



Review: Paul took a side trip to talk about the equal access of Jews and Gentiles to the gospel, but this still leaves the question of the Israelites as the "people of God." Has He rejected them?  
 Two key questions: How does Paul balance election and man's responsibility?  
 Observations: 1) OT quotes 2) Key point  
 Question: Why does Paul use himself as an illustration? What is the illustration?

"then"—therefore—most likely refers back to the whole previous section 9:30-10:21—so Paul returns to the first question

**Romans 11:1-10**

1 I ask, then,  
 has God rejected his people?  
 By no means!

Paul—personal illustration of the remnant principle

2 **For** I myself am an Israelite,  
 a descendant of Abraham,  
 a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

3 **God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.**  
 Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah,  
 how he appeals to God against Israel?

Ps 94:14; 1 Sam 12:22

Emphasis on God's covenantal love—"to choose to know them" Why does God not reject them? Because He foreknew them.

4 "Lord,  
 they have killed your prophets,  
 they have demolished your altars,  
 and I alone am left,  
 and they seek my life."

1 Kings 19:10, 14

We return to the key question, first posed in 9:6-13—here stated emphatically and as in this whole section support by OT quotes

5 But what is God's reply to him?  
 "I have kept for myself seven thousand men  
 who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

1 Kings 19:18

Elijah thought he was the only one left (which discouraged him)—but God has preserved a remnant. The discouragement was probably felt by Jewish Christians who wondered and worried about their fellow countrymen

Logical inference

6 So too at the present time there is a remnant,  
 chosen by grace.

Decisive action which results in the existence of the remnant, not a coincidence or simply "luck" but proactive action by God

7 **But** if it is by **grace**,  
 it is no longer on the basis of **works**;  
 otherwise **grace** would no longer be **grace**.

Though God chose the nation and provided temporal blessings to all—each individual was not guaranteed salvation. It is a reminder of how God works today. Those who are elect must still respond in faith.

8 What then?  
 Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking.  
 The **elect obtained it**,  
 but the rest were hardened,

9 as it is written,  
 "God gave them  
 a spirit of stupor,  
 eyes that would not see  
 and ears that would not hear,  
 down to this very day."

Is 29:10

Deut 29:4

10 And David says,  
 "Let their table become  
 a snare and a trap,  
 a stumbling block and a retribution for them;  
 let their eyes be darkened  
 so that they cannot see,  
 and bend their backs forever." (ESV)

Ps. 69:22, 23

**Working Idea** (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

Having established what the promise of God, for the salvation of Israel, does *not mean*<sup>1</sup> not a guarantee of salvation for all individual Jews that God is free to offer salvation to Gentiles as well as Jews Paul now turns to explain what the promises *do mean* to Israel.

**Main idea:**

God has preserved a remnant by His gracious choosing.

**Teaching idea/explanation:**

This passage may seem redundant—and to some degree it is—but it is a helpful passage to reemphasize key elements:

- God’s initiative in the process of salvation
- God’s faithfulness to His promises
- God’s gracious gift of salvation apart from works

**Introduction**

Last week we were challenged to share the gospel. Did you have opportunities? Share them with the class. Do you have someone in mind that you need to seek opportunities to share the gospel with? Ask a group of people to pray with you toward this end.



As we move into today’s passage—a question: If you were “defense exhibit 1”, evidence for the reality of Christianity, what would you be an exhibit/evidence of?

**Review**

Paul took a side trip to talk about the equal access of Jews and Gentiles to the gospel. But this still leaves the question of Israel as the “people of God.” Has He rejected them?

**Summary**

In these verses Paul has demonstrated that Israel has pursued the law by works instead of by faith, sought to establish their own righteousness, and refused to believe in Jesus as the Christ even though the message has been preached to them and God has graciously invited them to believe and be saved. In light of the obstinate refusal of Israel to believe, Paul asks whether God has rejected his people.<sup>1</sup> He emphatically repudiates this conclusion with the words μή γένοιτο (*mē genoito*, certainly not!). The idea that God has rejected his people is a contradiction in terms.<sup>2</sup>

**Overview**

Chapter 9 deals primarily with Israel’s **PAST** (as God’s chosen and privileged people). Chapter 10 deals primarily with Israel’s **PRESENT** (as a nation which has refused to submit to God’s gospel). Chapter 11 deals primarily with Israel’s **FUTURE** (a nation which someday will be saved and which will enjoy the fulfillment of the new covenant promises).

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 353.

<sup>1</sup> Stuhlmacher (1994: 163) says that Paul responds to an objection brought against his gospel, that is, that he himself taught that Israel was rejected by God.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 6, *Romans* (Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 577.

## Preview

First, God has not rejected the Jewish people. Paul is exhibit number one that God still has a purpose for the Jewish people as a whole. Paul represents not merely the fact that a Jew can become a believer in Jesus as the Messiah. Rather, Paul as a Jew has become the missionary to the Gentiles. In him, then, there is a strong argument for Israel's future hope as a people (see below). Second, God is not through with this people as a whole nation, but He has planned a glorious revival among them sometime in the future (11:11-29). These two aspects of the Jews' present and future are both introduced by a separate question in verses 1 and 11.<sup>3</sup>

Romans 11:1 – 32 is bracketed by assertions of God's continuing commitment to Israel: "God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew" (v. 2a); "as far as election is concerned, they [Israelites] are loved on account of the patriarchs" (v. 28b). In this sense, the whole chapter pursues one broad theme. But a significant break occurs between verses 10 and 11. As he has done in every major section in this part of this letter (see also 9:25 – 29; 10:18 – 21), Paul marks the end of a unit with a composite quotation from the Old Testament (vv. 8 – 10) and the beginning of another section with a rhetorical question (9:30; 11:1, 11). Paul therefore unfolds his teaching about God's enduring faithfulness to Israel in two stages. If 9:6 – 29 have surveyed the history of God's promise in the past, 11:1 – 10 focus on the present and 11:11 – 32 on the future. At the present time, God is demonstrating his continuing concern for Israel by bringing a remnant to salvation (v. 5), but in the future "all Israel will be saved" (v. 26).

Thus, the center of the first paragraph is verse 5: "So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace." Paul leads up to this assertion by citing the evidence of his own Christian commitment (v. 1b) and the Old Testament (vv. 2b – 4) for God's preservation of a remnant. He follows up his central claim by elaborating on grace (v. 6) and then, reiterating his argument from 9:6 – 29, concludes by showing how Israel's present condition is the result of God's sovereign choice (vv. 7 – 10).<sup>4</sup>

## Catch Phrase / Key Phrase:

A remnant chosen by grace

## Outline

### I. Doctrine: Justification—The Righteousness of God Revealed 1:18–11:36

*God's Gracious Provision of Righteousness is Acquired by Faith in Jesus Christ*

#### A. The Need of It 1:18–3:20 *What a Mess!*

*The Righteousness of God Revealed in Condemnation: The Universal Need of Righteousness*

*The Bad News: All condemned for sin—no exceptions*

#### B. What It Is 3:21–5:21

*What a God—The Way of Salvation*

*Justification: The imputation of righteousness to all who believe*

#### C. How It Affects Me 6:1–8:39

*Sanctification: The Impartation of Righteousness*

*The Purpose of Salvation: Conformity to Christ's Image*

1. Believer and Sin 6:1-23
2. Believer and the Law 7:1-25
3. Believer and the Holy Spirit 8:1-39

*The believer's relationship to the Holy Spirit gives assurance of victory in Christian life.<sup>5</sup>*

*To have victory over sin—you must live in the Spirit*

#### D. Why Israel Rejected It 9:1–11:36

*Vindication: Israel's Rejection of God's Righteousness*

The fourth major section now turns to an issue which would have been in the back of his readers' minds: If God is so righteous, how could he give Israel so many privileges (including

<sup>3</sup> Alan F. Johnson, *Romans: The Freedom Letter*, Vol 2, Everyman's Bible Commentary, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985) p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 354.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Harold W. Hoehner's outline (DTS, Spring 1991, Exegesis of Romans 206, unpublished class notes)

unconditional promises) and then reject his chosen people? Chapters 9–11 deal with this issue (note especially 9:6—“It is not as though God’s word has failed”), the vindication of God’s righteousness in relationship to Israel.<sup>6</sup>

1. Israel’s Rejection Considered in Light of God’s Sovereignty, Justice and Mercy 9:1-29
  - a. Paul’s grief 9:1-5
  - b. Present situation: the rejection of some not inconsistent with God’s promise 9:6-13
  - c. God’s relationship with humanity is based on who He is 9:14-23
    - (1) God’s character 9:14-18  
*First problem: Is God just?*
    - (2) God’s sovereignty 9:19-24  
*Second Problem: Why does God find fault if it is His Sovereign choice?*
  - d. Recipients of Mercy 9:24-29
2. God’s Present Dealings with Israel 9:30-10:21
  - a. The nation’s rejection of the Messiah via legalism 9:30-10:4  
*Rejection of righteousness by faith in favor of pursuing righteousness by the Law*
  - b. Equality with the Gentiles 10:5-13  
*Righteousness for all who believe*
  - c. Obstinace of the Jews 10:14-21
3. Israel’s Rejection is not complete or final: God will save 11:1-36
  - a. God’s present dealing with Israel: Preserving a Remnant 11:1-10

## Exposition / Key Exegetical Issues to be Aware

### 11:1-36

See preview



What the apostle does in [chapter 11](#) is show what that corporate election of Israel as a whole means for the salvation of Jews in his own day and in the future.<sup>7</sup>

### 11:1-10 God’s present dealing with Israel—preserving a remnant amid rebellion

#### Question

As we go through this section, try to understand the primary reasons Paul uses himself as an example—as evidence—of the faithfulness of God to His promise to Israel.

### 11:1-4

11:1-2 Paul, an illustration: the selection of a remnant by God

#### *Paul—Defense Exhibit 1*

Paul functions as a fitting illustration of the choice of a remnant, for he was an ardent opponent of the Christian sect (like many of the Jewish opponents of Paul) and was converted dramatically on the road to Damascus.<sup>8</sup>

The principal reason for his confidence in God’s favor toward the Jewish people as a whole is that he himself comes from pure Jewish ancestry and yet believes in Jesus as the Messiah. Very often the point is made simply that the existence of Jewish Christians in the world proves that God has not rejected the total Jewish community.”<sup>9</sup>

But Cranfield points out in this excellent summary, Paul is more than an illustration of salvation:

<sup>6</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Romans: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*, bible.org

<sup>7</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 355.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 579.

<sup>9</sup> Alan F. Johnson, *Romans: The Freedom Letter*, p. 63-64.

Very often the point is taken to be simply that Paul's existence as a Jew who is also a Christian proves that the Jewish people as a whole cannot have been rejected. According to Luther the point is that Paul is one who had opposed God with particular fury. If God had cast off His people, then he above all would have been cast off. But God has not cast him off: much less then has He cast off 'the others who did not depart from him as far as I did'. But the most probable explanation is that what Paul has in mind is not just the fact that he, a Jew, is a Christian, nor yet that he who has been so fierce an opponent of the gospel is a Christian, but the fact that he, a Jew (and one who has particularly ferociously opposed the gospel) is God's chosen apostle to the Gentiles. Were God intending only to save a mere handful of Israel, had He really cast off the people of Israel as a whole, would he have chosen an Israelite to be the apostle to the Gentiles and the chief bearer of the gospel message? In his person the missionary vocation of Israel is at last being fulfilled, and Israel is actively associated with the work of the risen Christ. This is a more cogent evidence of God's not having cast off His people than is the simple fact that one particular Jew has come to believe.<sup>10</sup>

*So Paul is evidence of:*

Mercy and Grace in salvation rather than rejection  
But also of God's plan for Israel and His faithfulness to His Word.

The phrase at the beginning of verse 2 "God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew" is a quote from either:

**Psalm 94:14** For the Lord will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage; (ESV)

**1 Samuel 12:22** For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself. (ESV)

### *Context*

1 Samuel 12

The people of Israel reject God as their King and request a human king to be just like the other nations—contrary to what God had chosen them to be—sanctified—set-apart for His service.

So in 1 Samuel 12, Samuel gives a history lesson and summarizes the sins of Israel but affirms the faithfulness of God.

The reference to the remnant here is not precisely the same argument from the remnant used in chapter 9. There the salvation of the remnant occurs in a context that emphasizes mainly judgment. Here the remnant theme anticipates the future salvation of all Israel.<sup>11</sup>

So while Paul has already taught that judgment will come to those who reject God, here he is showing the graciousness of God in maintaining a remnant.

"Foreknew"—

προγινώσκω (*proginosko*)— to know beforehand, choose beforehand (as in 8:29, the it is an aorist active indicative—something viewed as having been done)

### *Meaning*<sup>12</sup>

"His foreknowledge is of persons, not of their state or conduct; it is not what, but whom He foreknew."<sup>31</sup> The Greek verb "foreknew" (προέγνω) means "to know in advance, to foreknow." The preposition προ does not change the meaning of the verb (γινώσκω); it only dates the knowledge. God's knowledge of those He chose goes back to eternity past (1 Pet 1:2, 20). In His omniscience God knew, knows, and foreknew all men. But, unlike οἶδα, this verb does not

<sup>10</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Vol 2: The International Critical Commentary, (Edinburg: T & T Clark Limited, 1979), p. 5:44.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* p. 580.

<sup>12</sup> For a more complete explanation see, Edgar C. James, *Is Foreknowledge Equivalent to Foreordination?* Bib Sac Vol 122 #487 -- Jul 1965 -- 215-219.

<sup>31</sup> William Kelly, *Notes on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (London: G. Morrish, 1873; reprint, n.d.), p. 153.

imply mere intellectual apprehension; it also indicates an active and affectionate desire to bless. “That this character, in which they were foreknown to God, presupposes the subjection to faith (the ὑπακοῇ πίστεως, i.5), was self-evident to the Christian reader.”<sup>32</sup> Paul’s focus in Romans 8:29 is on the terminus, not on the intermediate stages (cf. v. 30).<sup>13</sup>

Paul adds the words ὃν προέγνω (*hon proegnō*, whom he foreknew) to the statement that God has not forsaken his people. As in 8:29 (see the exegesis and exposition of 8:28–30), the word προγινώσκειν (*pro-ginōskein*, to foreknow) does not merely connote foreknowledge but also implies foreordination, with the emphasis being on God’s covenantal love for his people (cf. Amos 3:2; 1 Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:19). This understanding of προγινώσκειν is confirmed by the immediate context, for προέγνω clearly functions as the antonym of ἀπόσατο.<sup>5</sup> The latter verb means “rejected,” and thus the former means “selected.”<sup>14</sup>

### Summary

The idea of the verse, then, is that God has not rejected those upon whom he has set his covenantal love. Such an idea is unthinkable and indeed impossible.<sup>15</sup>

11:3-4 OT prophets as an illustration: the selection of a remnant by God

### *The Prophets—Defense Exhibit 2*

Paul supports his premise with a quote from 1 Kings 19:10, 14, 18

Paul uses a very low point in the history of Israel to make his point. Even when we don’t see the plan—God is still at work.

The Point: the majority of Israelites in Elijah’s day, and by inference in Paul’s day, are far from God. But God has preserved a remnant.

They have refused to acknowledge God. In Paul’s day and into the present, they have refused to acknowledge God’s provision in Jesus as Messiah, Savior.

While the quote in 1 Kings 19 God has to correct Elijah’s perspective, Paul’s teaching followed what God said to Elijah—He maintains a remnant.

The phrase “I have kept for myself” in verse 4 indicates that God takes the responsibility for maintaining the remnant.

The existence of the remnant is not just a coincidence or luck—God has acted to preserve them through decisive actions. This reinforces what Paul has been teaching about God’s proactive involvement in salvation.

### Summary

Therefore, God has not rejected His people—He has maintained a remnant.

Even when we don’t see or understand the plan, God is at work.

We can be sure, have confidence in God—because He is faithful to His word (9:6).

**11:5-6** God’s preservation of a remnant is by His gracious election, not works

This is the key concept in this section and includes two parts:

There is a remnant chosen by grace

<sup>32</sup> Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 335.

<sup>13</sup>D. Edmond Hiebert, *Romans 8:28-29 and the Assurance of the Believer*, Bib Sac, Vol 148 #590 - Apr 1991, pp. 180.

<sup>5</sup> It is also the view of most scholars. See, e.g., Calvin 1960: 239–40; Barrett 1991: 193; Murray 1965: 68; Munck 1967: 107; Luz 1968: 80; Käsemann 1980: 299; Wilckens 1980: 237; Gundry Volf 1990: 167; Baugh 1995: 195.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* p. 580.

<sup>15</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* p. 581.

They do not select themselves by works

Grace and works are in opposition when it comes to entering into a salvific relationship with God.

The existence of a remnant of believing Jews is not ultimately ascribed to their greater wisdom or nobility, or to their free will, or to their spiritual perception. The inclusion of the remnant in God's people is due to his electing grace.<sup>16</sup>

“Grace” means that “works” have no role to play, that God is entirely free to bestow his blessing on whomever he chooses. If those blessings were in fact dependent on our works, God would not be free in his granting of blessing, and “grace would no longer be grace.”<sup>17</sup>

The only reason some Jews believe is because God has graciously and mercifully chosen them to be part of his people (cf. 9:27–29). The linkage of grace and election also must be observed. Many worry that the choosing of some and not all would be unjust, but this idea overlooks the fact that election is gracious. No one deserves to be elected, and thus the election of any is a merciful gift of God that cannot be claimed as a democratic right.

Verse 6 proceeds to forge a connection between election by grace and the exclusion of works, for election is the implied subject of the sentence in verse 6. By definition if one is elected by grace, then works are excluded. In saying that election is “no longer” (οὐκέτι, *ouketi*) by works, there is no implication that salvation in the old covenant was by works, for the word οὐκέτι here is logical rather than temporal.<sup>18</sup>

11:6

Though this may seem obvious, it is helpful to remember and emphasize that salvation is by grace, not works.

Once works play a role in gaining salvation, then by definition grace is excluded.<sup>19</sup>

One should also observe that Paul's teaching on election is indissolubly bound up with his gospel of justification (Luz 1968: 82). Those who deny unconditional election introduce, albeit subtly, the notion that human works play a role in obtaining justification and open the door for human boasting (so Müller 1964: 86–87).<sup>11</sup> For Paul the purity of grace is bound up with the conviction that God elects apart from any work on the part of human beings.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, the election of a remnant of the Jews is no contradiction of Rom. 9:6–7, where Paul says that no one's election is guaranteed because of one's pedigree (so Munck 1967: 107–8, 111), for the latter text teaches that no one is saved on the basis of ethnic background, nor does Jewishness guarantee salvation. What Paul affirms here, however, is that God by his grace freely confers, in accordance with his historic promises, saving grace upon a remnant of Jews by virtue of his sovereign will. God sovereignly chooses to redeem those whom he freely chose.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 582.

<sup>17</sup>Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 356.

<sup>18</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 582.

<sup>19</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 583.

<sup>11</sup>See especially Calvin (1960: 242), who concludes that the verse excludes the foreknowledge of any works as the basis of election.

<sup>20</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 583.

<sup>21</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 583.

**Implications/Application**

Review—What is grace?  
 Can grace be over-taught? Overemphasized?  
 Should we be careful in teaching grace?



Can we insure that focusing on grace won't lead to "taking advantage" of grace?  
 No  
 When do people "take advantage" of grace?

**Teachers**

We cannot overemphasize enough the reality of salvation by grace. While other passages challenge the behavior of believers—that is, to demonstrate their faith through their works—the emphasis in salvation is on the gracious gift of God.

I don't believe that grace can be over emphasized. As a matter of fact, any abuse of the doctrine of grace may actually be due to a lack of full understanding of God's grace.

When individuals (we) become aware of grace, when they grasp the breadth, depth and height of grace it does not lead to "taking advantage of grace" as some charge, but it leads to a desire to surrender to the One who is so gracious.

God's unmerited favor—receiving what we do not deserve should inspire us to obedience, to devotion.

May we teach grace with such passion that people see the abundance of grace and celebrate the overwhelming goodness of God.

**11:7-10**

To further illustrate his point, Paul will provide quotes from all three parts of the Hebrew canon: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

**11:7**

As in 9:1-13 here we have a difficult or at least very uncomfortable teaching:

Notice the order in which Paul places his thoughts.

Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking.  
 The elect obtained it,  
 but the rest were hardened,

What was Israel seeking?

The interrogative τί οὖν (*ti oun*, what then?) refers back to verses 1–6 according to most scholars (e.g., Sanday and Headlam 1902: 313; Murray 1965: 70; Cranfield 1979: 548). More likely, it reaches back to the whole discussion that began in 9:30 and thus comprehends all of 9:30–11:6, so that 11:7–10 sums up the substance of 9:30–11:6. The evidence sanctioning the inclusion of 9:30–10:21 is contained in the words, "Israel has not obtained what it seeks" (11:7). This sentence recalls 9:31, where Israel "pursues the law for righteousness," and 10:2–3, which describes the zeal of Israel to obtain righteousness through its own efforts. In 11:7 Paul argues that Israel "did not obtain" (οὐκ ἐπέτυχεν, *ouk epetychen*) what it seeks. This fits nicely with 9:30–10:21, where Israel's pursuit of the law for righteousness and their attempt to secure righteousness by law ended in failure because they did not seek righteousness by faith, even though they had definitely heard the message of the gospel that summoned all people to faith in Jesus as Lord. We can fairly conclude, then, that what Israel failed to obtain in 11:7 is righteousness by faith (so Barrett 1957: 194–95; Murray 1965: 71).<sup>1 22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Murray (1965: 71–72) argues persuasively that the text refers to salvation. Dunn (1988b: 640) proposes that Paul does not refer to initial entrance into salvation but maintenance of covenant status. This interpretation is

## The elect obtained

“the rest were hardened”

the text does not indicate that they were hardened because of unbelief but instead that the hardening produced unbelief.<sup>2</sup> Nor is there any doubt that the passive of ἐπωρώθησαν is a divine passive (contra Sanday and Headlam 1902: 313–14; rightly Wilckens 1980: 238), and that God is the agent of the hardening. Any hesitation on this score is removed immediately by verses 8–10, for the καθώς (*kathōs*, just as) introducing the scriptural citations indicates that verses 8–10 function as a ground or proof for the thesis that the majority of the Jews were hardened by God.<sup>3 23</sup>

The *porosis* of v. 7, though describing the same moral fact as the *to sklerynesthai* of 9:18, is perhaps stronger in its import. The metaphor implies not merely the stiffening of the existing soul and character, but the outgrowth of a new feature, which obscures while it hardens, by an outer coating of mental habit. *Porosis* differs from *sklerynesthai* by the idea of a *new outgrowth* of mental obduracy. *Poros*, the tufa-stone, is especially used of a callus or substance exuding from fractured bones and joining their extremities as it hardens: hence *poroo* to petrify, form a bony substance, and so metaphorically, to harden.... This *porosis* produced permanent bluntness and insensibility in the intelligence.<sup>24</sup>

The Greek verb for “hardened” is *poroo*, which in secular Greek often refers to a callous or to the hardening of a bone when it heals after being broken. But in the New Testament, the word always has a metaphorical significance, referring to spiritual obduracy (Mark 6:52; 8:17; John 12:40; 2 Cor. 3:14; cf. the noun form in Mark 3:5; Rom. 11:25; Eph. 4:18). While the Greek verb in 9:18 is different (*skleryno*), the idea conveyed here is the same. God confirms the spiritual insensitivity that people are locked up under by virtue of their sin in Adam.

The Old Testament quotations in 11:8 – 10 provide biblical support for the idea that it is God who hardens people.<sup>25</sup>

God has not rejected “Israel” as a whole, for he has now chosen a remnant. But he has rejected those whom he has hardened. Such rejection does not mean that he has rejected Israel corporately or that Israel has been forsaken forever.<sup>4 26</sup>

## 11:8

Isaiah 29:10 and Deuteronomy 29:4

## Context

The OT context of both quotations is suggestive. In Deuteronomy (29:2–30:20) Moses rehearses and foretells the history of Israel, arguing that they will face exile for their sin and will be delivered only in the future when God circumcises their hearts (30:6). At the beginning of his discourse (29:3) Moses acknowledges that the people of his day are incapable of keeping the law, because God has withheld understanding from them “until this day” (ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης, *heōs tēs hēmeras tautēs*). Significantly, Paul includes these words as well (ἕως τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας, *heōs tēs sēmeron hēmeras*, until this very day), indicating that he believes that the gracious work of God that will lift the blindness off the majority of Israel has not yet occurred. When the Lord circumcises their hearts (30:6), then all Israel

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unpersuasive, for it does not adequately reckon with the larger context of Rom. 9–11 in which the issue is Israel’s failure to attain salvation.

<sup>22</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* p, 585.

<sup>2</sup>Stott (1994: 292) sees a judicial hardening at work here. Nanos (1996: 262–63) rationalizes the idea of hardening by defining hardening as God’s “strengthening” what people have themselves chosen.

<sup>3</sup>Calvin (1960: 244) says wisely that God’s ways are beyond us so that we must “wonder at the incomprehensible counsel of God.”

<sup>23</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* p, 587.

<sup>24</sup>*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Pradis CD-ROM: Romans

<sup>25</sup>Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 356.

<sup>4</sup>Of course, when Paul uses “Israel” corporately, individuals are logically and necessarily included. Nonetheless, in some texts the focus is on Israel as a corporate entity.

<sup>26</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* p, 587.

will be saved. But Israel at this juncture is still in the state in which they are blinded from seeing the truth. Isaiah 29 contains a judgment oracle against the prophets (29:9–16; cf. 6:9–10). Paul elsewhere applies Isa. 29:14 to the blindness of the Jews in his day (cf. 1 Cor. 1:19). But Isa. 29:17–24 looks forward to a new day in Israel in which shame will be removed from Jacob and understanding will be granted to them. Thus Paul understands Israel to be under the judgment described in Deuteronomy and Isaiah, although the contexts of both prophecies indicate that this is not the last word for Israel.<sup>27</sup>

It is interesting that Paul understand the two passages quotes in 11:8 as applied to Israel. That the Israel of his day was under the judgments listed in the Old Testament. What I find interesting, in light of Romans 11:11-32 is that the context of both passages are clear that judgment is not the final word for Israel.

11:9-10

Psalm 69:22-23

Often used in the New Testament as an allusion or quote in reference to Christ’s ministry and death.

The curse on the enemies of the Psalmist is here in Romans applied to unbelieving Jews who reject Jesus.

*Summary*

Both of these OT texts, then, refer to God’s work. He pours out a stupor upon the Jews so that they do not perceive and comprehend the gospel. He is the one who has reversed their fortunes so that their table of plenty has actually become the scene of their own destruction. He has darkened their eyes and bent their backs in ignominy. We should also note that the attribution of hardening to God does not remove responsibility from the Jews. Paul never concluded that since God hardens, therefore the Jews were exculpated from responsibility for their actions. Paul deemed both of these truths to be compatible.<sup>28</sup>

**Summary**

Only those whom God has chosen by an act of his grace are true members of God’s people. God is in fact freely choosing only some Jews to be saved but many Gentiles. Paul sees this in accord with what the Old Testament teaches about God’s purpose to create an “Israel within Israel.” But, unlike some of his Jewish contemporaries, Paul also continues to affirm God’s election of Israel as a whole. God has not completely abandoned the nation in order to concentrate only on some within it. The promises he made to the patriarchs continue to be valid (11:28). Indeed, [chapter 11](#) is basically about what the continuing implications of that corporate election are for Israel.<sup>29</sup>

<b>My Musings</b>	
I am struck by the quantity of illustrations in both the Old Testament and New Testament, of not only the amazing grace of God, but the frequencies of individual walking away—rebellng against God.	
With all that God does to demonstrate mercy and grace, with the revelation of Himself, the giving of Jesus Christ to be our sacrificial Savior, the present of the indwelling Spirit—why are people, why are we so prone to wander?	
Song: Prone to Wander—Chris Rice On the surface not a ripple Undercurrent wages war Quiet in the sanctuary Sin is crouching at my door <i>Chorus</i>	Mask  Alone Obstacle

<sup>27</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* p, 587.

<sup>28</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* p, 589.

<sup>29</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 359.

<p>How can I be so prone to wander          So prone to leave You          So prone to die          And how can You be so full of mercy          You race to meet me and bring me back to life</p> <p>I wake to find my soul in fragments          Given to a thousand loves          But only One will have no rival          Hangs to heal me, spills His blood</p> <p><i>Chorus</i></p> <p>Curse-reversing Day of Jesus          When you finally seize my soul          Freedom from myself will be the          Sweetest rest I've ever known</p> <p><i>Chorus</i></p>	<p>Distraction          Matthew 6</p>
<p>What causes us to wander? Why?          Distractions?          —time, money, hobbies, events, tasks          —self, self-esteem, fear, pull of sin</p> <p>Solution          Community (communion with God and His people)          Context—depth with God through the Word, meditation</p> <p>See: Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25 (not just a strategy or method but truth)</p>	



**Implications/Application**

God is faithful to His promises but not blind to man’s condition.  
 God has a plan for Israel, a plan that is gracious to His chosen people.  
 His promised blessing on Israel as a nation does not indicate that all Israel will be saved, only those graciously chosen.

Salvation is by grace; it is initiated by God.  
 The condition of man—sinful and rebellious against God—makes the provision of salvation even more amazing.

**Key Point**

As in Romans 9:6—God is faithful to His Word—He will accomplish His purpose.



What do we learn  
 About God?

Gracious  
 Actively involved



Act on it

How can you be an exhibit of the grace of God? This week?  
 What are you doing to avoid wandering?

## Romans 11:1-10

- 1 I ask, then,  
has God rejected his people?  
By no means!  
For I myself am an Israelite,  
a descendant of Abraham,  
a member of the tribe of Benjamin.
- 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.  
Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah,  
how he appeals to God against Israel?
- 3 “Lord,  
they have killed your prophets,  
they have demolished your altars,  
and I alone am left,  
and they seek my life.”
- 4 But what is God’s reply to him?  
“I have kept for myself seven thousand men  
who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”
- 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant,  
chosen by grace.
- 6 But if it is by grace,  
it is no longer on the basis of works;  
otherwise grace would no longer be grace.
- 7 What then?  
Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking.  
The elect obtained it,  
but the rest were hardened,
- 8 as it is written,  
“God gave them  
a spirit of stupor,  
eyes that would not see  
and ears that would not hear,  
down to this very day.”
- 9 And David says,  
“Let their table become  
a snare and a trap,  
a stumbling block and a retribution for them;
- 10 let their eyes be darkened  
so that they cannot see,  
and bend their backs forever.” (ESV)