

Session 51: God Has Not Cast Away His People

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 51)

I briefly want to outline what we are looking in Romans 11. There are a couple of side issues here. One of them is emphasizing the importance of understanding God has not replaced Israel. The second thing I want to talk about is the sons and daughters around the world: those who are engaged in a sonship education. The third little side issue is “the election.”

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.*

Romans 11:2 *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,*

This is where we left off last time.

Lets start by talking about God’s Jehovahness and grace, so I know we are all thinking about this in the same way. (Much of what Mike discusses is not written in notes.)

God’s purpose in creating the nation of Israel; (and by extrapolation, his purpose in his unconditional covenant (promise) to Abraham regarding Abraham’s seed, was something God did in response to the Adversary. To transfer his program with them (because they failed) over to the Gentile church is to say in effect that Satan won. (It actually says more than that, but I am saying it that way to put it in a nutshell.) It says that God was not able to perform with them what he said he would perform. It not only means that Satan ultimately prevailed in his contention with God over Israel, but it denigrates the power of God’s Jehovahness and grace to provide for Israel what they could not provide for themselves. And that is a huge insult to God.

There is an aspect of the thinking that God has replaced Israel that does not identify all of what God was accomplishing in creating Israel in the first place; how he intends to utilize them in his contention with the Adversary, and what it tells us about God if he decided to replace them, or if they forced him to replace them because of their failure. There are more implications and consequences to replacement theology than its proponents imagine.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 52: Elijah's Complaint

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 52)

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

The added phrase of “which he foreknew” means that God is not casting Israel away even though he knew all about them in his omniscience. And, the phrase “which he foreknew” does not mean God forced Israel to reject his Son.

If you recall the issue of Pharaoh and God hardening Pharaoh's heart, we saw that God was not forcing Pharaoh to do the things which he did. In the same way, neither did God force Israel to do what they did when they rejected their Messiah.

Let us be clear; just because God “knew” what Israel would do before they ever did it, does not mean that God forced, ordained, or made Israel reject his Son. God did not pre-determine that Israel would be rebellious. But rather, based on his foreknowledge, God did do something; he made provision in light of what he knew Israel would do (rebel) and how they would respond (reject).

Because of what God knows about Israel's future usefulness to him, and based on that knowledge, God had no reason to cast Israel away forever; therefore, he did not, just as verse 2 says.

Israel's disobedience, rebellion, rejection, and stumbling did not take God by surprise. (After all, he told them about their national response to the Messiah ahead of time.) The issue is not that God got disgusted with them and decided he was all through with them and just cast them away like a broken and unusable tool.

In fact, just the opposite is true. God knew about their rebelliousness and their rejection. Yet, he knew that he would still be able to utilize them in his plan and purpose. In spite of all Israel's failure, God knows that he will still accomplish his purpose with them.

And now God is going to remind them of something to illustrate the first part of the verse.

Romans 11:2 *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias...*

“Wot ye not” is to ask, ‘do not you know...?’

Paul was asking, do not you know what the scripture said of Elijah? What was it about Elijah that Paul refers to?

Romans 11:2 *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, ³ Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.*

What was Elijah saying? Was he just griping to God about the fact that Israel had rejected him and his message? He was griping – for sure. Verse 2 said that he made intercession to God “against Israel.”

But was he telling God something God did not already know? When Elijah said that Israel had killed God’s prophets, destroyed God’s altars, that he (Elijah) was the only one left, and Israel was looking to kill him, what was he really saying?

Do not you get the idea that Elijah was talking as though if they killed him, then it was all over for what God was doing with Israel? Elijah was acting like the program could not continue if something happened to him. Elijah had forgotten something about God: who he is, and what he can do. (That same thing has happened to those who think God is through with Israel.)

So what is God’s response to Elijah?

Romans 11:4 *But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.*

Returning to the situation with Elijah: God knew what was happening (and not only that), but God had made arrangements in accordance with what was happening by the expression: “I have reserved to myself...”

The question of verse 4 was one that Paul i was s asking those who think God has cast Israel away: ‘What did God say to Elijah when he thought that everything was about to end with his death?’

God said, ‘You are not the only one Elijah. If you die, it will not be the end of what I am doing. I still have 7000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. And while 7000 is a small number among the millions in Israel, the fact is, what God is doing in Israel is a long way from being over.’

I want to say a word about some terminology in that passage concerning Elijah.

By the way, God did not ‘elect’ the 7000. God did not elect who the 7000 were. What election did was provide for Israel to respond to the message. Think of it like this: Billie and I flew up to Fayetteville, Arkansas for my aunt’s funeral a couple of months ago. American Airlines did not predetermine that Billie and I would buy and ticket and fly on the plane. What they ‘elected’ was to provide everything that anybody who wanted to fly to Fayetteville would need in order to get

there. They provided a plane, a flight crew, and an itinerary. And we, along with a number of other people, got on the plane.

In much the same way, God is not electing anyone in particular to respond positively to the gospel. He has elected to make it possible for anyone who wants to. Therefore, those who do respond can be called “the elect” because they responded in faith to a message. The message did not pick and choose who would respond, but it provides for all who do respond.

If God controls who gets saved and who does not, then according to 1 Timothy, everyone would be saved.

*1 Timothy 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;
4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 53: The Issue of Election

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 53)

God did not determine that you specifically would become part of the body of Christ. He determined that whoever trusted in Christ would become part of that body. God elected that all who believe are eternally identified with what he is doing.

Notice that Romans 8:29 says “whom” not ‘those.’

Romans 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

The “whom” indicates an open ended invitation with no specifics as to the people that God foreknew: a ‘whosoever will’ type of thing. If it had said, ‘for those he did foreknow...’ then you might say that God had certain individuals in mind.

Paul is only using the issue with Elijah as an illustration of the fact that just because God has decided to show mercy to Gentiles does not mean that he is all done with Israel forever. Just as the program back in Elijah’s day would not have ended with his death (for he was not the only one), the completion of his program with Israel is not in jeopardy just because God has turned to the Gentiles.

Romans 11:5 *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.*

“Even so” indicated a parallel issue to what Paul just wrote about Elijah. Paul was saying: ‘just like God had a “remnant” contingency to continue the program back in Elijah’s day, he has made a contingency to continue his program today. He has also made a contingency to continue the program in the future with the believing remnant.

At the time Paul writes, there is a righteous remnant in Israel. They have been made righteous by grace through faith – not by the works of the law.

They (the remnant) are the fulfillment of God’s elective purpose. That is to say that God’s elective purpose is to call out of the ranks of unbelieving Israel, a believing remnant.

During the Acts period of Paul’s ministry, Paul is setting forth this remnant principle to unbelieving Israel. This group has been talked about by Moses back in Deuteronomy 32 and

again by the prophets, such as in Isaiah 65. They are called the “foolish nation” because that is always how religion views faith.

I want to step aside just for a moment to give you some background on this issue.

Look again at what Paul writes in Romans 11.

***Romans 11:5** Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

Paul writes Romans during his “Acts” ministry where there are two kinds of believers in the world. At the time Paul writes Romans 11; there are: 1) members of the little flock, and 2) members of the body of Christ.

Just to make sure we all understand, let me ask some questions:

1. When, on the timeline, did the members of the little flock get saved?
2. Under who’s preaching were they saved?
3. How did they get saved; what did they believe, put their faith in?
4. When, on the timeline, were members of the body of Christ saved?
5. Under who’s preaching were they saved?
6. How did they get saved; what did they believe, put their faith in?

You have to remember that the book of Acts is not an account of the ‘early church’ which we are to copy today. Acts is the historical record, written to Israel, informing them of Israel’s fall and diminishing.

As Paul writes Romans, there is an identifiable Jewish remnant which is centered in Jerusalem. At the same time, there is an identifiable group of the body of Christ which is centered in Antioch.

According to Romans 11:5, the “election” is according to grace. This is the issue I want to enlarge on. In order to do this, turn to Acts 15.

Background to Acts 15.

***Acts 15:1** And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. ² When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*

- Paul was not interested in going to Jerusalem to answer this question.

- Peter was not going to be able to shed any light on the issue for Paul, in fact just the opposite.
- Paul fills in details in Galatians that are not contained in Acts.

Galatians 2:1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.² And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

“By revelation” meant that the Lord revealed to Paul to go up there and inform them at Jerusalem about what God was doing with him (Paul).

Notice it said that Paul met “privately” with Peter and James. What does Peter learn when Paul meets with them privately? Look at Acts 15 to find out.

Acts 15:6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.⁷ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.⁸ And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;⁹ And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Peter was still talking as though there were two categories of people: ‘us and them.’

Who was the “us” Peter referred to? It was Israel.

Who was the “them” Peter referred to? It was the Gentiles.

Was Peter wrong to divide humanity into those two groups? No, he was not.

When did Peter begin to learn that there was no difference between Israel and the Gentiles? That was in Acts 10 with Cornelius. In Acts 10, things just were not adding up for Peter.

Now we know why God sent Paul to Jerusalem, to talk to Peter, to straighten out his thinking about what was going on. After Paul met with Peter, all the pieces of the puzzle fell into place. Therefore, in Acts 15 Peter says:

Acts 15:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

What did it mean to “tempt ye God?” Peter defined it there as ‘putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples...’

Think about that verse. What was the “yoke?” The “yoke” was the law. And Peter was saying we “tempt ye God” when we encourage believers to live under the law! How was that tempting God? It was tempting God to do something that he was not doing; to deal with people as though they were under the law in this dispensation of Gentile grace.

Acts 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Space for personal reflection and notes