

For completeness sake, let's look for a moment at faith's role in the creation of the nation of Israel, to do this we must go back to Genesis 11:10-32 where we see the genealogy of Abram and we see two people:

- Nahor
- Abram

They are brothers. Now Nahor was not a believer. Abram was, so Israel begins with a believer. Abram had two natural sons:

- Ishmael
- Isaac

Ishmael had the genes of Abraham and by the way, all the Arabs are descended from Abraham as well. Isaac was the child of faith – he was the one that was the child of promise.

So faith means that it is in Isaac that Israel descends. Notice that Ishmael is as much physically related to Abraham as Isaac is. You might say, well Ishmael was illegitimate, but you see this is why this passage goes on to talk about the next generation. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau.

Romans 9:10-13 *'not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (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), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated"'*.

Esau was not a believer. Jacob was a believer. The line of Israel does not follow the line of natural descent, but the line of faith as well. So all those who are physically from Abraham are Israel, but there is a subset, which also share the faith of Abraham, thus we have the title called 'the remnant' which we will look at in a moment.

Today there is a remnant of people in Israel who are believers, and what Paul is saying is God made the promises to believing Israel. **Not** to unbelieving Israel.

Romans 9:27 *'Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved"'*.

Already there are many Israelites but only a remnant will be saved and these are the **true** Israel. So now we can look at a glorious conclusion –

1. God has made promises which He will keep.
2. God made them to a believing Israel.
3. The day is going to come when God will keep them and these should tell you something wonderful about Israel's future and our God.

Before we go on, for completeness sake, I just want to cover a couple of things about the church.

Galatians 3:26-29 *'For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'*

These are statements made about the church. Let us see with what we have studied, how these verses in Galatians fit. In the early church as in the church today, you had Jewish believers and you had gentile believers. A few legalistic Jews were coming along and saying various things. These Jews were saying we have got the genes of Abraham and the faith of Abraham, they looked at the gentile believers and said all you have got is the faith of Abraham. You are not physically descended from him, and the Jewish believers would say you have got to be related to Abraham in some way, and by the way that is a true statement, there is no salvation outside of Abraham's family, there is only one family that is going to be saved on this earth and that is those who belong to the family of Abraham. Anyway, these Jewish believers said that in order to be related to him you will have to be circumcised because that is the only way you can fulfil all that is needed to be saved.

However, the rule in the New Testament is this, Jews needed to change their mind – repent - about who Jesus was and believe and receive Him as the Messiah, gentiles simply needed to believe and receive Him, plus nothing.

As gentiles we did not need to 'rethink' anything because we knew nothing in the first place, however, these legalistic Jews weren't happy with this and felt that something more needed to be done as proof. Paul says forget that! You Jews have got this thing wrong, the gentiles are part of Abraham because Jesus is physically descended from Abraham, and they are in Him by virtue of their believing in Him. So this passage is nothing to do with literal or spiritual Israel, Paul is talking facts about the church – in every nation there are Christians and we are all equal, in Christ. Wonderful!

On May 14<sup>th</sup> 1948 Israel came back to the land, most people did not believe that would happen. In 1967, Jerusalem was taken by Israel.

Romans 11:29 *'For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable'*. This is a verse that applies specifically to Israel, but has tremendous encouragement for us. God has called us, and He will bring us all the way through, we are going to make it. He knew what He was getting when He got us. God knows that there are areas of our lives which still need dealing with and by the Holy Spirit, God is working on them – God took us on knowing He was big enough to look after us, and keep us. Praise His Name.

So this verse is not only good news for us, but it is good news for Israel. God has made promises to the nation of Israel, and He will fulfil them to **believing** Israel, the only conclusion you can come to is that on the day that God fulfils His promises to Israel, they will, as a nation, be a nation of believers. The bible doesn't only say that Israel has a future, but it also says the day is coming when the Jews will turn back to God en masse and they will all be believers.

I have told you the culmination at the of the study so that we might see the tremendous truth of God's word as we build with the word of God to that conclusion.

I am not going to do a verse by verse study of Romans 9,10 and 11 but it will help us if I tell you what Romans 9 and 10 are about, then we will have a closer look at Romans 11.

Romans 9 deals with God's sovereign call of the nation of Israel. God has made promises to believing Israel, they are His elect. He has chosen them and He will fulfil His promises to them.

### **The remnant:**

I said earlier we would look at what I meant by the remnant -

Romans 9:6-9 The children of faith – or the promise – God has chosen them. God's sovereignty is shown. This can be clearly seen in verses 12 and 13 ', *"The older shall serve the younger."* As it is written *"Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated"*. Before either Jacob or Esau were born, God chooses Jacob, there is God's sovereignty, and also His foreknowledge. God knew Jacob would believe, He also knew Esau would not, and the rest of the chapter deals with God's sovereignty. So we now have a group of people we call the **believing remnant**. The size of this believing remnant has varied in number throughout Jewish history, but there has always been a '**believing remnant**'. A definition of remnant is a small part that remains after the rest has gone.

Isaiah 1:9 *'Unless the Lord of hosts had left to us a very small **remnant**, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah'*. Sodom and Gomorrah were totally destroyed. The two cities are still under the southern part of the dead sea because God could not find enough believers in them. Remember God said to Abraham, if I can find 10 believers in these two cities I will not destroy them, but He could not even find 10 who believed, but God removed the believers He did find from the cities and then destroyed the cities.

We will see this principle again when we look at the rapture, or catching away of the church, God never judges the righteous with the wicked. Principle. We can see now Israel has always had a believing remnant.

Romans 10 begins actually in Romans 9 and verse 30. The chapter headings are not inspired, they were put in afterwards and often they were wrongly placed and this is an example of that. The old story goes that the man who put the verse and chapter heads in was riding a horse at the time!

So Paul starts to speak about the error Israel made. Romans 9:31,32 *'But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness, why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law.'* In other words, they were using their works and calling them righteousness, but righteousness is only obtained by faith, not by works, so they missed it. So chapter 10 is about human responsibility. Paul is saying Israel is in trouble because of their unbelief. So, does that mean that God is finished with them?

Chapter 11:1 and Paul begins, *'has God cast away His people – certainly not!'* He is most emphatic. He says *'I'm an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin'*. And this answer is not the answer you often hear today. Notice in verse 1 he is stating there is still a believing remnant of Israel around and I am one of them. He goes on in verses 2-4 to speak of Elijah's time and a believing remnant were around then, though Elijah thought he was the only one. God's answer in verse 4 is worth a mention *'But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal".'*

And verse 5 *'Even so at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.'*

And there was still a remnant around when Jesus was born Luke 2:21-38 which is the story of Simeon who was 'waiting for the consolation of Israel' and Anna the prophetess, who served God night and day in the Temple. At the cross a believing remnant was around. God always has a believing remnant in Israel.

Paul himself was told go and preach to Israel first, even though they had rejected Jesus and put Him to death, God told Paul, Israel first. When Paul started preaching, some of the Jews believed, but the majority still rejected and it was only when Israel rejected the message that Paul started preaching to the gentiles.

*Acts 13:45-46 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the gentiles"*

*Acts 28:24:27 'And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved, so when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: 'The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers "Go to the people and say; hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive; for the heart of this people has grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and lest they should understand with their heart and turn, so that I should heal them" '.*

What does that mean? Very often when there is unbelief in a nation God brings them to judgement and He will cause the gospel to be preached again and so speed up the judgement. So that once judged the people can start again – that is what this passage means. It is the grace of God in action. He is always redemptive.

*Acts 28:28 'Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the gentiles and they will hear it!'*

Paul was met with unbelief from the Jews and he turned from the Jews to the gentiles. It is at this point people say, see, God is finished with Israel and use this to base their belief that the church is now everything and God has finished with Israel. When you look at the scriptures, this is clearly not the case because there is still so much unfulfilled prophecy hanging over the nation of Israel.

*Romans 11:11 'I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! (or as Derek Prince would say 'perish the thought!') But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the gentiles,'*

This statement is found in Romans 10:19 *'But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world"* and this is a quotation from Deuteronomy 32:21 *'They have provoked Me to jealousy by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation'.*

Verse 21 is God's view of comparative religions. 'foolish idols' God is saying they are rubbish. Foolishness.

We are the fruits of Paul's preaching to the gentiles (the foolish nation so called!) and we can see the reason why God sent him to us, because of His great mercy and grace and He would have all men to be saved. So does this mean He has finished with the Jews, no, God still wants Israel so He is using us, the church, to provoke them. He wants them provoked to jealousy that they might be saved. Finished with Israel, I think not. God loves us very much, but His character is at stake with Israel that is the point behind all this. Again behind all this is a satanic strategy to prove God a liar. No chance!

So the main thing the church is to do is to move Israel to jealousy – have we done that? I feel we have not, from the moment the church came into being it became anti-Semitic in the main, a terrible indictment. Many mainstream churches in this country are still anti Jewish. It is appalling what the church has done to the Jews, they have persecuted them, lied to them, isolated them, they have sent them into isolation, they have treated them as the Christ killers. The Bible says it was my sin, your sin, that put Jesus to death on the cross. In fact I am equally as guilty as Israel in putting Jesus to death.

In fact, Israel has looked at the church and far from being jealous of the church they have wanted nothing to do with them and the church has failed in its ministry to Israel. Even today in some quarters of the church all Israel hears is that they are finished and the church is everything. Well, praise God, today in some parts of the church God is getting what He wants, a group of gentiles who are part of the church who are pro-Israel and are not only praying for them, but are supporting them in practical ways. Beloved, this is serious stuff, we must think rightly about what the bible says and not be carried about by every wind of doctrine.

So, Romans 9,10 and 11 are not there to build up the gentiles, they are there to build up the Jews and cause us to think rightly about their position before God. It is not appropriate for this teaching, but I just want to draw your attention to the fact that Israel was the 'wife' of God, the church is His bride, neither of these terms are sexual in connotation, they speak of an intimate relationship – has God cast off His people – perish the thought.

Romans 11:11,12 headed up in my bible 'Purpose of Israel's rejection'. *'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. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the gentiles, how much more their fullness!'*

There is still fullness to come for Israel. Notice in verse 12 Paul is not saying Israel is finished, he's saying instead there is **fullness** still to come.

Romans 11:13-15 *'For I speak to you gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be, but life from the dead?'*

When Israel were in unbelief it brought in life from the dead, if it means life now has come about when Israel was cut off, just imagine what will happen when Israel comes back into fellowship with God again. My son that was lost, is found.

Romans 11:16 *'For if the first fruit is holy, the lump is also holy, and if the root is holy so are the branches'*. What Paul is referring to here is that what they used to do at harvest was to take some of

the grain, and if the grain was good, then the dough was good. So what is Paul saying, where did Israel come from, they came from God's call, that was their root, their root was God. Israel still has a future and all the good things that God has promised them will come to pass.

Having explained that God has by no means finished with Israel, Paul turns his attention to the gentiles in Romans 11:17-18 *'And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.'*

Notice, some of the branches have been broken off, not all of them, some. Some people have this idea that all the Jews are out, but the believing remnant are still in. It is **some** of the branches, the unbelieving, the believing remnant are still there.

Now the branches were broken off in order that we might be grafted in and the idea of some of the branches being broken off and we being grafted in was so that Israel would start to produce fruit again for God. We are both fruit producers, Israel and the gentile church.

We are not to boast, we are grafted in to the root. People who think God has finished with Israel and the church is everything, are boasting to their own destruction. Romans 11:19, 20 and 21 *'you will say then "branches were broken off that I might be grafted in". Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty (proud) but fear.*

Romans 11:21 *'For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either''*. Here Paul is speaking not to individuals, but to churches.

We are not to boast and we see that sort of boasting today when people think that God has finished with Israel and the church is everything. This is just not true. I have no idea what they do with the book of Romans!

Romans 11:22 *'Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God; on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.'* This is a warning to the gentiles.

The doctrine that the church is spiritual Israel started in two main centres. The churches of Turkey and North Africa. These were the two major centres of Christianity and they began to preach that God is finished with natural Israel and the church is now spiritual Israel. They took no notice of God's warning in these verses in Romans.

I understand that today the two hardest places to preach the gospel are Turkey and North Africa. God has fulfilled His word – He may not spare you either – what has happened to the churches in these centres of Christianity is that they have been cut off and cut down by God. The point I am making is that we must take the view that we have been blessed because of Israel and we must be a blessing to them. This verse, incidentally, before you freak out, is not talking about losing your salvation, this is purely a doctrinal point and Paul is warning against error. But today we need to heed the warning, the point is we have been blessed because of Israel and we must be a blessing to them.

Romans 11:23-25 *'And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more will these, who are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion (or estimation) that hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the gentiles has come in.'*

Notice, blindness in part has happened to Israel – there is still a believing remnant today and there are probably more Jews today who believe than there has been for many hundreds of years. Israel is not finished, the blindness of the Jews will come to an end, when all the gentiles who are going to be saved have come in. When the gentiles have been saved, it is Israel's turn again. This, beloved, is where the book of Revelation comes in.

Romans 11:26 *'And so all Israel will be saved'.*

Israel is coming back, we are just waiting for the full number of the gentiles to come in. By the way, every time you lead somebody to Jesus you have speeded up the return of the Lord.

Right, now let us look at history outlined in this chapter of Romans:

- Jesus came to the Jews and they rejected Him
- Paul went to the Jews, some believed, the majority did not.
- God used a people who were no nation, the gentiles, and God is waiting for the full number of the gentiles to come in.
- Israel will then come into national repentance.

Romans 11:26 *'The Deliverer will come out of Zion and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins'.*

*'Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out!'*

Jesus is coming back, so we can see Israel is not finished. We can see Paul is not talking about the church, but the nation of Israel. The time will come when the church is complete and God will raise up 144,000 Jewish evangelists who will start preaching the gospel (Revelation 7).

When Israel is saved, Jesus will return and fulfil all of the covenants to Israel. Israel will get all the land God promised them. Jesus will reign from Jerusalem and Israel will be top nation. Israel will be in all the land. The bible says Jesus will whistle for His people when he returns. Israel has a most glorious future.

Romans 11:29 *'The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable'.*

Romans 11:33-36 *"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the*

*Lord? Or who has become His counsellor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for every. Amen.'*

Remember Romans 11 follows Romans 8:28! It is not good that Israel went into unbelief, but it will work for their good. Romans 11 is one of the biggest 'Romans 8:28' in the whole bible. We will study what God has in store for Israel. Let me just say to conclude, that to base your doctrine of the church being spiritual Israel and ignore Romans 9,10 and 11 is foolishness in the extreme and we must have nothing to do with it. God loves the church, yes, and we have a glorious future, but God loves Israel as well and Israel has a glorious future.

Just before we move on to study other things about Israel, and the book of Revelation, I just want us to take note of a few points concerning Israel.

Many people who love Israel do them a great disservice without knowing it through some of the things they say and do. Just for completeness, these are three of the things we must not do:

- Do not love Israel more than God does. By that I mean there are some Christians who think you cannot speak about Israel or a Jew without being against them, because God loves them.
- God calls a spade a spade, when they are out of fellowship with God, God tells them. Do not think that you have to agree with everything Israel does today – their government do not share the faith of Abraham. They make mistakes. Some people go to the extreme of thinking that whatever the Israeli government does it has to be right – if that is so it is the only government on the earth you can say that about!
- We need to pray for them and love them, but love does not overlook overt sin and wickedness. Please do remember that whatever Israel does it not automatically right in God's eyes or our eyes. We must see the truth in these situations and we must pray for them, most important.

Jeremiah 30:1-10

This is yet future, and this is what Jesus meant in Matthew 24. This will happen and it will apply to literal Israel. It will be the Lord who brings Israel back to the land, not the Zionist movement or anybody else. God does use unbelievers to bring about His plan. Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian king was used by God and remember, Nebuchadnezzar was saved as a result of God using him and we will see him when we get there – he is now our brother. God wants Israel and they will be His very own nation.

Do not misuse scripture just because it happens to suit the particular ideas you have. Do not take scripture out of context and use it as your explanation. Please keep New Testament revelation clear and keep your ideas of the church clear. Today whoever believes becomes part of the church, neither Jew nor gentile, but Christians. Jewish and gentile believers make up the church.

The point of all this is this, Israel is supported by a God of covenant, a God who is faithful and true, a God who does not change.



God has called Israel and has a glorious future for them and it is on that basis that we can say the best is yet to come. Pray for Israel and love them. God bless you and thank you for listening, it's been a marathon, but well worth it.

Tomorrow, the five cycles of discipline and the book of Daniel and it's relevance to the book of Revelation.