

ROMANS

*A Daily Devotional
Study Guide*



Monday

Study: Romans 11:1-10

Reading: I Kings 19:1-21

Memory: Matthew 5:21

Back in the 2002 Winter Olympics, a huge scandal broke out concerning one of the judges in the figure skating competition. It was found out that her evaluation was unfair because she had been bribed to make a certain decision. This story was in the national spotlight and caused doubt on all the judges in the Olympic competition.

Today, we are going to see how important it is to honestly evaluate ourselves before God. When we deceive ourselves, we welcome struggles and problems into our lives.

What Does the Bible Say?

If God had opened the door for the salvation of the Gentiles, did that mean that He closed the door for the salvation of the Jews? Did God reject the Jews and turn to the Gentiles instead? Paul once again responded to questions like this by saying, “By No Means!” The very reason that Paul knew that God didn’t turn away from the Israelites was because he himself was an Israelite (vs 1). Paul went on to explain how God never rejected Israel. Even when almost all of Israel had turned against God and Elijah thought that he was the only one left in Israel who worshiped the one true God, He didn’t turn away from Israel (vs 2-3). God told Elijah that there were still 7,000 men that God had chosen to be His servants and had not bowed down before the prophet Baal (vs 4).

In the same way, there was a remnant left in Israel who still followed God and would be saved. This remnant did nothing to earn their salvation, but it was offered to them by grace. God didn’t reject His people, but offered salvation to all of them. If salvation was offered by works, the grace of God would be worthless (vs 5-6).

Concluding his thoughts on the salvation that was available to the Jews, Paul declared that Israel was unable to obtain the salvation they were seeking by their works. No matter how hard they would try, they would still fall short of the glory of God. Though many would fall short, there

was a remnant who would believe on Him and would be saved. Those who chose to believe were the ones who God chose to be the remnant of Israel, but there were many others who rejected God and failed to accept His plan. This failure led to the hardening of their hearts by God. Paul supported his thinking with a passage from Isaiah 29:10 and then with a passage from Psalm 69:22-23. These passages describe how a person's religion often blinds them from understanding the truth. The more that they strove in their religion, the more they are blinded by their own works (vs 7-10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you able to evaluate yourself in an honest manner, or are you not willing to see yourself for who you really are? Having the ability to honestly evaluate your own life and make the necessary changes is a very difficult task. Many people, especially those who have attended church for years and years, have become right in their own eyes and have failed to honestly view themselves in the light of who God is. This failure often leads to a mediocre Christian life in which people are satisfied with their lives, but never grow to experience the fullness of God. Not only can unsaved people fall into the trap of being blinded by their religion, many believers can fall into that trap as well. Take time today to ask yourselves and ask others to honestly evaluate your life.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for making salvation available to you.*
- * *Ask God to give you the ability to honestly evaluate yourself.*

Thought for the day

What question did Paul ask (vs 1)?

How did Paul describe himself (vs 1)?

Why do you think he described himself this way?

What did God not do (vs 2)?

Who did Paul use as an example (vs 2)?

What had Elijah thought (vs 3)?

How have you felt like this in your life?

What did verse 4 emphasize about God?

What did Paul say about the remnant (vs 5)?

What did Paul emphasize about grace (vs 6)?

What had many Israelites failed to obtain (vs 7)?

Who did obtain it (vs 7)?

What do you think that means?

What OT verse did Paul quote to backup his point (vs 8)?

Rewrite verses 9-10 in your own words.

Why do you think Paul quoted these verses?

Why was it important that Paul help the Israelites see that not all of them were children of God?

How can this apply to many religions today?

Tuesday

Study: Romans 11:11-15

Reading: Genesis 50:15-21, John 9:1-7

Memory: Matthew 5:21

I was a freshman in college the first time I voted in a presidential election. Bill Clinton was running against George Bush. On the night that President Clinton was elected, my boss at college, who was a senior, began to panic. He thought that the United States would come to an end and the world as we knew it would be completely different. Though I am sure things slightly changed, what he thought would happen never happened. All of his panic, worry and frustration were for nothing, Although this experience taught my 18 year old self a valuable lesson. We as people tend to get worked up over politics and tragedies in the world, but God is still in control and we can trust Him to use whatever happens in the world to work out for his purpose.

Today, we are going to be reminded how God used the rejection of the Jews to bring around great good for the Gentiles.

What Does the Bible Say?

Since the Israelites failed to recognize the Messiah and chose to reject Him, did that mean that they would never have a chance for salvation? Once again, Paul answered his own question with a bold, "By no means!" Though many of the Jews rejected Christ, not all of them did, and not all of them had to. Salvation was not offered to the Gentiles or the Jews, but was offered to both. In fact, in God's foreknowledge, He knew that the Jews would reject Him and He used this rejection as an occasion for the Gentiles to hear the truth. God used the rejection in order to bring salvation because it was the Jews that rejected Jesus and set Him before the Roman government to be crucified. As God has often done throughout time, He used the evil of men to help bring about a greater good. The Apostle Paul saw this first hand as he tried to minister to the Jews around the world, but was normally rejected. That rejection caused Paul to turn his attention almost exclusively towards the Gentiles, which allowed the Gospel to be spread to the known world. This didn't mean that the Jews were left out,

but the Jews who chose to believe in God were more than welcome to believe and would be used by God (vs 11-12).

Ever since the first Gentile was converted to Christ through the ministry of Peter (Acts 10), the Jews expressed some type of jealousy to see God working in the hearts of the Gentiles. Paul realized that this pride would assist in bringing some of the Jews to Christ as they realized their importance of getting on board God's program (vs 13-14). Paul argued that if the Jews rejection fit into God's plan and allowed the Gentiles to be converted, how much greater it would be for the Jews to repent and allow God to work through their submission. Their acceptance would not only bring salvation to them, but would also open the door for many others to be spared from eternal damnation (vs 15).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize what a great God you have? Today's passage gave us just a glimpse into His sovereignty and power over the affairs of men. One of the lessons we can learn today isn't new to Scripture. In fact, thousands of years before Romans was written, Joseph declared, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." (Genesis 50:20) This realization should cause us to worship God in a greater way. It should alleviate much of the fear and the worry that many people face because we can know and realize that God is always in control, even at times when we can't understand what is happening.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Praise God because He is sovereign.
- * Ask God to help you trust in Him in all things.
- * Thank God because He is constantly at work for you.

Thought for the day

What did Paul ask (vs 11)?

What do you think he meant by this?

****The Jews stumbled over their religion and stumbled over Jesus, but this did not permanently exclude them from being children of God. They stumbled, but they still had a chance to be redeemed if they turned to God and accepted Jesus as their Savior.*

How did Paul respond to his question (vs 11)?

What was the result of the Jewish rejection of the Messiah (vs 11)?

How did the Jews react when the Gentiles came to Christ (vs 11)?

Why do you think they responded this way?

What did the Jewish rejection mean for the Gentiles (vs 12)?

What was the main point of verse 12?

How does this reveal that God desires all men to be saved?

Who did Paul direct verse 13 to?

Why did Paul say he was an “apostle to the Gentiles” (vs 13)?

Why would Paul want to make the Jews jealous (vs 14)?

What did the Jewish rejection mean for the world (vs 15)?

What would their acceptance mean (vs 15)?

Why do you think Paul had such a great desire for the Jews to come to know Christ?

Do you have this desire for others around you? Explain.

Wednesday

Study: Romans 11:16-20

Reading: Philipians 2:1-14

Memory: Matthew 5:21

What Does the Bible Say?

In verses 11-15, Paul described how the Jewish rejection of the Messiah helped open the door for many Gentiles to believe. This didn't mean that God rejected the Jews. Scripture is clear that He wants both Jews and Gentiles to come to Him. Paul used two very interesting illustrations to prove his point. The first described how if the “firstfruits” of a piece of dough was holy, the whole lump would be holy. In order for a loaf of bread to be good to eat, the dough that it is made with has to be good as well. Along the same line, Paul used the illustration of a tree. In order for a tree to be healthy and produce fruit, the tree must have a good root system. These illustrations describe how God offered salvation to the founding fathers of the Jews (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) as they were set apart to be holy to God. They are like the dough and the root, and if they were set apart for God, the rest of Israel can still be set apart for God as well (vs 16).



Two different cactus trees that were grafted together
Picture from: Dr. T. Ombrello - UCC Biology
Department

Does that mean that if the patriarchs of Israel were holy that the whole nation would be holy?

Throughout the book of Romans, it is clear that no person is saved because of his race or religious upbringing. Paul illustrated this by describing the Jews and Gentiles as tree branches. The Jews were compared to the original branches on a tree, but those who refused to believe God were

broken off. In their place, the Gentiles, described as wild olive branches, were grafted in. Wild olive branches were useless on an olive tree because they bore no fruit. But, God took them and grafted them onto another tree which allowed them to bear fruit (vs 17).

Paul reminded the Gentiles that they had no reason to be prideful and look down at the Jews (the broken branches) because it was only God's grace that opened the door for their salvation (vs 18). Some Gentiles thought they were special because God called them after the Jews rejected Him, but Paul reminded the Gentiles that the Jews were broken off the tree because of their unbelief. Instead of pride, the Gentiles should respond in awe and humility (vs 19-20)

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you take your salvation for granted? The United States was founded on many biblical principles, but we have strayed far from that, though we are not alone. Israel was founded upon God, but they allowed selfishness and pride to creep in and eventually destroy much of the nation. Their pride also passed a self-righteous type of religion down to the following generations and caused them to reject the Messiah. This is an example God wants all of us to learn from. You need to realize how important it is not to take your salvation for granted. You need to realize your need to live a holy and pure life so that you can boldly share the truth with those who need the same hope and joy that God has given you. Salvation wasn't just meant for you, but is for all men. Ask God to give you the desire and ability to pass your faith down to the generations that come after you?

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for giving you His grace.
- * Ask God to help you "work out" your salvation.
- * Praise God because He offers salvation to all men.

Thought for the day

What two items did Paul use to illustrate his point (vs 16)?

- 1.
- 2.

What was the beginning point of this illustration?

****The beginning of an item was very important. Whether a bread starter or roots, the foundation was vital for bread or trees to succeed.*

Why do you think he used these illustrations?

****These would have been very common items that everyone would have been familiar with.*

What do you think the broken branches were a reference to (vs 17)?

What do you think the "wild olive shoot" was a reference to (vs 17)?

Why were the wild branches who were grafted in told not to be arrogant (vs 18)?

What spiritual point was Paul making?

What might the grafted branches say (vs 19)?

Who do the grafted branches represent?

Why were the branches broken (vs 20)?

Who were the branches (vs 20)?

What was faith so important (vs 20)?

Why should Gentiles not become proud (vs 20)?

Why do you think Gentiles were told to fear (vs 20)?

Thursday

Study: Romans 11:20-24

Reading: John 15:1-11, Isaiah 6:1-8

Memory: Matthew 5:21

What Does the Bible Say?

Neither the Jews nor the Gentiles had a reason to be proud of themselves because of their choice to trust in Jesus. As Paul has clearly stated, Jesus came to this earth not to save a particular race, but to save individuals who believe. Yesterday, you read the beginning of the illustration that is continued in today's reading. Paul depicted God as a tree

trunk of an olive tree that provided nutrients to its branches and allowed it to bear fruit. The Jews were the original branches, but because of their unbelief, they were broken off of the trunk. In their place, the Gentiles, represented by branches from wild olive trees, were grafted into the tree because of their belief.



Olive Tree in Israel

The fruit that a wild olive tree would produce wasn't very good, if it produced any at all, The fruit of an olive tree that was in an orchard would produce abundant fruit. Paul warned the Gentiles not to become prideful because they were just wild olive branches that were shown mercy and grafted in by God. Instead of being prideful, they were to stand in awe of God and this awe would help produce thankfulness and service (vs 20). He reasoned with them by saying that if God broke off the original branches because of their unbelief, he would also break off the branches that had been grafted in. Paul wasn't dealing with individuals losing their salvation,

but was dealing with the nations as a whole (vs 21).

Though God is loving and caring, God is also holy and just. The kindness of God was displayed by allowing the Gentiles to be a part of His kingdom, but His severity was also displayed when He chose to break off the Jews because of their rejection. This didn't mean that all Gentiles would believe and all Jews would reject God. Those Jews who did believe would become part of the kingdom, just as the Gentile believers would become part of God's kingdom. God was more than willing to accept Jews into His kingdom and Paul understood this well because he was one of them. That is why his heart's desire was for Israel to be saved. (vs 22-24).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you sometimes begin to think that you deserve salvation? Do you sometimes feel that you have earned the right for God to give you good things because of all the service you have put in for Him? We live in a society where there is a great emphasis placed on earning things in life by the work you put in. For instance, if a football player wants to get better, he needs to spend hours working out and hours watching game film. If a person wants to advance in their company, they are expected to work long hours and do whatever it takes to get the job done. This same type of thinking often enters into the church as we start to think we deserve the blessings of God. Sometimes we expect God to answer our prayers because we have obeyed Him and served Him. You need to realize that you deserve nothing. The answers to your prayers aren't because you're good, but because God is good. He chooses to love you and chooses to bless you, but not because you deserve it. Stop working to get things from God, but choose to stand in awe of Him and to worship Him by presenting your body as a living sacrifice to Him.

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Ask God to help you have the right attitude about Him.*

Thought for the day

Why were the Jews rejected (vs 20)?

Why were the Gentiles accepted (vs 20)?

Why do you think this would cause pride in the Gentiles?

How do you see pride creep into your life as a believer?

How can you live with a proper fear of God rather than with a heart full of pride?

What did God not spare (vs 21)?

Who would God not spare (vs 21)?

What point was Paul making in verse 21?

What did Paul want his readers to understand about God (vs 22)?

What did Paul point out about the severity of God (vs 22)?

What did Paul point out about the kindness of God (vs 22)?

Who is the “they” Paul is referring to in verse 23?

What did God have the power to do (vs 23)?

What does this show about God’s desire for all men?

How were the Jews and Gentiles described in verse 24?

What point was Paul making in verse 24?

What do you think God wants you to learn from this?

How can you apply this lesson to your every day life?

Friday

Study: Romans 11:25-29

Reading: Romans 11:30-36, Jeremiah 31:31-40, Hebrews 13:5-6

Memory: Matthew 5:21

An elderly Christian was in much distress as he lay dying. “Oh, Pastor,” he said, “for years I have relied upon the promises of God, but now in the hour of death I can’t remember a single one to comfort me.” Knowing that Satan was disturbing him, the preacher said, “My brother, do you think that God will forget any of His promises?” A smile came over the face of the dying believer as he exclaimed joyfully. “No, no! He won’t! Praise the Lord, now I can fall asleep in Jesus and trust Him to remember them all and bring me safely to Heaven.” Peace flooded his soul, and a short time later he was ushered by the angels into the light of God’s eternal day. (From Our Daily Bread)

Today, we are going to see the extent of God’s promises and how far He is willing to go to keep them.

What Does the Bible Say?

Much of the first part of the book of Romans was directed to the Jews and their misunderstanding of the grace of God, but in the later chapters he began to direct the book towards the Gentiles. In Romans 11:13 Paul made it clear that he was speaking directly to the Gentiles as he spent much of chapter 11 telling the Gentiles not to become proud because of their salvation, but to realize that it was by the grace of God. Paul continued this warning in verse 25 as he described how the partial Jewish rejection of God wouldn’t last forever, but was only going to last for a short time. This time is the time of the church age where the majority of the converts are Gentiles. It will continue until all the Gentiles that God wants to be saved are converted. This appears to usher in the tribulation period in which the eyes of the Jews will be opened and those who remain alive will be saved. According to Ezekiel 20:34-38, the small remnant of Jews who rebel will be destroyed and all the Jews left alive will believe on Jesus Christ and will become followers of God (vs 25). The salvation of Israel was prophesied about by Isaiah (59:20-21, 27:9) when he declared that the nation of Israel

would turn to God (vs 26-27)

The turning of Israel wasn't happening at the time Paul was writing to the Romans as the majority of the Jews were rejecting God, which allowed the Gospel to be spread to the Gentiles. Though the Jews rejected God, He didn't reject them. They were still God's beloved, His chosen people with whom He had made a covenant to love forever (vs 28). The covenant that God made Abraham and his descendants was an irrevocable covenant and could never be changed (vs 29).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Did today's reading make sense to you? Has Romans been a more difficult book for you to understand? It is easy to get bogged down in the details at times, and miss the main point that Paul was attempting to get across to his readers. One lesson that was very clear is the fact that God always keeps His Word. He made a covenant with Abraham and no matter how rebellious his descendants (Jews) became, God still loved them. Even though they fought against Him and became His enemies, He never turned away from them and will never break His promises to them. This means that God will never break His promises to you either. God doesn't say one thing and then change His mind based on your unbelief or bad behavior. The grace of God is not earned or deserved, but is given to you in spite of who you are or the things you do. God loves you so much that He chose to declare you righteous through faith and to provide you with magnificent and wonderful blessings. You and I have a GREAT GOD!!!!

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for extending His grace towards you.*
- * *Ask God to help you to comprehend some of His love for you.*
- * *Praise God because He keeps His Word.*

Thought for the day

Why did Paul say he was writing this next portion (vs 25)?

What are ways that you can be wise in your own eyes (vs 25)?

Why do you think Paul wanted to make them aware of what was happening (vs 25)?

What had come to Israel (vs 25)?

What do you think the fullness of the Gentiles was a reference to (vs 25)?

What will happen to all of Israel (vs 26)?

What prophecy did Isaiah give about Israel (vs 26)?

Who was the "Deliverer" (vs 26)?

What would this Deliverer do (vs 26)?

What does verse 26 and 27 show about God's future plan for Israel?

What is God's plan for the future when it comes to Israel (vs 27)?

What was the current state of Jews when it came to the Gospel (vs 28)?

Why do you think Paul said this?

How had the Jewish rejection been good for the Gentiles (vs 28)?

How did God view the Jews even though they had rejected Him (vs 28)?

What does this reveal about God keeping His word (vs 28)?

What did Paul declare about the gifts and calling of God (vs 29)?

What do you think the "gifts and calling" were a reference to (vs 29)?

Saturday

Study: Romans 11:30-36

Reading: Psalm 107:1-16, Job 11:7-9

Memory: Matthew 5:21

When my oldest daughter was little she had a small piggy bank. She would use this to save some of her birthday money and other miscellaneous change that she found. One day, she asked if we could buy a minivan to use instead of the car we had. We told her that we didn't have enough money yet and that we would have to wait. She told us that she had money in her piggy bank and would help us buy a minivan. Though the thought was great, her accumulated amount wouldn't even be able to fill the van up with a tank of gas.

Today, we are going to see how we are often like little children when it comes to our view of God. We think what we have to offer is so valuable, but our infinite God sees things much differently.

What Does the Bible Say?

When God offered salvation to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, He didn't offer it to them because they were righteous, but He offered it to them because they were sinners. Ephesians 2:1-3 describes how all men are children of the devil and are born sinners. Romans 5:12 describes how "so death spread to all men because all sinned." All men are disobedient to God and are trapped in their sin. There is nothing that they can do to work themselves out of this trap, but this is not a problem for God. Because all men have sinned, all men have the ability to experience the tremendous mercy that God offers to us. God's mercy is displayed by choosing not to give those who believe on Him what they deserve because of their sin (vs 30-32).

This thought caused Paul to break out in praise towards God. He knew that a full understanding of God's mercy was impossible because of our finite minds. The depths of the riches that we have because of God are far greater than we can begin to understand. Why God would reach down and choose to save a terrible, rotten sinner like Paul simply overwhelmed him. He had a full understanding of what he deserved and realized that God

spared Him from the penalty of sin (vs 33).

The words of Isaiah (40:13) came to Paul's mind as he declared that no human can fully know the mind of God and no one could even come close to trying to tell God how to run things (vs 34). The words of Job then came to his mind because Job (35:7) had realized that no gift that we could offer up to God is valuable to Him. God owes us nothing, and will never owe us anything. All the works that men do here upon this earth amount to nothing before a holy God (vs 35). This is because God is the ruler and creator of everything. He has all he wants and all he needs. He can do whatever He wants to do and He doesn't need us. It is only by His mercy and grace that He chooses to love us and chooses to spare our lives as we place our faith and trust in Him (vs 36).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Does the mercy and grace of God overwhelm you as you ponder who you are in the sight of God, or do you sometimes find yourself thinking that you deserve something from God because of the time and effort you give to Him? One thing that is very clear throughout the writings of Paul is that he knew he deserved nothing but eternal punishment from God. He knew how sinful he was not only before he was converted, but after he was converted. This is a foreign concept to some believers in the United States because they are taught to believe that we are good people. Many are led to think that their goodness forces God to give them the things they want. This type of thinking is the exact opposite of that presented in the Word of God. Even the best gift that you could offer to God is worth nothing to Him. He owes you nothing, but He has chosen to give you everything.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for His mercy towards you.*
- * *Ask God to help you empty yourself of yourself.*
- * *Praise God because He is merciful and gracious.*

Thought for the day

What were all believers like at one time (vs 30)?

Why is this important to understand?

When did God choose to show mercy (vs 30)?

What was God's future plan for Israel (vs 31)?

What condition do all men face (vs 32)?

Why is this such a vital truth to understand (vs 32)?

What does God want to have on all men (vs 32)?

How is God's wisdom and knowledge described (vs 33)?

Why do you think Paul pointed this out (vs 33)?

What did Paul declare about the ways of God (vs 33)?

Why do you think Paul declared this?

What three questions did Paul ask (vs 34-35)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do you think was the purpose of these questions?

Why is it so important to realize that God's ways are far above man's ways?

Why is human nature constantly fighting against God?

What did verse 36 declare about God?

How should this cause you to exalt God?

Sunday

Reading: Romans 11:1-36

(Take time to read this passage again, letting the truths you have studied this week sink into your mind. You are encouraged to go online and read it through a few times in different versions.)

www.biblegateway.com

Bible Memory

Matthew 5:1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'