

The Question Stated

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches on the significance of Romans 11, emphasizing the importance of understanding God's purposes concerning the Jewish race and the impact of Israel's place in His plan. The chapter addresses the question of whether God has cast away His people, showcasing through seven answers and proofs that Israel is not forsaken but has a future of restoration and salvation. Gaebelein highlights the errors in Christendom's interpretation that spiritualize Israel's promises, stressing the need to discern between Israel and the church to grasp the fulfillment of God's covenant with His chosen people.

Description

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Transcript

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 thumbnailUrl: "" hasTranscript: true oneLinerSummary: "The sermon explores God's unchanging promises to Israel and their significance in the context of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles." sermonType: "expository" topics: - name: "Israel's Restoration" slug: "israels-restoration" - name: "God's Covenant" slug: "gods-covenant" bibleRefs: - text: "Exodus 4:22" bookId: "EXO" chapter: "4" verse: "22" - text: "Jeremiah 31:35" bookId: "JER" chapter: "31" verse: "35" - text: "Romans 11:1-28" bookId: "ROM" chapter: "11" verse: "1" outline: - heading: "I" points: - "Introduction to the eleventh chapter of Romans" - "Importance of understanding Israel's role" - "Consequences of ignorance in Christendom" - heading: "II" points: - "Structure of the Epistle to the Romans" - "Salvation, Dispensation, and Exhortation" - "Significance of the second part" - heading: "III" points: - "The Jewish question posed" - "God's promises to Israel" - "Response to the objection from the Jewish perspective" - heading: "IV" points: - "Seven answers to the question of Israel's rejection" - "Conversion of Saul of Tarsus" - "The remnant according to the election of Grace" - heading: "V" points: - "Partial blindness of Israel" - "Salvation's impact on the Gentiles" - "The promised fullness of Israel" - heading: "VI" points: - "The parable of the olive tree" - "The mystery of Israel's future" - "God's unchanging promises" - heading: "VII" points: - "Conclusion on God's

faithfulness" - "The implications for Gentile believers" - "Final thoughts on Israel's national future" faq: - q: "What is the main question addressed in Romans 11?" a: "The main question is whether God has cast away His people, Israel." - q: "What does the sermon say about God's promises to Israel?" a: "The sermon emphasizes that God's promises to Israel are still valid and will be fulfilled." - q: "How does the sermon define the relationship between Jews and Gentiles?" a: "It states that both Jews and Gentiles are under Grace and share in the blessings of salvation." - q: "What is the significance of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus?" a: "It serves as evidence that God has not completely rejected Israel." - q: "What does the olive tree parable represent?" a: "The olive tree parable illustrates the relationship between Israel and the Gentiles in God's plan." quotes: - "God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew." - "Their past history proves this." - "God's gifts and calling are without repentance." applicationPoints: - "Understand the importance of Israel's role in God's plan to avoid confusion in doctrine." - "Recognize that God's promises are eternal and apply to both Jews and Gentiles." - "Encourage a deeper study of Scripture to grasp the fullness of God's revelation." keywords: - "Israel" - "Grace" - "Salvation" - "Dispensation" - "Promises" - "Gentiles" - "Faithfulness" - "Future" ---

The eleventh chapter in the great Epistle to the Romans is perhaps the least studied of all in this Epistle of our salvation. It contains not alone deeply interesting truths, but is of great importance and puts before us most solemn facts. The Holy Spirit unfolds here the purposes of God concerning the Jewish race. The knowledge of Israel's place and position in God's revealed plan is of incalculable importance. All the confusion in doctrine and practice we see about us, is more or less the result of a deplorable ignorance which exists throughout Christendom concerning Israel's place and future. The carnalizing of the professing church has been the result of this ignorance. All Christendom attends to Israel's earthly calling, and not only fails in it most miserably, but also dishonors God and His Word.

If it were possible to straighten out the confusion existing about us in the professing church, the proper starting point would be, no doubt, to teach God's purposes concerning Israel.

Let us first consider in what part of Romans we find the chapter which contains the Jewish question.

Romans is divided into three parts. The first section extends from chapter i-viii; the second contains chapters ix, x and xi; the last is from chapter xii-xvi. Over the first part we put the word "Salvation" over the second "Dispensation" and over the third "Exhortation."

This is how God makes His truth known. First He tells us what He has done for us in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; how rich and full His Grace is toward all who believe, Jew and Gentile. In the next place He acquaints us with dispensation; that is, How He, the Sovereign, dispenses; how He deals with Jew and Gentile. In dispensational truths He takes His child, so to speak, into confidence, because He has made him a son and an heir, and introduces him into the knowledge of His ways in the government and future of the earth. Having shown us what He has done for us and what He has made us, He speaks to us once more, showing what manner of men we should be. This is exhortation. Reverse this order, salvation, dispensation and exhortation, or leave one out, and you will have but confusion.

Our chapter then stands in the second, the dispensational part, that great parenthesis, in which the Holy Spirit traces God's righteous and merciful ways. At the end of the salvation part of this Epistle we find a chapter of summing up, the eighth. The second part has likewise such a climax, the chapter which is before us. It brings in not only the Jews, but the Gentiles, and in a measure the church of God. From this chapter we can reach back over the entire history of Israel. From here we can learn their present condition

and, above all, we can study their future and learn what God will yet do in fulfillment of His oathbound covenants.

There is, however, a special reason why the Holy Spirit in Romans introduces the three chapters, which form the second part.

It is the following. In the first part, chapters i to viii, the Spirit of God shows that Jews and Gentiles have no righteousness and are lost, that there is not one that doeth good, no, not one. Then God reveals His righteousness and His salvation for Jew and Gentile, which is by faith. An old saint was asked what the three great lessons are which he had learned in his Christian experience, and he said: "First, I learned that I have never done anything good in my life; secondly, that I could never do anything good; and, thirdly, that Christ has done it all." This is precisely what is taught in the first part of Romans.

Now, after the guilt and lost condition of the Jew and Gentile are fully demonstrated, the Jew is left out of sight. In this dispensation of Grace God deals alike with the believing Jew and Gentile; there is no difference. The believing Jew and Gentile are under Grace, linked with the Second Man, in possession of every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus, a Son and an Heir, destined to be like the Firstbegotten from the dead.

But now comes an objection from the side of the Jew. Questions are frequently asked in Romans. The Jew now has a question, after he has heard all about this salvation by Grace for him and for the Gentile, as well as the results of this salvation.

This is the question: "What becomes of our national promises and blessings? God has promised us so much as a nation, and these promises are not yet fulfilled; will He keep them?" In other words, "Does God's dealing in Grace with the Gentiles mean that He is through with us as a nation, that our people are now completely and finally rejected and are the many promises contained in the oracles of God never to be fulfilled?"

This question is answered in the second part of Romans. In it the Holy Spirit shows how righteously and mercifully God deals with the Jews and Gentiles, and the end of the section, our chapter, shows most blessedly that God has not cast away His people; a time of their fullness and reception is coming and all Israel shall be saved.

The chapter in its construction is very simple. In the preceding one we read: "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was manifested unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." The quotation is from Isaiah lxxv:1, 2, and in it the call of the Gentiles is plainly foretold as well as God's attitude towards His own people Israel. Now if God is found of them (the Gentiles) and manifested unto them that asked not after Him, and if His own people have no answer to His hands stretched forth towards them, would one not be justified to say He has cast away His people? The eleventh chapter therefore asks this very question: "Hath God cast away His people?" This question is the great superscription of this chapter. The fact that God has not cast away His people is demonstrated throughout the chapter. Up to the 27th verse the Holy Spirit gives seven answers and proofs to this question that His people, Israel, are not finally nor completely cast away. After this fact is demonstrated comes the great and sublime ending (verses 28-36) corresponding to the ending of the doctrinal part of the Epistle in the eighth chapter. We shall follow in our exposition these seven answers and proofs.

They are the following:

I. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus (verse 1).

II. There is a remnant according to the election of Grace, hence Israel is not completely cast away (verses 2-6).

III. The blindness of Israel is partial and judicial. It is never complete nor final. The Scriptures prove this fact (verses 7-10).

IV. Salvation has come to the Gentiles by their fall and by it God wishes to provoke them to jealousy (verse 11).

V. There is a promised fullness and receiving of Israel which according to the prophetic Word will mean greater riches for the world, even life from the dead (verses 11-15).

VI. The parable of the olive tree (verses 16-24).

VII. The mystery made known (verses 25-27).

Look at the question first and its answer. The answer is best translated by "Far be the thought/ "God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew." The question of the casting away of Israel is, of course, a national question and not the question of the individual. God had foreknown His people and called them to a distinctive and peculiar place in the government of the earth. The nation is called to be a peculiar treasure unto the Lord above all people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, a people prepared to show forth His praises (Exod. xix).

God's gifts and calling are without repentance. Throughout the Word He declares that Israel should never cease to be a nation before Him and that they shall be at last that in the earth, as a nation, for which He called them. "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is His name; if those ordinances depart from me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever.

Thus saith the Lord: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah xxxi:35-37). 'For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee; though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jerem. xxx:11).

Numerous other passages could be quoted in which God assures His people that He will never abandon them forever. Their past history proves this. Again and again God's firstborn Son, Israel, (Ex. iv:22) had been disobedient, a stiff necked people. They were punished and led into captivity, their city plundered and razed, their temple burned and their land laid waste, and still God's infinite mercy hovered over the people and the land and He never said that He hath cast them away.

Then a part of the nation, the Jews, rejected their Messiah and King, who had come to His own; they cried their awful "Away with Him!" "Crucify Him!" "His blood be upon us and upon our children!" Yet from that cross there came that wonderful prayer, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Again the

offers of Grace were spurned by the nation, and those of the nation who had believed were bitterly persecuted and some murdered by their unbelieving brethren, and yet over all the Spirit of God hath put the assuring statement, "God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew."

The temple was laid in ruins once more, the nation peeled and scattered into the corners of the earth. Their saddest dispersion began and with it trials and sufferings such as their previous history had not known, and still over this great dispersion and all their terrible experiences the Spirit of God has placed these words: "God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew."

What a different answer Christendom has to this question. If the Jew asks of Christendom the question about his national future, the promises of blessing and glory, he receives a strange answer. Or if he turns to the great commentators on the Bible he finds teachings altogether opposite to the plain national promises, which belong still to his people. He is told that God hath cast them away and that there is nothing left for them. He hears that the church is Israel and all the promises given to the original Israel find now a spiritual fulfillment in the church. But the intelligent, orthodox Hebrew refuses to accept this spiritualizing mode of interpretation nor does he find anywhere throughout Christendom that his national promises and national glories are now fulfilled in a spiritual way in the church. If all this wrong and confusing interpretation of the Word of God, which does not distinguish between Israel and the church, were true, and if it were true that God hath cast away totally and finally Israel, then we certainly would have to give up the belief in an inspired Bible. It would be true what higher criticism is constantly claiming, that the Jewish prophets were patriots and dreamers and not inspired by God. Furthermore, God's gifts and calling would be not without repentance; God would have gone back upon His own word, and in consequence of this we sinners of the Gentiles would have no assurance of our salvation. For who can assure us that God really means what He hath said about us, if He hath cast away Israel and is not keeping His promises? Will He not do the same with us? We learn therefore that the question of Romans xi is a very important one indeed.

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