

Has God Rejected Israel? (*Part 1*)

Romans 10:16-11:10

Thought for the Day: God will always remain faithful and true to His promises, both to Israel and to us—count on it!

As we continue our study of Romans 10, it's important to remember that Romans 9, 10 and 11 form a complete section in the book. We need to keep the "Big Picture" in mind:

- Romans 9 – Israel's Past Election (Israel was chosen by God to be His special people)
- Romans 10 – Israel's Present Rejection (Israel rejected her Messiah, so it seems reasonable that God would reject Israel—but did He? Cp. Isaiah 55:8-9)
- Romans 11 – Israel's Future Restoration (According to Scripture, God will restore Israel to a right relationship with Himself in the future)

In Romans 10:13 Paul gives this wonderful promise – "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." But in verse 16 we are confronted with the sad reality that most of the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah (John 1:10-12). This sad reality continues to this very day! So much so that many in the Church today question, "Are the Jews still God's chosen people?" And many conclude that they are not! (Beware of the false teaching of Replacement Theology that says that God is done with Israel and that the Church has replaced her).

It may seem reasonable to us that God would reject Israel because:

➤ **Vs. 16 – God revealed Himself to Israel through Special Revelation**

- He revealed Himself through the preaching of the prophets.
- In the Old Testament, Israel often rejected the message of the prophets.
- Verse 16 is a quote from Isaiah 53:1, the clearest and most powerful Messianic chapter in the Old Testament. It is a lament that Israel, for the most part, did not believe and receive the message of God delivered by the prophets.

➤ **Vs. 17 – God revealed Himself to Israel through the Gospel of Jesus, the Christ**

- Just as Israel had rejected the message of the prophets, so she rejected the message of the Apostles.
- God gave Israel plenty of opportunity to hear and believe, but she repeatedly refused to respond in faith and obedience. (cp. Hebrews 1:1-3)

➤ **Vs. 18 – God revealed Himself to Israel through General Revelation**

- Psalm 19:4 (vss. 1-6: General Revelation – God's Creation; cp. Romans 1:18-20; vss. 7-11: Special Revelation – God's Word).
- Israel was "without excuse" before God—He had clearly revealed Himself to the nation!

But perhaps Israel had not understood:

➤ **Vss. 19-20 – God sought to shock Israel out of her spiritual stupor by showing mercy to the Gentiles, both in the Old Testament and in Paul's day**

- The fact that the Gentiles understood the message shows that Israel was without excuse.

➤ **Vs. 21 – God had been patient and longsuffering with Israel in the face of her disobedience and refusal to repent**

So in view of Israel's rejection of God, it seems natural to ask, "Has God rejected Israel?" Paul's answer is emphatic: "By no means!" (cp. 1 Sam. 12:20-22; Psa.94:14; Jer. 31:36-37)

➤ **Vs. 1 – Because Paul, himself, was an Israelite**

➤ **Vs. 2 – Because God had "foreknown" His people, Israel**

- Cp. Romans 8:28-30. "Foreknow = "to know beforehand."
- Many theologians and Bible scholars understand the word to mean more than a passive "knowing in advance, knowing beforehand, or being aware of beforehand".
- Passive foreknowledge is called "omniscience". God is certainly omniscient!
- But in addition to omniscience, foreknowledge includes the idea of God actively choosing for Himself and setting His love upon those whom He has chosen. (Cp. Deuteronomy 10:15; Amos 3:2)
- "Israel is the only nation God has foreknown and predetermined to be His people and the recipients of His love and grace. 'For you are a holy people to the Lord your God,' Moses declared to Israel. 'The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers' (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).
"Because God foreknew and predetermined before the foundation of the earth to set His special love upon Israel forever, He can never totally reject them. To do so would invalidate His divine promises, nullify His divine faithfulness, discredit His divine integrity, and compromise His divine love." (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*)
- "God knew beforehand that Israel would be unfaithful; if God's faithfulness to Israel was going to be dependent on their faithfulness, God would never have chosen them in the first place. God will remain faithful to his promises to Israel, despite Israel's failure." (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)

➤ **Vss. 2-6 – Because God always has a "remnant chosen by grace"**

- Cp. 1 Kings 19:9-18; Romans 9:27, 29
- "One of the greatest evidences that God has not totally rejected Israel is the continual remnant of that people whom God has graciously preserved for Himself. From the day God called Abraham until the day Christ returns in glory and judgment, there has not been and will never be a time when the earth will be without believing Jews." (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*)

➤ **Vs. 7 – God's elect obtain grace, mercy and righteousness**

- Cp. Romans 9:14-18; 11:25.
- Did the Israelites reject the Lord because He hardened their hearts or did He harden their hearts because they rejected Him?

➤ **Vss. 8-10 – The rest are hardened in their rebellion, disbelief and disobedience**

- Cp. Deuteronomy 29:2-4.
- Willful unbelief manifested in rebellion and disobedience to God has terrible consequences for time and eternity!