

Did God's Plan A Fail?

Week 3 - Romans 10:16-11:10

Objectives:

- To see that God has always had a remnant in Israel, and Paul is evidence of that
- To see that God is sovereign in choosing whom to save and human beings are responsible in choosing/accepting His salvation
- To see how gracious God is in saving us, people who are no less rebellious than Israel
- To see that God is still working the same plan for all of history

? What is a brain worm? Do you have them often?

What stands out?

Romans 10:16 - 11:10

But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?”

¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. ¹⁸ But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did:

“Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

¹⁹ Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says,

“I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.”

²⁰ And Isaiah boldly says, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”

²¹ But concerning Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”

11 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ² God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: ³ “Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me”? ⁴ And what was God's answer to him? “I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” ⁵ So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

⁷ What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were hardened, ⁸ as it is written:

“God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see
and ears that could not hear, to this very day.”

⁹ And David says:

“May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them.

¹⁰ May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.”

? How would you describe **Israel's** attitude and response toward **God** in this passage; what are some words or phrases Paul uses to paint the picture?

Possible answers: disobedient, obstinate, unbelieving

? How would you describe **God's** attitude and response toward **Israel** in this passage; what are some words or phrases Paul uses to paint the picture?

Possible answers: gracious, persistent, confident

Digging a little deeper

? Why does Paul quote both Moses (Deut. 32) and Isaiah (Isa. 65) in verses 19 and 20? What is his point?

Possible answers: From Israel's start as a nation, they were warned about choosing to follow anyone but God. God always had it in mind to draw others into His flock. Israel has no excuse! In some similar way today, we who are so familiar with God's message have no excuse.

? Did God abandon the Israelites for these Gentile Romans? What does Paul say?

Possible answers: By no means! A remnant was always there, and Paul himself is the evidence of the 'contemporary' remnant at their time.

? What is Paul demonstrating when he quotes the story of Elijah from 1 Kings?

Possible answers: God did not reject Israel. He has always had a remnant. In the same way as he had Elijah and the seven thousand, he had Paul and others. Again, Paul appeals to the Old Testament to show God's same plan at work.

Bringing it home

? In 10:16, Paul writes, “they have not obeyed the Gospel.” What do you think it means to obey the Gospel? How does obedience connect to faith?

Possible answers: Obedience and belief are connected through faith, which comes through hearing the word of Christ, the Gospel. James 2:19 - Genuine Faith leads to joyful obedience and good works.

Charles Spurgeon says this about Psalm 69, which is quoted in 11:9-10, and specifically verse 10: “They shall wander in a darkness that may be felt. They have loved darkness rather than light, and in darkness they shall abide. Judicial blindness fell upon Israel after our Lord's death and their persecution of his apostles; they were blinded by the light which they would not accept. Eyes which see no beauty in the Lord Jesus, but flash wrath upon him, may well grow yet more dim, till death spiritual leads to death eternal... See the terrifying, degrading, and enfeebling influence of unbelief. See also the retaliation of justice: those who will not see shall not see; those who would not walk in uprightness shall be unable to do so.”

? What would motivate God to bring this upon His people? (11:7-10)

Leader note: In the Roman’s Untangled podcast about this passage, Pastor Steve says that God hardens those who have already chosen to be hardened. Continuing to choose sin rather than believing and obeying God hardens the human heart. He also quotes Spurgeon, that “the same sun that melts the wax also hardens the clay.” This is difficult to think about, but we need not shy away from this truth. As we have seen in this series, God is in control of hearts while we still have responsibility. Encourage anyone still wrestling with this to continue studying these chapters of Romans, and particularly 9 through 11.

? From what we have studied so far in Romans, how does this quote and passage relate to those of us who are elected by God now? (11:7-10)

Possible answers: We reject God in small and big ways, every day. And without Christ, we would be totally bound to our sin. But since we do have Jesus, we are freed from the stupor, the darkness, the blindness that sin creates.

For Discussion and Accountability

? What has God saved you from in your that you are especially thankful for this week?