

Day 122, Romans 11

by David Servant

David Servant's sermon on Romans 11 explores God's choice, mercy, and the importance of faith for both Jews and Gentiles.

Scripture: Romans 11:5-32, Hebrews 10:31, Hebrews 12:29, 1 John 4:8

Topics: "Salvation By Faith", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

David Servant preaches on the misconception of God preselecting certain individuals for salvation, highlighting the importance of meeting God's conditions for salvation, such as believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that God's hardening of Christ-rejectors does not make it impossible for them to repent, as God desires all people, Jew and Gentile, to be saved. Paul also warns Gentile believers about the danger of being severed from God's salvation if they abandon their faith, showing the balance between God's kindness and severity.

Transcript

Today we once again read verses about certain Jews whom God chose for salvation and certain ones whom He hardened. Ripped from their context, these verses are sometimes used to promote the idea that God has sovereignly preselected certain individuals for salvation. But we don't have to search very far within the context to see the error of that interpretation. Paul cites God's response to Elijah, who once thought himself to be the only surviving Israelite who was not an idolater. God told Elijah, however, that there were 7,000 others like him who had not "bowed the knee to Baal" (11:4). Paul then comments, "In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice" (11:5). In Elijah's day, God chose a remnant of Israelites who met His conditions---they made a choice not to bow to Baal. Likewise there was a remnant of Jews whom God chose in Paul's day. He chose them because they met His conditions---they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those Jews who had rejected Christ God hardened as He did to Pharaoh of old. But those Jews whom God chose to harden could have been among those whom He had chosen to save had they not rejected Christ. If Paul was saying that God hardened certain Jews whom He had not arbitrarily preselected for salvation, then Paul was an idiot, because he contradicted himself so many times within this very chapter and the rest of his letter to the Romans. For example, we read today of the possibility of Jews being grafted back in to the olive tree from which they were severed "if they do not continue in their unbelief" (11:23). So is it possible that God might change His mind regarding His alleged sovereign preselection of

certain persons?

We also read Paul's words, "For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all" (11:32). The "all" to whom God showed mercy are the same "all" whom He "shut up in disobedience." God is offering salvation to every sinner.

Referring to the prophecy of Moses that he had mentioned in chapter 10 (10:19), Paul states that God has shown mercy to Gentiles in order to provoke Israel to jealousy, attempting to motivate them to repent. Clearly, God desires that they would all repent. As Scripture teaches consistently, He desires that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, Jew and Gentile (1 Tim. 2:3-4). God's hardening of Christ-rejectors is apparently not a hardening that makes it impossible for them to repent. "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew" (11:1).

Based on promises God made through His prophets, Paul knew that eventually there would be an awakening among the descendants of Israel. They will one day, en masse, embrace their Messiah whom they previously rejected. Their current hardening will end after "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (11:26). Won't that be a wonderful time, to see multitudes of Jews believing in Jesus?

Another modern doctrine that is debunked in today's reading is the idea that if one is saved, one is guaranteed to always be saved. Paul clearly warns Gentile believers that they face the danger of being severed from God's tree of salvation---just as Jews have been severed---if they abandon their faith:

If God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off (11:21-22).

How much more clear could it be?

From these same verses we also gain a picture of God that brings some balance to the over-emphasis that is placed on His love. Indeed, Scripture teaches us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8), but the same Bible also tells us that "God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29) and, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). I think I'll "continue in His kindness" (11:22)!

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