

Union Bethel AME Church Bible Study

Dial-in Number: (425) 436-6260 Access Code: 141997#

Zoom Meeting ID 863 1188 9288, Passcode 782781

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Tuesday, September 22, 2020, 6:30 – 7:30 PM

Romans 11:1-21



Romans 11:1-6

1 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.

God was angry with the Hebrew people. They turned from God and worshipped Baal. Baal was the main god of the Canaanites and the Phoenicians. Worship of the Baal was a continuing problem for the Hebrew people (Judges 3:7, 1 Kings 16:31-33, 2 Chronicles 28:1-2). King Ahab was influenced by his wife Jezebel, a Phoenician to lead the Hebrew people to worship Baal. Sexual acts and magic were an integral part of the worship in a false belief that Baal would provide rain for crops.

Why did worship of Baal cause a problem?

What do some Christians worship today that can cause similar problems?

How does God's reply to Elijah give us hope today?

Romans 11:7-10

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."

The Hebrew people wanted a relationship with God, but their earthly desires drew them to follow ungodly leaders. Paul also indicates that God hardened their hearts to not see or hear the truth. David essentially says that their "good fortunes" will be their downfall.

What should we do when we interact with someone whose heart is hardened?

How do we guard ourselves to prevent hardening of our hearts?

Romans 11:11-16

11 Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. 12 But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring! 13 I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry 14 in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

Even those who stumble can get back up and turn back to God. Although Christ Jesus came to earth through a Hebrew heritage, salvation is available for all people. We must understand that the rejection by the Jews led to Christ Jesus' suffering according to God's plan. Since that rejection led to our salvation, we should marvel at the promise of life for all.

Why is it wrong to hold the death of Jesus against the Jews?

How do we see ourselves as part of a holy order?

Romans 11:17-21

17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be

arrogant, but tremble. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

Paul reminds the Gentile converts that they are indeed adopted and grafted into the family of God. However, he warns them not to elevate themselves. Arrogance can lead to downfall.

Why should we tremble?

Romans 11:22-24

22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

God is kind and stern. Those are typical attributes of a good parent. Paul furthers his argument about God's character by presenting a wild olive tree branch versus a cultivated olive tree branch. The wild tree branch is out of place but will still grow when grafted to the cultivated tree. He asks the Roman church to then imagine how much better a grafted branch grows when grafted to the same type of olive tree. God does the same with us. We may seem out of place but God grafts us where we will grow.

How can we support people who are different from us but who want to follow God?

Romans 11:25-27

25 *I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, **26** and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: “The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. **27** And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”*

Just because we have accepted Christ Jesus and our Hebrew brothers and sisters have not is no reason for us to boast. God is allowing all Gentiles to choose salvation.

How is this an example of God’s character (kind and stern)?

Romans 11:28-32

28 *As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, **29** for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. **30** Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, **31** so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. **32** For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.*

God still loves the Hebrew people. Some have not yet accepted Christ Jesus as the Messiah so that we Gentiles might have salvation through faith. Paul points out that we have mercy because Israel was disobedient and rejected Christ Jesus.

How can one group’s disobedience lead to mercy for others?
