

Romans Lesson 14 Articles

Sulking in a cave forty days' and nights' journey away from danger and consumed with self-pity, Elijah learned that he was not a minority of one. He was not the last prophet in the land. If he had known the whole story, he would have realized that God had reserved for himself a significant number of Israelites that had not fallen into the worship of Baal.

So it was in his own time, said Paul. There remained a remnant chosen by grace (v. 5; cf. 9:27). This remnant (Jewish Christians) did not exist because of works they had done but because they had been selected by God on the basis of his own unmerited favor.⁸³ Grace and works are mutually exclusive principles. If the remnant had earned their position by their works, then grace would no longer have been grace. As a remnant "chosen by grace" there was absolutely no room for personal merit or meritorious performance. Although the seven thousand in the days of Elijah were certainly worthy of commendation for their faithfulness to Yahweh, in the case of the remnant in Paul's day there was nothing they had done that would ever merit their standing as God's people.¹

Romans 11:11–24) Paul in these verses is discussing Jews and Gentiles, not individual sinners or saints. In this section he proves that God has a dispensational purpose behind the fall of Israel; namely, the salvation of the Gentiles. Through Israel's fall, God was able to commit all people to disobedience and thus have mercy upon all! Gentiles do not have to become Jews before they can become Christians.

Paul argues that if the fall of the Jews has brought such blessing to the world, then how much greater will the blessing be when Israel is again restored! The restoration of Israel will bring resurrection to the world (v. 15). In other words, Paul was certain that there was a future for Israel as a nation. The teaching that the church today is God's Israel, and that the OT kingdom promises are now fulfilled in the church in a "spiritual way" is not scriptural. Paul looked forward to the day when Israel would be received into fullness of blessing as a nation.²

⁸³ Nygren points out that the existence of a remnant in any age depends not upon the character of the people but wholly on God's purpose and election. Thus " 'remnant' and 'election' (λεῖμμα and ἐκλογή) are interchangeable concepts. A 'remnant' is not just a group of separate individuals, taken out of a people doomed to overthrow; it is itself the chosen people, it is Israel *in nuce*" (*Romans*, 392–93).

¹ Mounce, R. H. (1995). *Romans* (Vol. 27, pp. 215–216). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (p. 397). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.