

## Romans

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Romans 11:1-12



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Vss. 1-4

- At the start of what we know as Ch. 11, Paul returns to both his imaginary opponent and to the idea of the "remnant who shall remain".
- He begins by asking his opponent's question: "So after all you've said Paul are you actually saying that God has rejected His people?". To which Paul responds with a resounding NO! And he himself is the proof! Paul is a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, yet God has not rejected him. Indeed, God sought him out on that Damascus Road!
- But to argue with a Jew is pointless if you cannot back up your argument with Scripture, even if you present yourself as proof. So Paul quotes 1 Kings 19 and the story of Elijah hiding in the cave, having a pride-filled pity party, where the prophet is complaining to God that he is all alone because the rest of God's prophets have been killed and now he is the only one living who is faithful, to which God replies in a whisper that Elijah's complaint is nonsense, for He has kept a remnant for Himself, some 7000 true believers.
- After Elijah, the prophets began to see that there never was going to be a time when the whole nation of Israel would be true to God, but that there would always be within the nation a remnant who had never forsaken their loyalty or compromised their faith. Prophet after prophet came to see this. In Amos 9 he thought of God sifting men as corn is in a sieve until only the good are left. In Micah 2 and 5 and Zephaniah 3 there was a vision of God gathering the remnant of Israel. Jeremiah foresaw the remnant being gathered from all the countries throughout which they had been scattered (Jeremiah 23:3). In Ezekiel 14, the prophet was convinced that a man could not be saved by either a national or an inherited righteousness. Above all, this idea dominated the thought of Isaiah. He called his son Shear-Jashub, which means The Salvation of the Remnant. Again and again throughout the Book of Isaiah the prophet returns to this idea of the faithful remnant who will be saved by God.

Vss. 5-6

- Paul now fast forwards to the present where he points out that once again God has called out a remnant of true believers, people who hear and see the Truth and know it when they see it.

- So God has not rejected “*the Jews*” but has claimed for His own the remnant who are “true Jews”, that is, those who are not merely sons of Abraham, but ultimately have the faith of Abraham. And their calling is not due to their impressive works, but to grace, God’s amazing grace.

#### Vss. 7-10

- What then is to become of the Jews who were not called, who do not accept Christ as Messiah and Savior? Paul suggest that God allows the “scales” of sin to blind them. Hearing the Word of truth requires hearing with the ears of the heart, spiritual ears. Paul quotes Moses from Deuteronomy 29 where Moses is so frustrated with the Jewish people because they neither see nor hear the Truth of God.
- In verses 9-10, Paul quotes Psalm 69:22-23 where David is crying out to God in distress because his enemies have surrounded him. The idea here is that David’s and God’s enemies are sitting feasting comfortably at their banquet table and the overconfidence of their safety has placed themselves in a trap, so the enemy can sneak upon them all unaware. “That is what the Jews were like. They were so secure, so self-satisfied, so at ease in their confidence of being the Chosen People, that that very idea had become the thing that ruined them” (Barclay).

#### Vss. 11-12

- Finally, Paul says that despite Israel’s insensitiveness, the Jews did not stumble so as to fall completely away from God, rather their stumbling opened the way to the Gentiles to come in. Because Israel did not want the message of the good news, it went out to people who were ready to welcome it.
- So, in the end, after tragedy comes the hope. While Israel became insensitive, the nation with the callus on her heart and scales on her eyes, here come the Gentiles by faith and trust in the love of God. But, Paul declares, a day will come when the love of God will act like a solvent on the callus of the heart and causing the scales to fall from Israel’s eyes so both Gentile and Jew will be gathered in. It is Paul’s conviction that nothing in the end can defeat the love of God.