



## Part 5

### 2 more studies in Romans

**Please Note the following:**

1. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
2. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP**

## Study 1 – The Response to Unbelief

Romans 9:30-10:21

*(Sermon on 26-May-2024)*

**Before we begin:** What picture does Paul paint in Romans 9:24 from our last study? How might this apply to the Church in Rome at the time of Paul writing?

*The picture is Christians called by God, not only from the **Jews**, but the **Gentiles** as well!*

*Notes from Introduction to the first Bible Study: Some early traditions make the Apostle Peter the founder of the Roman Church, but this is unlikely. Probably Jewish pilgrims from Rome, converted through the preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, planted the gospel among the large Jewish population in Rome. (Luke tells us in Acts 2:10 that Jews from Rome were present on that day!)*

*As in so many other cities, the Jews of Rome did not all embrace this Messianic teaching. The historian Suetonius noted that the Roman Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome 'because they were constantly rioting at the instigation of Chrestus' (a corruption of 'Christ'). This expulsion of Jews, then, would have included Jewish Christians, as Luke himself implies when he mentions that it was because of this edict of Claudius that Priscilla and Aquila had come to Corinth (Acts 18:2). The expulsion (possibly AD 49) would have a significant effect on the make-up of the Christian community in Rome: Gentiles, who up to this point had been a minority of the believers in Rome; were now left as the only Christians in the city. **By the time Paul wrote Romans, Jews had been allowed to return to Rome - for example Priscilla and Aquila had returned (Romans 16:3-4) – Gentiles were still in the majority in the Church in Rome; and had come to dominate both its leadership and theological tone.***

### Read Romans 9:30-31

1. What analysis does Paul give here [from a human perspective] of how the Gentiles came to faith in Jesus but Israel did not?

*The **Gentiles** who appeared uninterested in righteousness and didn't pursue righteousness, but they actually obtained righteousness, because they embraced Jesus and had **faith** in Him; whereas **Israel** pursued the law as a way of obtaining righteousness (but didn't and couldn't, keep the law) and so they have not obtained righteousness.*

*And the reason Israel did not obtain righteousness is because they pursued it by "**working**" rather than by having "**faith**".*

## Read Romans 9:32-33

2. In verse 32, what does Paul say his fellow Jews stumbled over? Who is this stumbling stone? (cf. 1 Peter 2:8)

*The MSG puts it this way: They were so absorbed in their "God projects" that they didn't notice God right in front of them, like a huge rock in the middle of the road. And so, they stumbled into him and went sprawling.*

*That stumbling stone is of course, Jesus!*

**1 Peter 2:8** - "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

3. Where does Paul quote from in verse 33? (cf. Isaiah 8:14; 28:16 and 1 Peter 2:6, 8)

*Isaiah (740-700BC) predicted that God would send/lay this stumbling stone [Jesus] in Zion (mountain on which Jerusalem is built).*

*Isaiah 8:14 – He will be a holy place; for both Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem, he will be a trap and a snare.*

*Isaiah 28:16 – So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic.*

*1 Peter 2:6 – For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."*

*1 Peter 2:8 - and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.*

4. **Ponder:** Why do people stumble over Jesus?

*In the time of Jesus*

- **Different Expectation:** *Jesus was not the Messiah the Jews were expecting. Their expectation was a political liberator and king like King David, who would lead Israel to triumph over their enemies (like the Romans) but Jesus came as a humble servant King, who came to bring spiritual salvation; and taught people to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute you. This didn't align with their expectation.*

- **Challenged the Religious Leaders:** Jesus often criticized the religious leaders of the day, the Pharisees and Sadducees, challenging their interpretation of the law and exposing their hypocrisy. This made Jesus a stumbling block for those entrenched in traditional beliefs and practices.
- **Jesus' teaching:** He taught forgiveness, loving one's enemies, turning the other cheek; and the way to salvation through faith. His teachings were difficult for many to accept and so Jesus was a stumbling block for those who could not reconcile His teaching with their own values and beliefs.
- **The Cross and Resurrection:** The idea of the promised Messiah being crucified was scandalous and an offence to many Jews and foolishness to some Gentiles (1 Corinthians 1:23). The concept of a crucified saviour was a significant barrier to believing for many, because crucifixion was a shameful and humiliating form of execution!
- **Inclusivity of Salvation:** Jesus preached a message of salvation that was inclusive: tax collectors; lepers; outcasts and sinners were offered salvation; as were people beyond Israel with Gentile nations also included in the offer of the Gospel!

#### Today

- **Moral and Ethical Standards:** Jesus' teachings often contradict modern secular values. For instance, his calls for sexual purity, forgiveness, and turning the other cheek can clash with contemporary views on sexuality, justice, and personal rights.
- **Jesus' Exclusive Claim:** Jesus' claim that he is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) can be seen as exclusive and intolerant in a pluralistic society that values all beliefs as equally valid and sees many roads lead to Heaven/Paradise! In a multicultural world with many religious traditions, the idea of Jesus as the unique and exclusive path to God can be offensive or hard to accept.
- **Objection to the Supernatural:** The accounts of miracles, virgin birth and the resurrection are difficult for many to accept in a scientific age that often values practical evidence and rationalism over faith!
- **Historical skepticism:** Some people struggle to accept the historical accuracy and authenticity of God's Word; leading people to doubt Jesus' existence or identity and to doubt the reliability of the Gospel accounts.

- **Negative experiences with Christianity:** People who have had negative experiences with Christians or churches, such as hypocrisy, abuse, or judgmental attitudes, may reject Jesus because of these experiences!
- **Problem with suffering:** The existence of suffering and evil in the world can be a major stumbling block to people. They can begin to question how a loving and powerful God, as Jesus is portrayed, can allow such pain and injustice!
- **Call to self-denial:** Jesus' call to take up one's cross, deny oneself and follow Him (Matthew 16:24) demands a level of self-sacrifice and self-denial that is counter-cultural and difficult for many to embrace!
- **The Trinity:** The Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which includes Jesus as the Son of God and as fully God, is complex and difficult for many to understand or accept.
- **Moral demands:** Jesus' teaching requires significant lifestyle changes and letting go of previous sinful behaviour and patterns, and living the "old" life behind. These moral demands can be a significant stumbling block for those who are unwilling to change their lifestyle to follow Jesus!

5. **Ponder:** In Romans 9:1-29 Paul has said unbelief is down to God's sovereign choice. But now in Romans 9:30-10:21, Paul's saying unbelief is down to human responsibility. Paul is a very intelligent man, so he can't be contradicting himself, so how can we reconcile these two things?

*Paul is showing us that God's sovereignty and human responsibility stand in relationship to each other as an "antinomy" – an apparent contradiction between two valid principles. However, they are not a contradiction.*

*The Bible never says: This event totally happened in accord with God's plan, therefore the human beings were not responsible for their actions. Nor does the Bible say: human beings were responsible for their actions; therefore, the event was not certain to happen according to God's plan. Rather the Bible holds both these truths together*

*A. The complete sovereignty of God over all history – AND*

*B. The complete responsibility of every human being for his or her own behaviour*

*Martin Lloyd-Jones explains it this way: This is what the Bible teaches. Election alone accounts for the saved; but non-election does not account for the lost. No-one would be saved were it not that God in a sovereign manner had chosen them,*



*as explained in Romans 9:6-29. It's God's actions that saves a person. So why is anybody lost? Is it because they are not elected? No! What accounts for the lost is their rejection of the Gospel. We are responsible for our rejection of the Gospel, but we are not responsible for our acceptance of it!*

### **Read Romans 10:1-3**

6. What is Paul's heartfelt prayer in verse 1? Could we have that prayer for Australia?

*Paul's heartfelt prayer is that his fellow Israelites would be saved [for Heaven] by believing in Jesus.*

*The latest census data says 42% of Australians are Christian; in reality this could be as low as 10% who are genuine Christians! We should be praying heartfelt prayers for our fellow Australians to be saved – and praying for a revival!*

7. According to Paul where have the Israelites gone wrong?

*They are zealous for God – but their zealousness is NOT based on knowledge. They did not seek or come to know the righteousness of God but established their own righteousness. That is, they are **self-righteous**.*

*Paul knows what it's like to be zealous. Before Paul became a Christian, he was extremely zealous in his religion (Galatians 1:14); as seen by his persecution of Christians (Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6). In fact, Paul was just as zealous for God as any of his contemporaries (Acts 22:3) and could even described his zeal at that time as an obsession (Acts 26:9ff). But Paul's zeal to persecution was based on NO knowledge – he didn't KNOW or ACCEPT who Jesus was/is! Scripture says 'it is not good to have zeal without knowledge' (Proverbs 19:2). Sincerity is not enough; we can be sincerely mistaken! The proper word for zeal without knowledge, commitment without reflection or enthusiasm without understanding – is **fanaticism**! And fanaticism is a horrific and dangerous state to be in!*

### **Read Romans 10:4-8**

8. How is Christ described in verse 4?

*Christ is the culmination of the law. The Greek literally means the "end" (telos) of the law. The law is ended in the sense of it cannot be used to save people. Jesus is the only one who can save us – because He is the only one who can keep the law. And Paul tells us in verse 4, the reason that Christ is the culmination of the law; is*

*so that there is righteousness (being right with God and approved by God) available for everyone who cares to believe in Jesus!*

9. What contrast does Paul make between God's righteousness and people's attempts at righteousness in verses 5 to 8? Where does Paul quote from? (cf. Deuteronomy 30:12-14)

*Paul contrasts between the righteousness that comes from the law (v5) and the righteousness that comes by faith (v6). In this contrast, Paul sets Moses in Leviticus against Moses in Deuteronomy.*

*On the one hand, in verse 5, Paul quotes Moses from Leviticus 18:5 and writes about the righteousness that comes by the law "the person who does this things will live by them". In other words, someone who keeps the law will have salvation (eternal life). But of course, no one can has succeeded in keeping the law! On the other hand, in verses 6 to 8, Paul quotes from Moses from Deuteronomy 30:12-14. His point is: there is no need to ask such questions "who will ascend to Heaven (to bring Christ down)?" or "who will descend into the deep (to bring Christ up from the dead)"? There is no need to scale the heights or plumb the depths looking for Jesus – He has already come, died and risen, and so is accessible to us! In fact, verse 8, the Word (the Gospel message) is near us, in our mouths and hearts! That's the Gospel message that we (Paul and the Apostles) are proclaiming! Paul then goes on to summarize the Gospel in verses 9 and 10.*

### **Read Romans 10:9-13**

10. According to verses 9 and 10, how do we become a Christian? What's involved?

*<sup>9</sup> If you **declare with your mouth**, "Jesus is Lord," and **believe in your heart** that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For **it is with your heart** that you believe and are justified, and it is with your **mouth** that you **profess your faith** and are **saved**.*

*Thus, it is heart and mouth; inward belief and outward confession, belong essentially together. John Murray says: "Confession without faith would be in vain...and faith without confession would be shown to be spurious (fake, counterfeit)"*

11. What promise does Paul quote in verse 11? (cf. Isaiah 28:16)

*Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:16 with different wording. V11 says: "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame". Whereas Isaiah 28:16 says: "the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic. It seems Paul is quoting from the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint).*

12. What important statement does Paul make in verse 12? (cf. Romans 3:22, 29)

*There is no difference between Jew and Gentile – Jesus is the same Lord for both groups of people. And anyone can "call" upon Jesus and be richly blessed.*

*Romans 3:22 says: This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is **no difference between Jew and Gentile**,*

13. What promise does Paul quote in verse 13? (cf. Joel 2:32) Is that comforting to know?

*Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [Jesus] will be saved.*

*Joel 2:32 says: And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, This is a magnificent and comforting promise. None who come to Jesus will be cast away!*

### **Read Romans 10:14-15**

14. What's Paul's argument in verses 14 to 15? How does Paul's "call" here fit in with God's Sovereign choice (election)?

*Paul's argument in verses 14 and 15 is: People can't call on the name of the Lord (as Paul has just said in v13) unless they believe; but they can't believe in the Lord if they have never heard of the Lord and His offer of salvation; and to hear about the Lord, someone has to go and preach the Gospel to them; and no one can go and preach the Gospel to them, unless someone is sent to preach the Gospel. They Paul describes the one who is sent to preach as having "beautiful feet of those who bring the good news (=Gospel)" quoting Isaiah 52:7.*

*Paul's "call" fits in with God's sovereign choice (election) in that – God has chosen the "Church" of Jesus to be the instrument or vehicle by which people are "called" to follow Jesus. So, God chooses people to be saved – and we (the Church) "call" them on God's behalf – to come and follow Jesus.*



## Read Romans 10:16-21

In these verses Paul quotes from various Old Testament prophets and says that these prophets foretold the rejection of the Gospel by Israel...

15. Who does Paul quote in verse 16 and what's his point? (cf. Isaiah 53:1)

*Paul quotes from Isaiah 53:1 – “Lord, who has believed our message?”*

*His point is even 700 years before Jesus came, Isaiah was saying the same thing that not all the Israelites accepted the good news of those beautiful feet. Nothing has changed in Paul's day or our day!*

16. What is required to become a believer according to verse 17?

*Faith is required. And faith comes by hearing the message the Word of Christ!*

*There is a chain of events – God sent – Christians preached – people heard – people believed and called upon the name of Jesus. The last part of the chain was missing for many in Paul's day and in our day!*

17. Who does Paul quote in verse 18 and what's his point? (cf. Psalm 19:4)

*Paul suggests maybe there's an excuse in v18? Perhaps they did not hear the Gospel? But Paul says: “of course they did!”. He quotes Psalm 19:4. This might seem a bit strange to quote from Psalm 19 because the psalm is talking about how God's creation (the mountains, the heavens etc.) declare the glory of God over all the world. Paul means here that the Gospel has been spread and declared as widespread and in the same way as creation declared the glory of God!*

*Remember, Paul is speaking about Jews here; and his point is that wherever a Jewish community existed in the world Paul lived in, the Gospel had been preached – and they have heard it; so, they Jews can use that as an excuse!*

18. Who does Paul quote in verse 19 and what's his point? (cf. Deuteronomy 32:21)

*Paul asks the question in verse 19: Did Israel not understand? By asking this question Paul is raising the possibility that people can be exposed to the Gospel but not understand. But by quoting God talking to Moses from Deuteronomy 32:21, Paul shows that it was only the other nations (i.e. the Gentiles) who had “no understanding”. The Jews did know the nature of God (holiness); God's need for righteousness; the promises of forgiveness by substitution implied by the tabernacle and temple worship and sacrifices; all the promises pointing to a*

*Messiah coming; and that the Lord Himself would become our righteousness for us (Jeremiah 23:5-6). Whereas the Gentiles were the ones who didn't understand or know any of that! So, God says to Moses that God in a sense will show up the Jews with the Gentiles faith, making the Jews "envious".*

19. Who does Paul quote in verse 20 and what's his point? (cf. Isaiah 65:1)  
*Paul's point is that the Jews did not miss Jesus because they were not searching for Him, because Paul says that God told the prophet Isaiah that God even works to reveal Himself to those who have not even asked for Him.*

20. Who does Paul quote in verse 21 and what's his point? (cf. Isaiah 65:2)  
*Paul's point is that the Jews did not miss Jesus because of any fault on God's part because Paul says that God said through the prophet Isaiah that God "all day long" "held out His hands to them, but the Jews were a disobedient and obstinate people!*

21. **Ponder:** How could you have "**beautiful feet**" sharing the Good News today?
- a. *Through genuine intentional faith-based compassionate conversations with family, friends and work colleagues*
  - b. *Through digital platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube; blogs; vlogs; and podcasts.*
  - c. *Mercy ministries that show the love of Jesus to the community (e.g. P.A.T.)*
  - d. *Support groups to help people going through tough times*
  - e. *One on one discipleship or mentorship*
  - f. *Workshops like Christianity Explained; Discipleship Explained, Discovery Bible Study Groups, Alpha course etc.*
  - g. *Evangelism in the community (Canton Beach; Toukley Green)*
  - h. *Prayer groups –specifically focused on praying for non-believers to come to know Jesus*
  - i. *Encouragement and support for those who are struggling – which might lead to Jesus*
  - j. *Teaching young people: Scripture in schools; Friday and Sunday Jaffa*
  - k. *Lifestyle witness: people see our integrity and exhibiting Christian value: love, honesty, kindness and compassion*
  - l. *Hospitality: opening our homes to share a meal with others*
  - m. *Sending out and supporting missionaries/mission partners*

22. **Ponder:** Do you ever find yourself making excuses for “**good people**” who have rejected the Gospel message? How do Paul’s words about his own people challenge you?

*Sometimes we might make excuses for people who have definitely heard the Gospel and rejected/ignored it. Paul’s words from Romans 10:1 that ‘my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved’, are convicting and challenging words. Where’s my heart’s desire for my fellow Australians? Am I praying for them to be saved?*

*This passage leaves us with two stark truths:*

- a. Every human being is responsible for how they treat the “word of Christ”*
- b. Every Christian is responsible for communicating that “word of Christ”. We must ensure that, wherever it is that God has placed us, no one around us can say they have not heard or understood!*

23. How **does Isaiah 28:14-16** relate to Romans 9:30-10:21?

*Isaiah 28:14-16 addresses the leaders of Jerusalem who have made a "covenant with death," **relying on their own schemes rather than trusting in God**. The passage **warns of impending judgment** but also **offers a message of hope and salvation**.*

*In Romans 9:30-10:21, Paul addresses **the righteousness that comes by faith as opposed to the righteousness based on the Law**. He discusses Israel’s pursuit of the law and their stumbling over the "stumbling stone." Paul quotes Isaiah 28:16 directly in Romans 9:33: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame."*

***Both passages highlight the futility of relying on human efforts** (whether the schemes in Isaiah or the law in Romans) and **the necessity of faith in God’s provision**.*

*Isaiah’s prophecy about the cornerstone is fulfilled in Christ, as Paul explains in the Romans passage. This cornerstone is the basis for salvation and righteousness by faith.*

*Isaiah warns of judgment but also points to the hope found in the cornerstone. Paul echoes this by showing how Israel’s failure to attain righteousness through the law leads to the need for faith in Christ.*

*Isaiah 28:14-16 lays the foundation for understanding God’s provision of **a cornerstone, a metaphor for Christ**. Romans 9:30-10:21 elaborates on this theme,*

*contrasting the righteousness based on faith with that based on the law, and shows how Christ fulfills Isaiah's prophecy. **Paul's use of Isaiah highlights the continuity of God's plan for salvation through faith, culminating in Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, the essential foundation for righteousness and salvation.***

What's the **BIG IDEA** of Romans 9:30-10:21?

**God's sovereignty works with human responsibility**



What **light globe moment** did you have in this study?

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

*<sup>15</sup> And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

**Finish in prayer:** Give thanks to God that anyone who trusts in Jesus, the precious cornerstone of our faith, will never be put to shame! (2 Peter 2:6)

## Study 2 – God has not total rejected Israel

Romans 11:1-10

*(Sermon on 02-June-2024)*

**Before we begin:** Remind yourselves, from the last study, what reasons did Paul give for most of his fellow Jews not believing in Jesus?

*In the last study, we said that alongside the truth that God chooses or elects those He will save through faith in the Gospel; there is the truth that human beings are responsible for their rejection of Jesus and His Gospel.*

*In the last study, we saw that:*

- *The Jews pursued righteousness (to be right with God and approved by God) by obeying the law rather than pursuing righteousness by faith!*
- *The Jews saw Jesus as a stumbling block. The Jews had the wrong expectations of the Messiah; expecting a military saviour not a spiritual saviour! Jesus criticized the religious leaders which put them offside. Jesus' radical teaching was hard to take! Jesus being crucified was scandalous to the Jews! Jesus' inclusion of the marginalized didn't go down well with many!*
- *The Jews had a zeal for God without the correct knowledge (e.g. Paul himself who persecuted Christians before he became a Christian and Apostle)*
- *Most of Israel were obstinate and disobedient when God told them to have faith.*

### Read Romans 11:1-6

1. What question does Paul ask at the start of verse 1? Based on Romans 9 & 10, why is Paul asking this question?

*Paul asks the question: Did God reject His people?*

*In Romans 9 & 10 we've seen that God's sovereignty chooses those who will be saved and we've also seen that the Jews are responsible for their refusal to come to Jesus and believe in Him.*

*Paul's asking the question 'if the Jews are supposed to be God's people and many of them have rejected Jesus, is this because God has rejected the Jews?'*

*It seems like a reasonable question. After all the promises that God made to Abraham and David, and so many others throughout Israel's history, why doesn't God turn the Jews' hearts towards Jesus?*

2. In typical Paul style, he follows up with a short answer, which is?

*Paul's immediate short answer is NO!*



*The rest of Romans 11 details why the answer is no – and **Paul's main argument is: God has not rejected Israel, because Israel's unbelief is not total!***

3. Paul backs up his short answer with a series of arguments...

a. What is the “**Paul argument**” in verse 1? Read the verses that support this:

**Leviticus 26:44; 1 Samuel 12:22; Psalm 94:14; Jeremiah 31:7; 33:24-26**

***Leviticus 26:44** – Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the LORD their God.*

***1 Samuel 12:22** – For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own.*

***Psalm 94:14** – For the LORD will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance.*

***Jeremiah 31:7** – <sup>7</sup> This is what the LORD says: “Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, ‘**LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.**’*

***Jeremiah 33:24-26** - <sup>24</sup> “Have you not noticed that these people are saying, ‘The LORD has rejected the two kingdoms he chose’? So, they despise my people and no longer regard them as a nation. <sup>25</sup> This is what the LORD says: ‘If I have not made my covenant with day and night and established the laws of heaven and earth, <sup>26</sup> then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. **For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.**’”*

*From these verses – it's clear that **God will not completely reject His people** – because He always keeps His covenant promises. And God promises a remnant and to also restore their fortunes! **God has not given up on the Jews!***

b. **Ponder:** Knowing Paul's background, how is the fact that Paul is now a Christian, great evidence that God has not rejected His people?

*Paul points out that he himself, the major missionary of the early church, is a Jew! Paul is saying: 'look at me! I am a Jew, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin and I was very blasphemous and a hard-hearted person. How can we say God has given up on the Jews when he didn't give up on me? God took me and is using me in a mighty way to do His work!*

- c. What is Paul's "***election argument***" in verse 2a? Read the verse that supports this: **Romans 8:29**.

*Romans 8:29 - For those **God foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*

*Paul's argument is that God has predetermined or foreordained or **foreloved** to bring some of the Jews to faith in Jesus. Those that God has foreknown can't fail to believe in Jesus.*

- d. What is Paul's "***Elijah argument***" in verses 2 to 4? Read the verses that support this: **1 Kings 19:1-18**.

*In 1 Kings 19 – The prophet Elijah has just defeated 450 false prophets of the false God, Baal in 1 Kings chapter 18 on Mount Carmel. Now King Ahab who had witnessed what had happened on Mount Carmel, told his wife, wicked Queen Jezebel.*

*Jezebel vowed to kill Elijah by this time tomorrow.*

*Elijah was so afraid (even though God has just been with him at Mount Carmel) and he ran for his life (v3) – as far away as possible.*

*Elijah even prayed that he might die because he has had enough!*

*But God was kind to Elijah.*

*God provided an angel to give Elijah food twice.*

*Then Elijah travelled 40 days/nights to Mount Horeb (where Moses received the 10 commandments)*

*God asked Elijah what he was doing there (v9b)*

*Elijah complains that: He's been zealous for the Lord and that the Israelites have rejected God's covenant agreement with them – by disobeying God, tearing down God's altars and even killed the prophets – and now they want to kill Elijah too! So, God demonstrates His power and presence to Elijah.*

*God sends a wind, an earthquake, then fire – but God wasn't in any of them. Then came a gentle whisper from God. That's how God chose to speak to Elijah.*

*That's how God can speak to us too!*

*And again, God asks Elijah what he's doing here?*

*And Elijah gives the same reply!*

*Then God tells Elijah to back the way he came – then go to Damascus to anoint Hazael king of Aram and to anoint Jehu King over Israel and to anoint Elisha to be Elijah's successor.*

*Then God reassures Elijah in v18 – that Elijah's not the only one faithful to the Lord – he's not the only one who hasn't bowed their knee to Baal – and God says – He has reserved 7000 from Israel who are faithful.*

*Paul's argument is that Elijah was someone who thought that God had abandoned Israel and that no one believed in the one true God apart from him. But God contradicted Elijah's perception that he was the only faithful one as Paul points out in verse 4: **I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal***

*In other words, there has always been a “**faithful remnant**” – who are the spiritual Israel within the nation of Israel – even in times when it seemed that Israel had utterly rejected God, and He them!*

- e. What is Paul's “**grace argument**” in verses 5 and 6? Read the verses that support this: **Romans 9:27; 3:24.**

*Paul's argument is that just like Elijah was mistaken to think all Israel had been rejected; Paul says people in his day can make the same mistake and not realize that there is a remnant chosen by grace (v5) and not by works (v6). In fact, James tells Paul in Jerusalem that there are ‘many thousands’ of believing Jews (Acts 21:20)*

*Paul means this: what guarantees that there will always be a faithful remnant is – not because there will always be a set of good, decent people who believe in Jesus – but rather that there is always the grace of God; and it's God who preserves a remnant (just like He did in Elijah's day). Those who believe in Jesus – do so – entirely because of God's grace!*

*Romans 9:27* – Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, **only the remnant will be saved**.”

*Romans 3:24* - and all **are justified freely by his grace** through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

### **Read Romans 11:7-10**

4. What clear statement does Paul make in verse 7? Where has he mentioned this before? (cf. Romans 9:31 and Romans 9:18)

*Verse 7 reminds us what Paul said back in 9:6 – “not all who are descended from Israel are Israel”. By Israel, Paul means the nation. They sought righteousness so earnestly but didn’t obtain it; only God’s elect/chosen ones did! The others, Paul says, were hardened!*

*The process is like this: first, Israel sought the righteousness of God, but when confronted with the choice of getting it by “works” or as a “gift” (grace), the majority sought it by works; while the “elect” (chosen) accepted it as a gift. Then the majority were hardened!*

5. How does Paul demonstrate this principle of “**hardening**” in verse 8? Where does he quote from? (cf. Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10. See also what Jesus says in Matthew 13:13-15)

*To back up his statement about hardening; Paul quotes from the Old Testament to show how God has always treated Israel – **if they hardened themselves, he reinforced their hardening** and gave them “a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day”*

*Deuteronomy 29:4* – But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear

*Isaiah 29:10* – The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes (the prophets); he has covered your heads (the seers).

*Matthew 13:13-15* - <sup>13</sup> *This is why I speak to them in parables: “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. <sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: ““You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. <sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”*

6. What principle does Paul demonstrate is going on for Israel? Where does he quote from? (cf. Psalm 69:22-23)

*Paul quotes from Psalm 69:22-23 - <sup>22</sup> May the table set before them become a snare; may it become retribution and a trap. <sup>23</sup> May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.*

*The principle is that this “darkening of their eyes” is a “**retribution**” (punishment imposed for wrong committed – a punishment that exactly fits the crime!)*

*Hardening(darkening) is a fitting punishment for a proud spirit!*

*Pride and self-centeredness lead to hardness and lovelessness.*

*Rejection of God leads to rejection from God!*

*Though God executes the punishment, it is a natural consequence.*

*Note: Hardening does not necessarily mean bitterness, wrath or hostility towards Christianity and it does not necessarily mean harshness. A hardened person is someone who is completely **resistant** or **obtuse** to the Gospel of free justification by faith and the adoption as children of God.*

7. **Ponder:** Verse 7 shows a dynamic that happens today. For example, a person might be earnestly seeking God and conclude, rightly, that God is holy and majestic and cannot abide sin; but wrongly resist the idea of God’s grace because they see themselves as too bad to approach God. Such a person would have a problem that a convicted murderer can just say words of repentance and come to God just like a person who has worked for years to be good! Such a person would see a convicted murderer coming to repentance as an insult to a holy God! Discuss in your group.

*Such a person a) misses that we are all too bad to be saved and that’s why we need grace; b) misses that grace and mercy are undeserved, so neither the convicted murderer or us deserves it; c) misses that we can’t earn grace by working for it by saying “I’m better than a murderer, so I deserve to be saved; and d) God doesn’t grade sin – sin is sin and any sin separates us from God – the consequences for particular sins will be more severe – but all sin offends God!*

8. **Ponder:** How is it that many sincere religious people (whether Jews or Hindus or Buddhists or Muslims etc.) misguidedly reject the Gospel because it seems to weaken the need for human moral effort?



*Most other religions have the concept that paradise awaits those who please their god/gods. Whereas Christianity says – we can't please God perfectly – we need a perfect one to do that for us – and that's Jesus. Believing in Jesus – doesn't diminish our efforts to please God and live an obedient life. The difference is – in Christianity, good works, done out of heartfelt gratitude towards Jesus are done in response to being saved by Jesus; whereas in other religions, good works are done so that the person gains salvation!*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Romans 11:1-10**?

God preserves a remnant



What **light globe moment** did you have in this study?

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**Romans 11:5** - *So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.*

**Finish in prayer:** Thank God for His grace in sending Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2)

**Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke**  
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**Resources:**

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

Romans 8 to 16 for you (Timothy Keller)

The Message of Romans (John Stott)

Romans (Geoffrey B. Wilson)

Romans 1 to 8 (William Hendrikson)

The Epistle to the Romans (Floyd E. Hamilton)

The Epistle to the Romans (John Murray)