

Romans 11:1~6

(Mt. 23) ³⁷ *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that kill the prophets, and stone them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* ³⁸ *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.* ³⁹ *For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

Here we read the fulfillment of what Moses and Isaiah both spoke about... How God's presence would depart from Israel, and be found among another nation, "not called by His name..." Jesus came unto his own, but his own received him not. Israel rejected their Messiah. And as a result, God's glory departed from Israel. What had began back in the wilderness on Mount Sinai, had come to an end.

¹ *I say then, Hath God cast away his people?*

Has He "forsaken" them...has He "turned His back" on them?

Absolutely Not! Once again, Paul answers with the strongest negative word of the day... *God forbid.*

Absolutely Not! There is No possibility, it is impossible! There is not even the "hint" of yes in it.

God would never "forsake" His people...He would never "turn His back" His own...

But rather what has happened is best understood in light of the story of Elijah.

(Vs 2~4) ² *God hath not cast away his people, which he foreknew. Know ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he makes 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. 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.*

Here Paul points to the story of Elijah, to serve as an example of the "current situation." Paul's day was much like Elijah's day. In that, the "Majority" of the nation had forsaken God to pursue their vanities. The story of Elijah was a story of "Apostasy." Webster dictionary defines apostasy as...

Apostate... - Renunciation of a religious faith...
- An abandonment of a previous loyalty...
- DEFECTION...

T: Listen... **God had not "Forsaken Israel" ...Israel had "Forsaken God."**

The truth that Paul is declaring here is that they are not all Israel... which are of Israel! Paul declares that there are two Israel's, one part is "believing Israel," and the other part is "unbelieving Israel." The majority of the nation had "rejected Christ." But Paul's point is, that does not mean that Christ is not "God's promised Messiah..." But rather, that only declares that those who rejected Him are not "God's Children." During the time of Christ visit to Israel, though the majority of the nation rejected Him, there was a "small remnant" who received Him! When contrasted with the nation as a whole, there was but a "handful" of believers. But, as Paul declares here, they are the "true children of Israel, the true children of God," and God has not forsaken them! That's what Paul means in verse 1, when he says...

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

God has not cast Israel away! He would never turn His back on His people... But what He has done, is drawn a clear line in the sand...distinguishing who the "True Israel" is! Those who place their faith in Jesus Christ, that is the "True Israel!" In Christ, the nation has been divided into two parts, those who trust in Christ, those of the gospel of grace...and those who do not!

In attempts to explain this, Paul points to the story of Elijah, as found recorded in 1 Kings. The account that Paul refers to here concerning Elijah was a description of what is likely Israel's lowest point in history. The time period between "King David" to the time of *Elijah* marked what has to be the worst times in the history of the nation. During the reign of King David, Israel was at her peak! In contrast to the time of Elijah, under King Ahab, Israel was at her lowest. Beginning with Solomon, the nation entered a spiritual decline that would spiral downward until the nation hit rock bottom! It was during this time, that Israel became "*divided*" into two parts, the top part being called Israel, (made up of 10 of the 12 tribes), with the other part being called Judah, (made up of the other 2 tribes). No doubt, a **SHADOW** of the things to come...

Over that time period (a little over 100 years) the nation etched farther and farther away from the "*faith*" of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So much so, that in the days of Elijah, the majority of the nation had forsaken the ways of God completely. Verse 3 here describes the condition of the nation at that time...

³*Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.*

Elijah's words describe the "*horrific*" spiritual state of the nation... "...*I am left alone*," says it all! *There's nobody else besides me*. All have defected, and they're even trying to get, wiping all of us out.

Though "*bleak*"... God reveals to Elijah, that it's a little better than what he thinks... He's not the only one; there are about 7000 men that have not defected, that have not bowed the knee to Baal, the Canaanite god. You're not alone. Bet even so, it had to seem that way, when contrasted with the millions of people in Israel! There was a very small remnant of the nation who remained faithful to the God of Abraham.

⁵*Even so*... In the same way... As it was in the days of Elijah...

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

Paul declares to Israel, that "*as it was in the days of Elijah*," so it was in his day... The majority of the nation had defected, they had forsaken God... but there was a *small remnant* that remained! A reference to the Jews who received Christ, in comparison to those who rejected him!

Now listen... There's a very distinct difference between the days of Elijah and the days of Paul... In Elijah's day, they had forsaken the ways of God to follow the ways of "*another god*," the so-called god Baal. They had torn down the altars; they had killed the prophets (God's spokesmen)... The nation had "*openly rebelled*" against the God of Abraham.

But in Paul's day, it was different in that the nation had not defected from the Law of the God of Abraham, the God of Moses... **But even so**, they had still defected from the faith. Even though the nation had not "*turned its back*" on the Law of the God of Abraham, their "*hearts were turned away*..."

Jesus, speaking to the religious leaders of his day said...

*Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people **honors me with their lips**, but their heart is far from me.⁷ *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

Listen, the nation Israel as a whole... had a "*form of godliness*..." just no content. In short, *their heart* was not in it. Though there was this "*form of worship of God*," there was a very small number who "*truly worshiped God*" from the heart! In Jesus' day, the "*temple*" was full every Sunday you might say... but it was little more than "*religious activity*." They were simply "*going through the motions*," it was just a routine part of their life, something they did on Sunday's.

The real tragedy of all this was...that they were **blind** to their *spiritual condition*! They thought they were “*right with God*” by their *outward observance* of the Law of God...but they weren't! They thought that by merely keeping the Law that they were right with God, that they would not encounter the judgment and wrath of God. But the truth was, even though it had resulted in them being “*good moral people*,” their *heart was far from God*! And here in this section of Romans, chapters 9~11, Paul is pleading with Israel to repent and turn their hearts to God through Christ. And he warns them, that the “*morality*” produced by their submission to God's Law was not enough to “*spare them*” from God's wrath.

Just because a man was a Jew, and partook in “*temple worship*” didn't make him a “*Child of God*.” The “*Children of God*” are those who “*Live by Faith*.” *True Israel* is identified as those who “*believe on the Lord Jesus*.” The prophetic words of Moses and Isaiah, declaring that God would leave Israel referred to Him leaving the “*Apostate*” part of Israel! (***Which was the major part***) By leaving them, God was not leaving “*His people*”...for they were not “*His people*!” Like in Elijah's day, their hearts weren't given to Him, but rather to other things...other gods.

In a very real sense...Paul is the “*Elijah*” of his day. He stood against Israel. He stood against the leaders of Israel, and preached the gospel of Christ. And much like Elijah, he was seen as a *troubler of Israel*. They sought to take his life.

You can see now, why Paul was so persecuted by the Jews in the synagogue... He was telling them that mere outward obedience to the Law of God was not enough. That was not “*obedience*” at all! “*True Obedience to God*” is manifested by a submission of one's life to Jesus Christ as Lord! Simply put, Paul told them their “*heart*” wasn't right with God. That's God requirement was for men to “*humble themselves*” (*remove self from throne of heart*) by placing Jesus there!