**The Book of Romans**

 Part Four: God’s righteousness is revealed in His Sovereign Plan for Israel. (Romans 9-11)

***The Nation Israel and “The Remnant” -- Or, Has God abandoned His people?***

***Romans 11:1-16***

As we seek to make sense of the world, it is good to remember that God is always faithful to His people. And that is because He is faithful to Himself and to His promises. But who are God’s people? Jesus gives us a big clue when, as His mother and brothers are seeking Him, he looks around at his disciples and says, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.” Mark 3:34–35 (ESV)

So the short and most obvious answer to the question, “Who are the people of God?” is not to say, “The Jews.” Rather, God’s people are those who are in covenant with Him by faith in His Word, those who believe Him and believe in Him. This is Paul’s argument here, and in answer to the question about God abandoning His people, “No way!”

***Of course God has not abandoned Israel. . .*** 11:1-6

* Paul is an example of one who is saved. v. 2
* And remember the “Elijah Remnant.” 3-5

Paul’s salvation points to a larger principle, namely that God always has chosen and kept to Himself a remnant. The story in 1 Kings 19 contains the quoted words, challenging Elijah to abandon his self-pity and martyr complex because God has preserved a number (then, 7,000) to Himself who had not bowed down to idols. He is doing the same today.

***Just keep in mind that the issue is God’s choice by grace, and has nothing to do with the Law or good works. . .*** 11:6-10

Paul explains that were it not for grace, no one would be saved. As it is, God’s chosen have believed, attaining salvation, but the rest rejected His grace as God hardened their hearts. Paul does not try to explain this away, but shows God’s election and man’s choices as two sides of the same coin. Again, God’s sovereignty does not mean that we are not responsible for our actions, for we are.

***And all of this is part of God’s plan.*** 11:11-16

Romans begins and ends with Paul explaining his mission (1:8-14; 15:14-33), and this passage shows how he views that ministry (to the Gentiles) as part of God’s plan. Here he hints at the future salvation of the Jews, but also begins to explain how it will happen. Israel’s “remnant” is only a token of what will come when Israel has been made “jealous” and returns to the Lord. (Here the jealousy should be under-stood as a spiritual desire for a pure relationship with God after their “adulterous” idolatry. See Hosea 1, 2; Ezekiel 16; James 4:4; *etc*.)

***Things to remember when thinking about the “Chosen People”:***

***1. God’s redeeming plan is to bless ALL NATIONS.***

We should remove any bias we have about the superiority of one race over another, and avoid tribalism. Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8

***2. The present nation of Israel is not the regathered remnant promised in the prophets.***

Israel’s return to God will be first a spiritual, Messianic awakening. Deut. 30:1-10; Zech. 12:10; 13:1; Luke 13:34, 35.

***3. God’s people are identified by faith, not race.***

Ultimately, the people of God are those who believe and follow His Son, regardless of race or language. Acts 28:17-31