

Sermon Title: The Preservation of Israel's Remnant

Sermon Text: Romans 11:1-10

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to understand the present state of Israeli conditions and God's plan for them.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 ways God is pursuing Israel partially.

- I. The **picture** of the preservation of Israel's remnant. V.1
- II. The **prophecy** of the preservation of Israel's remnant. V.2-4
- III. The **problem** of the preservation of Israel's remnant. V.5-11

Introduction: In this section Paul answers the question that logically arises from (Romans 10:19-21): "Is God's setting aside of Israel for rejecting Christ permanent?" At stake is the truthfulness and trustworthiness of God. Will God keep His unconditional promises to Israel.

Jeremiah 33:19-26 And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁰ "Thus says the LORD: `If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, ²¹ `then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers. ²² `As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.'" ²³ Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁴ "Have you not considered what these people have spoken, saying, `The two families which the LORD has chosen, He has also cast them off'? Thus they have despised My people, as if they should no more be a nation before them. ²⁵ "Thus says the LORD: `If My covenant *is* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, ²⁶ `then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, *so* that I will not take *any* of his descendants *to be* rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them."

I. The **picture** of the preservation of Israel's remnant. V.1

A. The **concern**. V.1a

The phrase castaway is the key here. The tern means to thrust away from oneself. The question in the Greek text assumes a negative answer. In spite of Israel's disobedience as outlined in (**Romans 9:1-13; 10:14-21**), God has not fully rejected His people (**1 Sam 12:22; (Is 49:15; 54:1-10)**)

1 Kings 6:13 "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel."

Psalms 89:31-37 If they break My statutes And do not keep My commandments, ³² Then I will punish their transgression with the rod, And their iniquity with stripes. ³³ Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, Nor allow My faithfulness to fail. ³⁴ My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. ³⁵ Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: ³⁶ His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me; ³⁷ It shall be established forever like the moon, Even *like* the faithful witness in the sky." Selah

Psalms 94:14 For the LORD will not cast off His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance.

B. The **relief**. V.1b

The phrase "certainly not!" is the strongest form of negation in the Greek (6:2). The unbelief of Israel is no argument against the gospel (**Romans 1:16-17**). Israel's ignorance resulting in blindness is not total, and God is still working with the nation, even though He may not be working with each individual within the nation. In the Old Testament book of Samuel, the nation chooses to reject God as their King and thus wanted to follow the example of the pagans, and chose a human king. Yet God continues to woo and work with His people.

1 Samuel 12:22 "For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people."

This leads up to the ultimate sign of rejection in the Gospels and Paul's time, they had rejected Jesus as King or Messiah [**John 19:15** But they cried out, "Away with *Him*, away with *Him*! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"] this was the leaders of the nation's response, yet God was not finished with them.

C. The **example**. V.1c

Paul was an example of Jews who were and would be saved by faith, like that of Abraham described in Romans Chapter 4.

II. The **prophecy of the preservation of Israel's remnant**. V.2-4

A. The **promise** of God's elective love. V.2a

God's election of the nation (whom He foreknew 8:29) is immutable or irrevocable. Even in their periods of great apostasy, idolatry, and harlotry, God saves for Himself a remnant.

Hosea 2:2-5 "Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; For she *is* not My wife, nor *am* I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, And her adulteries from between her breasts;³ Lest I strip her naked And expose her, as in the day she was born, And make her like a wilderness, And set her like a dry land, And slay her with thirst. ⁴ "I will not have mercy on her children, For they *are* the children of harlotry. ⁵ For their mother has played the harlot; She who conceived them has behaved shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, Who give *me* my bread and my water, My wool and my linen, My oil and my drink.'

Nehemiah 9:26-27 "Nevertheless they were disobedient And rebelled against You, Cast Your law behind their backs And killed Your prophets, who testified against them To turn them to Yourself; And they worked great provocations. **27** Therefore You delivered them into the hand of their enemies, Who oppressed them; And in the time of their trouble, When they cried to You, You heard from heaven; And according to Your abundant mercies You gave them deliverers who saved them From the hand of their enemies.

Nehemiah 9:28-30 "But after they had rest, They again did evil before You. Therefore You left them in the hand of their enemies, So that they had dominion over them; Yet when they returned and cried out to You, You heard from heaven; And many times You delivered them according to Your mercies, **29** And testified against them, That You might bring them back to Your law. Yet they acted proudly, And did not heed Your commandments, But sinned against Your judgments, 'Which if a man does, he shall live by them.' And they shrugged their shoulders, Stiffened their necks, And would not hear. **30** Yet for many years You had patience with them, And testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets. Yet they would not listen; Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands.

The individuals mentioned in verse 2 are the disobedient and obstinate people of the nation of Israel (**10:21**). The focus is not on individual regenerated Jews and Gentiles, even though it could apply, but Israel as a nation God has made promises to, and cannot neglect them.

B. The **portrait** of God's elective love. V.2b-4 (**1 Kings 19:10-14**)

Paul reminds the readers about what Scripture has prophesied in the passage about Elijah, and how he pleads with God against Israel.

1 Kings 19:10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

When he was threatened by Jezebel, even the holy and godly and usually fearless prophet became fearful and concerned, and fell into a state of self-pity, feeling like he was the only faithful believer on earth.

1 Kings 19:18 "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Chrematismos (divine response) carries the idea of divine oracle or revelation. Through His direct word, the Lord God reassured Elijah that others remained faithful to God (7000) and had not bowed the knee (worshipped) the pagan god Baal, whom the wicked Jezebel and her priests had led most of Israel to worship. (**1 Kings 19:9-18**).

When God called Isaiah to proclaim His Word, He warned the prophet that most of the hearers would not respond, listen, or repent, and only a small holy, obedient, and faithful remnant would remain, like a stump left when a tree is felled. (**Mark 4:12; John 12:40**) **Isaiah 6:9-13** And He said, "Go, and tell this people: `Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'¹⁰ "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." ¹¹ Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate,¹² The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places *are* many in the midst of the land.¹³ But yet a tenth *will be* in it, And will return and be for consuming, As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump *remains* when it is cut down. So the holy seed *shall be* its stump."

Matthew 13:14-15 "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: `Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; **15** For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'

III. The **problem** of the preservation of Israel's remnant. V.5-11

A. The **predicament** of Israel's rejection. V.5-7 (**2 Timothy 1:9; Romans 10:2-3**)

The word epizetro indicates a "diligent seeking." But it was a seeking after their own self-righteousness, and not the righteousness of God.

B. The **proclamation** of Israel's rejection. V.8-10

1. The testimony from a **prophet** of Israel. V.8

Isaiah 29:10-13 For the LORD has poured out on you The spirit of deep sleep, And has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, *namely*, the seers. **11** The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one who is literate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I cannot, for it *is* sealed." **12** Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I am not literate." **13** Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

God setting aside of Israel as a nation is only partial and the Lord has hardened the hearts only of those Jews who refuse to believe. God is active in the hardening, while Jews are passive. God is the outside power that does the hardening.

Deuteronomy 29:3-4 "the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders. **4** "Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this *very* day.

In Deuteronomy the law is the symbol, as well as Isaiah and the prophets. Both the law and the prophets bear testimony to God's sovereign and predetermined hardening of hearts. The hardening is neither unloving or unjust. God hardens only those hearts who, in rejecting His gracious offer of righteousness, harden themselves to His grace (i.e. dark room, flash light attendant).

2. The testimony from a **king** of Israel. V.9-10

Psalm 69:22-23 Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap.
23 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually.

A person's table is normally a place of safety, feasting, and nourishment. But David, prophesies that the table of the ungodly and self-righteous will instead become a snare and a trap. You see the Jews and Church attendees today considered God's Word, in particular the Torah, to be their spiritual sustenance (i.e. their daily bread), which indeed it was. Yet because of their rebellious, idol serving hearts, and unbelief, the Word became instead a judgment on them. Therefore, Israel as a result became zealously and progressively more spiritually blind, so blind (even among the leaders) they could not recognize the Messiah and Savior of their souls, and Israel is still blind as a nation to this day.