

Romans 11:5~6

“As it was in the days of Elijah...” Those are the words Paul used to describe the “*situation*” in the nation Israel, *in his day*.

“*The day we are in brethren, can be best described and best understood by contrasting it with the days of Elijah.*”

At first hearing...that would be an incomprehensible statement to the Jewish mind. Comparing the current Israel “*of Paul’s day*,” with the Israel in “*Elijah’s day*,” no doubt would be taken as an insult, and considered a great reproach upon the nation. Reason being, in the Jewish mind, the two were nothing alike. As a matter of fact, they would argue, they were not even close!

In Elijah’s day, the majority of the nation had departed from the faith of their forefathers. Spiritually speaking, it marked the “*lowest point*” in the nations history. It all started as a result of King Solomon’s sin. His wives turned his heart away to other gods. This made God furious, because he had warned him more than once of this matter. But as a result, the nation was “*divided*” into two parts, one being “*Israel*,” the other “*Judah*.” Solomon’s son Rehoboam resided as King over Judah, while a man named Jeroboam took the throne over Israel.

Beginning with Jeroboam, the nation began drifting farther and farther away from the “*ways of the God of Abraham*.” Until it reached the bottom, during the reign of King Ahab, (*seventh* King) who was King during the days of Elijah. During his reign, the majority of the nation had completely forsaken the “*ways of the God of Abraham*” for the Canaanite god...Baal. The description given in scripture of those days reveal a horrific scene.

Between the days of “*King David’s*” reign (*Highpoint* in Israel’s history) and the “*days of Elijah*,” a literal “*Landscape & Architectural*” change had taken place! Elijah’s generation of children could not imagine “*what use to be*.” They had “*torn down the altars*,” and replaced them with “*new alters*,” built for the worship of “*new gods*.” They had “*killed the prophets*,” to the point, that Elijah thought he was the only one left! Basically, they did away with anything that was associated with the worship of the God of Abraham. From Elijah’s standpoint, “*the whole nation*” **had apostatized!** But to Elijah’s surprise, God revealed to him that there were yet 7000 men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. There was a “*small remnant*” that had remained loyal to the *God of Abraham*.

Here, Paul points to the “*days of Elijah*” and declares, that the same was true of Israel in the current day!

(Vs 5) **Even so** then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. “*As it was in the days of Elijah...so it is in our day...*”

To his countrymen, his brethren the Jews, comparing them nation to “*Elijah’s day*” was nothing short of offensive! In their mind, there was “*no comparison!*” The “*current Israel*” was NOTHING like the Israel of “*Elijah’s day*.” They had no alters to strange gods, they never killed the prophets of God. They served only one God, the God of Abraham. The Temple had been rebuilt, and everyone attend on the prescribed days. They had not abandoned the “*ways of God!*” They diligently taught the ways of God as prescribed in the “*Law of Moses*.” They observed the Lord’s Sabbath, no work was done in them, they kept every feast and festival ordained of the Lord.

Paul...how could you *even begin* to compare us with those of “*Elijah’s day?*”

Q: Are you blind?

Paul's answer... *No, it's you who are blind...*

⁷What then? *Israel hath not obtained that which he seeks for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were **blinded*** ⁸(According as it is written, *God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*

It is not I my brother, who is blind...it is you. Just as Isaiah so "clearly" said.

It is you who are **blind**...you **do not see your need** of Christ! You, along with nearly all the rest of Israel, have been **blinded** by the "righteousness" created by your works in the Law. Your *self-produced righteousness* has blinded you to the "righteousness of God" which is in Christ Jesus. What you SEE as righteousness is nothing more than the works of men! True, outwardly speaking, what is SEEN with the human eye, Israel is much different that in the days of Elijah! There are no altars to other gods, there are no prophets to other gods. True, everything in Israel centers around the God of Abraham. But spiritually speaking, Israel is no different than it was in the "days of Elijah." Though there is a "Outward form" of the worship of the God of Abraham...but there's no "Content." I'm talking about the things below the surface, what the human eye cannot SEE! Jesus quoted Isaiah in Mark 7 speaking to Israel, and 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.*

Spiritually speaking...Israel was no different than they was in the "days of Elijah!" Outwardly they appeared to be much better, but inwardly...it was the same, their hearts were far from God. Just as it was then, it was true in Paul's day, there was a small remnant who have not defected.

⁵Even so then at this present time also there is a **remnant** according to the election of grace. "Remnant" refers to a very "small portion." A reference to the "Handful of Jews" who believed on Christ.

...there is a remnant according to the election of grace.
The term "**election**" simply means "selection" or "chosen."

The "election of grace" means...that God has chosen to save men by grace.

Now, when you combine that with the "remnant"...a full understanding comes into place...Listen,
⁵Even so then at this present time also there is a **remnant** according to the election of grace.

T: Listen very closely to what Paul is declaring here in this statement... The "*Small number of Jews*" who received Christ, and are following Him...are "*representative*" of the way that God has chosen to save men!

The question then becomes...

How was this "remnant" set apart?

By what manner were they declared "right with God?"

How did this "handful" of people attain justification before God, while nearly the entire nation did not?

What did THEY do?

T: NOTHING... That's just it...*it's not what THEY did, it's what God did!*

Listen closely; what set this small group apart, what divided this handful of people from the rest of the nation...was they "heard" the message of the cross...and believed it. Realizing what GOD DID there on the cross through Jesus Christ had drastically changed the lives of this "handful" of people!

This *small group of people* were *representative* of those whom God's Grace had affected!
The "Grace of God," the "Love of God" had changed their LIFE!

Q: What do you see? (*point at the cross*) It's always amazed me how you can take two people, side by side, looking at the same thing, but they each see it *much differently*. What do you see? A cross...two pieces of wood, a symbol?

At the crucifixion, *one man* sees a common man, no doubt, a man who had committed some crime worthy of death. And he sees him hanging there, nailed to a tree, with blood streaming down, gasping for breath, till finally, he dies. The man beside him sees everything much differently... He knows this is no common man, "*this man on the cross*" is the "*Son of God*." He's done nothing worthy of death. This man realizes, that this man is hanging there on "*his behalf*!" He's hanging there to pay the price for his sins! This man realizes, that everything "*this man on the cross*" has just endured was because of *his transgressions*! As he gazes upon "*this man on the cross*," he becomes more and more overcome by grief and shame, and remorse and sorrow...as the full weight of his actions become clearer and clearer! He becomes crushed by the weight of the guilt of his sin, realizing what they have done to "*this man on the cross*." He thus falls broken before Him in repentance...and in gratitude, realizing what He has just done! To think that God would lower himself to this level, to think that God would suffer the way He did, for me! So that I could be declared innocent, and not receive the judgment I so deserve from God! And to think, He did all this, simply to express how much He loves me! The second man becomes overwhelmed by the love, the grace of God manifested there on the cross... The love that he sees there, changes him. He no longer needs "*Laws*," he no longer needs "*commandments*" in order to serve God... As a result of the love he's seen in the cross, his heart now yearns to serve the God who would do such a thing for him.

Isaiah prophesied that Israel would "SEE him" as just a common criminal, being punished for his sins... (**Isaiah 53, the suffering servant**) ³*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.* ⁴*Surely he hath borne our grief's, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* ⁵**But** *he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

There was a handful of Jews, who "*saw something*" in the cross that the others didn't! They understood what the cross was all about. And the love of God, the grace of God, changed their life.

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

The "*Small number of Jews*" who received Christ, and are following Him...are "*representative*" of the way that God has chosen to save men!

When you look at the "*two Israel's*", the "*Majority & the Remnant*," the message is clear!
- Men are not saved by their "*good works in the Law*..."
- Men are not saved by their zealous efforts to live according to God's commandments...

There was no one on earth who were more religious, and more zealous in their religion than Israel. If anybody could possibly be saved by their sincerity and earnestness to God's ways, it would be Israel. But as Paul has made clear here...they weren't. Israel as a whole was yet "*in their sins*..."

Which serves to illustrate God's point. That "*it is not of works, lest any man should boast*..." It is obvious that men are not saved by the works of the Law...(look at Israel.) We do see though, through the "*remnant*," how men are saved, how men are *made right with God*... Men are made right with God not by what "*They do*..." but by what "*God has done!*" The Grace of God, the Love of God that He has shown

on the cross, breaks the hard heart, it melts the heart of stone, and creates in the one who experiences it, a love for God that can't be put out!

In verse 6, Paul says...⁶*And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.*

Which simply means... ***It is either*** by the “*Love of God*” (manifest on the cross) that we are saved, or it is by the “*works of the Law.*” It is one of the two! They are mutually exclusive, it is impossible for them to exist together at the same time. Grace is the absence of works...for if you add works to it, it is no longer grace, but works. The same is true with works, if it is works, then grace has nothing to do with it, otherwise it becomes grace. Paul is saying he is either completely right or completely wrong...

Using the “*Two Israel's,*” Paul declares that the “*remnant*” are the ones who are right with God, resulting not by what they did, not by their works in the Law, but by what God did through Christ on the cross.

T Paul declares that “*God's Love*” did what “*God's Law*” could not do... **Change the human heart!**

If the cross doesn't humble you...if the cross doesn't move you to repentance...NOTHING will! If you can hear what God did for you on that tree, and yet continue to live for yourself, live to your own will...brother, your heart is harden beyond help! There's no hope for you, there's nothing in this world that can help you...