

Has God Rejected Israel? (Part 2)

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!

In the first half of Romans 10, Paul explained that Israel was zealous for God but their zeal was not in accordance with what God had revealed to them. They were seeking to come to Him on their own terms, not in accordance with the means God had provided—by faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. They were trying to save themselves by the observance of the Mosaic Law and consequently, they were not submitting to God's means of salvation.

Paul further explained that to be saved by the observance of the Mosaic Law, you would have to keep that Law perfectly—only 100% obedience would be acceptable to God! So, what must we do to be saved? Paul summarized the Good News of the Gospel in this way: "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved... As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame'... for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

But sadly, most of the Israelites did not accept this Good News—they rejected Jesus as their Messiah. And this sad reality continues to this very day. Has God, therefore, rejected Israel?

Perhaps Israel had not heard:

- **Vs. 16 – In the Old Testament, Israel rejected the preaching of the Prophets**
- **Vs. 17 – In the New Testament, Israel rejected the preaching of the Apostles**
- **Vs. 18 – God had given Israel many opportunities to hear and believe, but she had repeatedly refused to respond in faith and obedience**

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's 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."
 - However, 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).” (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*)

In eternity past, God set His love on Israel and chose Israel for Himself; and neither His love nor His choice were based on Israel being worthy of His love or choice. And what was true of Israel in the past is true of us today in the Church!

“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.” (*ibid*)

- “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. 2-10 – Because God always has a “remnant chosen by grace”**

- “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 (those whom He has chosen) obtain grace, mercy and righteousness**
 - 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**
 - Willful unbelief manifested in rebellion and disobedience to God has terrible consequences for time and eternity!

Suggested Applications:

1. Have you submitted to God’s means of salvation or are you trying to come to Him on your own terms?
2. If God has, in fact, rejected Israel, as Replacement Theology teaches, can you trust God to keep any of His promises to you?
3. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, the Bible teaches that He actively chose you for Himself in eternity past. The Bible also teaches that He knew at the time He chose you that you would fail Him in many ways but chose you nonetheless. If God is going to fulfill His promises to unfaithful Israel (and He will!), can you not trust that He will also fulfill all His promises to you?