**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*Romans Series - Chapter 11*

 ***God’s Remnant by Grace***

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October 20th In the Year of Our Lord 2019

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)

Paul stands on the Old Testament prophets (Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David, Elijah, Ezekiel and Job) to deliver God’s message in Romans 11. It is critical for the proper application of the New Testament for there to be a solid understanding of the Old Testament. Paul’s legitimacy as a Disciple of God, Church Planter, Missionary and Evangelist stands upon the word of the Old Testament Prophets. Paul’s letter would not be received as credible and not received by Jews, if He did not rest His witness upon those who had previously spoke for God.

**Romans 11:1**

I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He?

May it never be!

For I too am an Israelite,

a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.

Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about **Elijah**, how he pleads with God against Israel?

 3 "Lord,

THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS,

THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS,

AND I ALONE AM LEFT,

AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE."

Words of Elijah in about 874- 853 B.C. (I Kings 19:10, 14)

 Elijah stood-up to Ahab and the prophets of Baal.

4 But what is the divine response to him?

"I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." (I Kings 19:18)

 5 In the same way then,

**there has also come to be at the present time**

a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works,

 otherwise grace is no longer grace.

 This is similar to when Moses returned from the Mountain and found Aaron leading the people in building the Golden Calf. Moses, by God’s grace, offered to all present, even though they had been caught “red handed” with the worship of the Golden Calf, “Whoever is for the Lord come to me.” The sons of Levi stepped forward (Exodus 32:26). These are like the seven thousand who did not bow a knee to Baal. Romans 11:3 points to the time that God spoke through His prophet, Elijah, confronting king Ahab of Israel in his worship of Baal.

 The point is that God extended His grace to those who came to Him. God did not make the seven thousand **not** bow to Baal. God did not make the sons of Levi come to Moses. And God did not make the Jews in Jesus’ day respond to the Gospel. We see the twelve (except Judas) and many Jews willingly surrender to the Lord. Nicodemus, all the women at the empty tomb, 3000 thousand at Pentecost and the list goes on. No doubt, you can add those Jews in Rome that Paul is writing too. The point is. . .that God still extends His grace to people even though this is a fallen world. Regardless of the evil events taking place, all around people every day, God still extends His grace. There will always be a remnant who surrender to God and not worship the Baals of the fallen world. Man does not earn this privilege, that is to be extended by God’s grace. Like Paul says, if people had to earn the opportunity to have God’s grace extended to them, then grace is no longer grace. The key to God’s grace is accepting. We become part of the remnant when we accept God’s grace.

**Romans 11 (cont.)**

 7 What then?

What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained,

but those who were chosen [7,000 remnant] obtained it,

**and the rest were hardened;**

Turned them over to their own desires Romans 1:24, like Pharaoh. There is a history of God hardening people’s hearts who had willfully chosen to continue to cross the line. God sent King Saul an evil spirit, (1 Samuel 16:14) and, as mentioned, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened (Exodus 9:12). This is biblical evidence that once a person continues to willfully sin in the face of God to a degree that there is a wanting flaunting of fallen human will, then God not only turns a person over to their own desires but assists them in receiving their just rewards.

 The Israelites in the Exodus were not model citizens. They brought with them from Egypt their pagan Idols and constantly rebelled against God and His servant Moses. We all know that God eventually sentenced the leaders to die in the wilderness. This took forty years. Then upon entering the Promised Land, God speaks through Moses. God had made them dependent upon Moses. They had no choice but to follow Moses during the wilderness experience. Moses was their eyes and ears and guiding spirit. With this instruction God is giving them eyes and ears by way of a covenant to keep them straight. This is the same as Jesus teaching that He is the Way to the Truth to Eternal life (John 14:6). With this covenant, people attain spiritual focus on a steadfast direction in life.

**Deuteronomy 29:9-13**

9 "So keep the words of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

 10 "You stand today, all of you, before the LORD your God: your chiefs, your tribes, your elders and your officers, *even* all the men of Israel,

 11 your little ones, your wives, and the alien who is within your camps, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water,

 12 that you may enter into the covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath which the LORD your God is making with you today,

 13 in order that He may establish you today as His people and that He may be your God, just as He spoke to you and as He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

 **Romans 11 (cont.)**

 8 just as it is written,

[By: Moses 1528 -1409 B.C.; Isaiah 762 – 680 B.C.,

Jeremiah 627 – 560 B.C.; Ezekiel 593 – 571 B.C.]

"GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR,

EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT,

DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."

Deuteronomy 29:4 "Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.

 This passage is after God led the Hebrews for 40 years in the wilderness due to their rebellion.

 Throughout the history of the Hebrew people, there were periods of following the Lord closely and then there were rebellious times. Unfortunately, the biblical account records more times of Hebrew rebellion than prosperity under the Lord. The Old Testament prophets testify to this fact. Isaiah is a primary example. During Isaiah’s time, God was severely disappointed and, as He was with Pharaoh, He gave them more of what they wanted. This accomplished two things: their sinful actions brought righteous judgement, and they became an example to people for all time. Pharaoh’s army was destroyed when the sea swept back over them. And after Isaiah’s warnings, the Hebrews were taken into Babylonian captivity. You go so far away from God, God will not only turn you over to your own desires, He will further you along your way ending in death and destruction. There isn’t any way of getting around what these words mean: God punishing people with their own desires.

Isaiah 29:10 For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep, He has shut your eyes, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, the seers.

Isaiah 6:9 He said, "Go, and tell this people: Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.

Isaiah prophecies to Judah before the Babylonian Captivity. Isaiah foresees the time of the captivity and beyond. Thus, judgement and redemption. There will be a remnant.

Ezekiel 12:2 "Son of man, you live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear; for they are a rebellious house.

Ezekiel was taken as part of the first group to be exiled to Babylon in about 597 B.C. He prophesied in Babylon.

Jeremiah 5:21 Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people, Who have eyes but do not see; Who have ears but do not hear.

Jeremiah begins his prophecies to Judah, before the Babylonian exile. He is also active and his prophesies are read during the first part of the Babylonian exile. Jeremiah is believed to have been taken to Egypt by those Jews escaping the Babylonians.

**Romans 11 (cont.)**

9 And **David** says,

"LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,

AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.

 10 "LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT,

AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER." (Psalm 69:22,23 Before 940 B.C.)

 Paul brings forward these Old Testament prophets and the historical events to shed light on his current situation facing the Jews. The Jews had gone too far in crucifying the Messiah. God turned them over to their own rebellious desires, and the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D., as Jesus prophesied (Matthew 24:2, Mark 13:2, Luke 21:6). But God still calls to them like He did through Moses, and the sons of Levi came forward. And like those seven thousand who did not bow to Baal, Paul identifies with those Jews in Rome that they are a part of the remnant God will use to further His kingdom. We must remember that God knows there will always be a remnant. God knows there will always be people who will surrender to Him.

This is so, because people are created in God’s image to have a relationship with Him. Even though we live in a fallen, sin-darkened world, there is a choice to be made. History has born that there may only be eight people as in the days of Noah or a remnant like Lot and his family, but there will be a remnant.

 In Romans 11:11-36, Paul goes to great lengths to explain the relationship with the Jews and the Gentiles. The bottom line is God’s covenant, as given to Abraham, is applicable for all the nations (Genesis 12:3). Obviously, this includes the Gentiles, who are all the nations. Through Paul, God, being frustrated with the Jews, identifies that His covenant also includes the Gentiles. This was a historical reality as noted with Abraham. This means you and I are included.

We Gentiles must remember that God chose the Hebrews to witness Himself to us. As Paul explains, we Gentiles have been ‘grafted in’. The Jews may be jealous, but God’s grace is applied to who He wills. Through the Jewish victories with God and through their failures, we receive the Truth in how to have a relationship with God. As Paul so colorfully writes, we Gentiles are a wild olive, but none-the-less, qualify to be ‘grafted in’ by faith to the root (Olive Tree), be it a remnant root, **a branch of Jesse.**

**Isaiah 11:1** Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

 **Romans 11 (cont.)**

 11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they?

May it never be!

But by their [Jews] transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles,

to make them [Jews] jealous.

 12 Now if their [Jews] transgression is riches for the world

and their [Jews] failure is riches for the Gentiles,

how much more will their [Jews] fulfillment be!

 13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles.

Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles,

I magnify my ministry,

 14 if somehow,

I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen [Jews]

and save some of them.

 15 For if their [Jews] rejection is the reconciliation of the world,

what will their [Jews] acceptance be but life from the dead?

 16 If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also;

and if the root is holy, the branches (Jesse Isaiah 11:1) are too.

 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, [unrepentant Jews]

and you, being a wild olive [Gentiles],

were grafted in among them [the Jews]

and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; [Jews]

but if you [Gentiles] are arrogant,

remember that it is not you [Gentiles] who supports the root,

but the root supports you [Gentiles].

 19 You [Gentiles] will say then,

"Branches [Jews] were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

 20 Quite right, they [Jews] were broken off for their unbelief,

but you [Gentiles] stand by your faith.

Do not be conceited, but fear;

 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches [Jews].

He will not spare you [Gentiles], either.

 22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God;

to those who fell [Jews], severity,

but to you [Gentiles], God's kindness,

if you [Gentiles]continue in His kindness;

otherwise you [Gentiles] also will be cut off.

 23 And they [Jews] also, if they do not continue in their unbelief,

will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them [Jews] in again.

 24 For if you [Gentiles] were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches [Jews] be grafted into their own olive tree?

 25 For I do not want you [Gentiles], brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—

that a partial hardening has happened to Israel

until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

 **26 and so all Israel will be saved**; just as it is written,

"THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,

HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

 27 "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,

WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." (Isaiah 59:20; Psalm 14:7)

Isaiah 59:20 "A Redeemer will come to Zion,

And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the LORD.

Ezekiel 18:30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel,

each according to his conduct," declares the Lord GOD.

"Repent and turn away from all your transgressions,

so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you.

Job 19:25 "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,

And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

Psalm 14:7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!

When the LORD restores His captive people,

Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.

Isaiah 1:27 Zion will be redeemed with justice

And her repentant ones with righteousness.

 28 From the standpoint of the gospel

they are enemies for your sake,

but from the standpoint of God's choice

they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

 30 For just as you once were disobedient to God,

but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

 31 so these also now have been disobedient,

that because of the mercy shown to you

they also may now be shown mercy.

 32 For God has shut up **all** in disobedience

so that He may show mercy to **all.**

 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

 34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD,

OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?

 (Isaiah 40:13,14; Job 11:17, 15:8;)

 35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM

THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?

 (Job 41:11, 35:7)

36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.

To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

After Jesus is tested in the wilderness by Satan, He gives His first sermon to the masses. This is called the Sermon on the Mount chronicled in Matthew 5. We cannot help but notice that Jesus’ test in the wilderness rejected Satan. The Hebrews test in the wilderness was a miserable forty-year failure.

People have given nothing to God for salvation. Man is incapable of producing anything towards salvation. Therefore, when Jesus delivers His Sermon on the Mount, He totally turns the Pharisaic-table upside down as powerfully as He did later with the tables of the money changers in the Temple in Jerusalem. No deed of man, but it is God working in the surrendered heart of a person that produced kingdom works. From the standpoint of who will be members in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus identifies not only the path, He lists the spiritual attributes of kingdom citizens.

This past week, I shared Galatians 5:22 with children with a reflection to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5.

**Matthew 5:1** When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

 2 He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying,

 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven.**

 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

 5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

 10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven.**

 11 "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your **reward in heaven** is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Galatians 5:22-23**

 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, **self-control;**

against such things there is no law.

There is a simple truth to all of these teachings about these spiritual characteristics, attributes, and personal qualities. . . regardless of what language you speak, from what heritage you come, what nationality you are, what tribe you represent; regardless of race, creed or denomination, all of these are part of the human DNA demonstrating our love for God and each other. You may have never read the Bible and never heard of the Jews. You have never met a Christian Missionary or a Jewish religious leader. You may have never been water baptized or taken communion, but you have all the spiritual attributes available to you as Jesus taught in His first sermon.

It is obvious the people waiting for Jesus to speak that day were waiting to hear the words of a miracle worker and possibly the long-anticipated Messiah. Their minds were waiting to hear the plan for victory over their oppressors, the Romans. As Moses and David won victories over God’s enemies, they too waited to hear Jesus’ plan. But what did they hear? Not a military plan to establish an earthly kingdom but a plan to be a member of a heavenly kingdom. Jesus’ plan, by the words He spoke, were inclusive of all people from all nations thus fulfilling the promise of God in Genesis 12:3 that all the nations would be blessed. Yes, Jesus came to the house of Israel, the root of the olive tree. Through this ministry to the Jews the rest of the world is evangelized.

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." **John 12:32**

**AMEN**