.

The Jews may be considered ‘enemies’ in the sense that they have, on the whole, rejected the gospel, but in God’s plan they are loved and God hasn’t changed his mind about winning them back just as he did many times in the Old Testament.

3. Doxology (v33-36)

“If God’s word fails to Israel, God is not glorious. And if God is not glorious, God is not God. And if God is not God, our greatest treasure is taken from us, and we are turned into beasts with the monkeys and the porpoises, and all our love and all our affections are nothing more than chemicals, and we must play ‘make believe’ all our life that anything is significant.

But Paul is passionate for the glory of God and the God-ness of God and the unspeakable significance of your life. And so he writes these chapters and ends them like this “... (v33-36)...” That is what hangs on God’s faithfulness to his word to Israel. His glory. His being God. And your life mattering at all.”

- John Piper

Memory Verse:

“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”
– Romans 11:36