

Session 48: The Context for Romans 11

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 48)

Hippocampus discussion

Romans 11:1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people?

Crabb's Synonyms

Cast: cast conveys simply the idea of laying aside or putting something from one's self. Throw and hurl indicate a mode of action. What is not wanted is 'cast off.' What is worthless or hurtful is thrown away. Cast is an indifferent action. Throw always indicates a dislike or contempt.

Cast requires no particular effort; it amounts in general to no more than let fall or go. To cast is to set aside.

There are two ways in which anything is cast away: temporarily and permanently. There is only one way that something is 'thrown away' and that is with the idea that it is permanent. We do not throw something away with the intention of using it again in the future.

The precision of our Bible in using "cast" instead of 'throw' is to allow for either meaning to be employed: temporarily set aside or permanently set aside.

We tend to be a bit sloppy with our language, because we do not recognize the shades of meaning that separate words and their use. To illustrate what I mean, let us suppose that I am going through my closet getting dressed for Sunday, and I pull out one of my shirts. Suppose it is torn or stained in some way that makes it unusable for me to wear to church. And then, I might hand the shirt to Billie and say, 'would you please set this shirt aside.' Now, if I had said, 'please throw this shirt away,' then she knows I have no further use of it and into the trash it would go.

But if I say, 'please set this shirt aside,' then it would indicate that I do not want it right now, but I may have a further use of it at some point in the future. Perhaps it will still function as a shirt but one that I will wear only to work in the yard. Perhaps I plan to turn it into cleaning rags. No matter, when I ask her to 'set it aside,' then it is the same thing as me casting the shirt away. We do not use the language that way today but it is the proper use of it.

In setting it aside, I may use it again or I may not. If I use it, there is no time schedule connected with when I will do so; it may be tomorrow or it may be months from now. Or, it may be that I may never pick it back up again. That is the two aspects of "cast away."

Romans 11:1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. ...

15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

Paul is going to employ both aspects of “cast away” in Romans 11. In Romans 11:1, the question deals with the permanency of Israel being cast away.

In Romans 11:15, in the context of the dispensational change, Paul is asking if God has temporarily set Israel aside.

While I believe that God has already made it plain that he intends to finish what he started with Israel, I suppose I can see how the unforeseen nature of the dispensation of Gentile grace might cause one to wonder if God might have changed his mind.

What Paul wrote in Romans 9:25-29 should have answered that question once and for all.

In Romans 9, Paul quotes Hosea and Isaiah. Why does Paul quote these two prophets?

First, let us take Hosea. Paul quotes from Hosea 2:23. What is it that Hosea is doing in that part of his book?

To understand the answer, we need to know something about Hosea. He was prophesying to the northern kingdom of Israel just before they went away captive into Assyria.

Background for Hosea

- Hosea prophesied from 753-715 B.C. to the northern kingdom of Israel.
- Israel was carried away captive in 722 B.C.
- Hosea wrote that even though the 5th course of punishment brought about a change in Israel’s status whereby they are no longer called ‘God’s people,’ it was still God’s intention to eventually restore them.

What was Hosea doing? He was declaring, before the 5th course of punishment ever began, that even though the nation was going to go away captive out of their land and they were going to endure the remaining installments of the 5th course of punishment, God will still restore them in the future. Even the punishment of the 5th course of punishment was not enough to keep God from fulfilling his plan and purpose with them. That was what Hosea was doing.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 49: The Context for Romans 11 Continued

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What is Paul doing by quoting from Hosea? They are no longer under the 5th course of punishment when Paul writes Romans, so what is Paul doing? He is using Hosea's promise to one day restore Israel but instead of applying to the 5th course of punishment like Hosea did, Paul is applying it to the dispensation of Gentile grace. In essence Paul is writing that what God said through Hosea still holds in spite of what has happened with the dispensational change.

Hosea 2:23 *And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.*

Romans 9:25 *As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.*

Verse 25 was the quote from Hosea. Verse 26 is Paul's commentary on what Hosea wrote.

Romans 9:26 *And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*

The promises that God made to Israel in her program (back before they went into the 5th course of punishment) are still going to be fulfilled with Israel. That fulfillment will not be during this dispensation of Gentile grace. The deduction goes this way: Back in Hosea's day, there was a hope that Israel would one day regain her lost status as God's people.

In this dispensation of Gentile grace, Israel is in an "accursed from Christ" status. Paul knows that is not a permanent condition for them, as one day God will return to working with Israel to bring to pass all that he promised to do with them.

When Paul quotes Isaiah in Romans 9, he is referring to the remnant principle which explains that the entire nation will not be restored, but only the believing remnant.

Isaiah 10:22 *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.*

Isaiah 1:9 *Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.*

When Paul quotes these two verses, he is indicating that the intervening dispensation of Gentile grace does not change what God intends to do with the remnant.

This is all to say that Romans 9 contained doctrine that should have already assured them (and informed us) that God was not finished forever with Israel.

And because Paul writes in the context of the dispensational change, then Israel (and we) are to understand that the revelation of the mystery did not change God's original plan with Israel.

God has already said that he is not finished with Israel forever. He will finish the work he started with Israel; he will finish it with the believing remnant of Israel (which is why Paul quoted Isaiah in Romans 9).

To my way of thinking, God is not simply coming back in Romans 11 to make the point all over again. In the context of the dispensational change (not the 5th course of punishment), Paul has already established the certainty of God's intention to return to Israel. For that reason, I believe there is more to understand about Romans 11 than simply establishing that God has not permanently cast Israel away.

Paul brings up the issue in Romans 11 by asking, "Hath God cast away his people?" But look at Paul's response.

Romans 11:1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people?

The question is asking if God has no further use for his people. Paul's answer is a strong one: God forbid. (Do not even think that!)

Romans 11:1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.

Why would Paul say, "God forbid" instead of just saying "No?" Not only is this the strongest way of saying 'No,' but "God forbid" is addressing the issue of their unbelief in what God promised to Israel.

If a man believes that God has cast Israel away, then that man either does not know about or refuses to believe in Israel's prophetic hope! A hope, by the way, which is given to them by God himself.

In response to this, Paul is going to provide two evidences (proofs) that God has not cast Israel away permanently. The first one pertains to Paul himself.

Romans 11:1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

The "For" introduces an example of why Paul can say "God forbid." This is the first proof that God has not cast Israel away.

Paul's response to the question is to use himself as an example. Paul is saying, 'If God has no further use for Israel, then he would have never raised me (Paul) up as the apostle to the Gentiles, because I am an Israelite!'

In fact, look at how Paul defines that in the remainder of the verse: "of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." Notice Paul did not say, 'For I also am an Israelite, a member of the church.'

We could look at the verse like this. Is God finished with his people so that he has no further use for them, either now (in the dispensation of Gentile grace) or in the future (after the dispensation of Gentile grace is finished)? First, do not even think that God cannot use an Israelite in this dispensation of Gentile grace; Paul is an example of that. God still has a use for Israel and 'I am a prime example!' 'I am an Israelite and God is using me.'

No, God is not using Paul to fulfill his plan and purpose in Israel's prophetic program, but that does not mean that God cannot deal with individual Israelites (or that Israel cannot be restored to fulfill their program in the future.) Just to be clear, Paul is not talking about national salvation for Israel, but individual salvation for those who are Israelites. He himself is such an example.

Remainder of notes in session 49 not covered on recording.

It is important to understand that during Paul's 'Acts ministry,' (which lasted for almost thirty years), Paul is obeying his "to the Jew first" mandate and instead of preaching national salvation, he is preaching individual salvation. Paul intends that his message might save some of them. Look at this in 1 Corinthians 9.

1 Corinthians 9:20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; ²¹To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. ²²To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

Without getting sidetracked on this passage, the part we are after is found in verse 22: "that I might by all means save some."

The point is that this is an individual salvation.

Shortly, we are going to be talking about what will be happening after this dispensation of Gentile grace is over, which means we will be talking dispensational change. At that time, God will resume his prophetic program with Israel and his work with Gentiles is going to change back to what it was like in Israel's "time past."

In this way, God will deal with Israel nationally. Yes, individual Israelites will be saved and become members of the believing remnant, but the focus of God's work will be with the nation of Israel. You will see this is the way Paul ends this chapter (Romans 11), by talking about this issue.

God never says he has replaced Israel. He does say that she is fallen. He also says she still has a future hope. It is with that future hope in view that God has not cast away his people.

The first proof has to do with Israel's usefulness during this dispensation of Gentile grace.

One more thing, if a man thinks that God will not carry through on his promises to Israel because he is no longer going to deal with them, then he:

1. Has a very low regard for or ignorance of the Old Testament scriptures because that belief would make God a liar.
2. Thinks God has transferred the prophetic program from Israel to the Gentiles (the church).

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 50: The Context for Romans 11 Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 50)

While replacement theology advocates will not outright say that God has cast Israel away (since Romans 11:2 obviously says he has not), but if they teach that God permanently replaced Israel with the “church,” then, no matter how they say it, they are still saying that God did cast Israel away.

They will not say God lied about what he promised to do with Israel. They will say that Israel failed and that forced God to accomplish his prophetic purpose with someone else: the Gentile church.

What they failed to understand:

1. God knew all along that they would fail. (See Leviticus 26, for example)
2. God knew all along that if Israel was going to succeed it would only be by his Jehovahness and grace; what God did for them and gave to them as a gift of grace and never by their merit.
3. If those things are true, and they are, then the only way that God would be forced to abandon his program with Israel is for his Jehovahness and grace to fail! That is not going to happen!

But since they do not understand those issues, the only way out of their theological dilemma is for them to change the meaning of the word “Israel.” Therefore, they came up with the idea that the word “Israel” is a code word; that is to say, when they read the word “Israel,” it really means the Gentile church.

The first proof has to do with Israel’s usefulness during this dispensation of Gentile grace.

1 Corinthians 9:20 *And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; ²¹ To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. ²² To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

They diminish the literal, historic, national identity of the nation of Israel. And because of the problems they run into, they would say that all the way through your Bible, any mention of Israel is really talking about the church. (See for example, “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”)

But what Paul does in Romans 11 is demonstrate that God was dealing with a literal, historic nation of Israel in distinction from the Gentiles. Even though she is in a fallen state, and she is

presently afflicted with blindness, God says she will, one day, receive all of the prophetic promises and hope and fullness and glory promised to her.

The second proof that God has not cast Israel away is in Romans 11:2-4, which talks about the remnant issue.

The two evidences are 1) Individual Israelites, such as Paul, in the dispensation of Gentile grace, and 2) the remnant of Israel, at the resumption of their program. Now we will look at this second proof.

Romans 11:2 *God hath not cast away his people...*

Verse 2 makes it clear, God is not finished with his people forever; God did not permanently cast away his people.

Without getting too far off track, turn with me to Hebrews 6. I want us to look at the issue of God's faithfulness to do for Israel what he says he will do. The promises we will look at are not conditional.

Hebrews 6:13 *For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,*

First of all, what God promised to Abraham was unconditional.

Secondly, when someone really means something or wants to emphasize the truth of something, they may say, 'I swear to...' and you can fill in the blank. The mafia would say, 'I swear on my children's eyes.' The idea is that they would never wish their children to be hurt and swearing on them would indicate just how honest they were being.

Many times the oath is 'I swear to God.' Hebrews 6:13 says that God "sware by himself." This is a gesture of his commitment to perform what he said to Abraham.

Hebrews 6:14 *Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.*

The multiplied seed of Abraham is the nation of Israel, not the Gentile church and not the body of Christ.

Hebrews 6:15 *And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. ¹⁶ For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. ¹⁷ Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:*

Oxford English Dictionary

Immutable: not mutable (mutate, change), not subject to or susceptible of change, unchangeable, unalterable, changeless; not subject to variation in different cases, invariable.

God's integrity is at stake in what he said to Abraham. To say that God will not perform this is to call into question God's veracity and character.

Hebrews 6:18 *That by two immutable things...*

What were those immutable things? We have already been given one of those immutable things in verse 13.

Hebrews 6:13 *For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,*

The second immutable thing is found in verse 18.

Hebrews 6:18 *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

The two immutable things are:

1. God swore by himself.
2. God swore an oath to Abraham.

That promise is meant to serve as an "anchor of the soul" for those who are counting on the fulfillment of the covenant to Abraham. In other words, it is their hope!

Hebrews 6:19 *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*

Replacement theology calls God a liar. It says his promises are not immutable. No, they would never say such things that way, so what they have to do is say that Israel is really Gentiles in the church and has nothing to do with national Israel. That way, they make the promise to the Gentiles in the first place so God does not have to violate his promise by turning to the Gentiles.

But what they do not realize is that theology will ultimately make God a liar when he literally fulfills his promises with the true Israel.

Note a question was asked and discussion – 'rabbit trail,' no notes for remainder of recording for 21:10 minutes.

Space for personal reflection and notes

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