

Devotional Questions – Romans 11:13-36

1. *What did Paul hope to do by winning Gentiles to Christ (Romans 11:11-14)?*
2. *In what way did Paul make the most of his ministry? Are there similar ways for us today (Romans 11:13)?*
3. *Why is it foolish today for Christians to feel superior to non-Christians (Romans 11:17-24)?*
4. *What condition is necessary to remain in the 'tree of Israel' (Romans 11:20-23)?*
5. *What two things about God does Paul want us to consider (Romans 11:22)? Why?*
 - a.
 - b.
6. *How will 'all Israel' be saved (Romans 11:25-26)?*
7. *What is Paul's summary on God's dealings with Israel?*
8. *How can Paul's description of God encourage us to trust and praise Him (Romans 11:33-36)?*

Devotional Questions – Romans 11:13-36, Answers to Questions

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Book of Romans* pp 434-461 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* p 1502 for detailed comment.

1. *What did Paul hope to do by winning Gentiles to Christ (Romans 11:11-14)?*

Paul sought to save Jews thereby as he explains in Romans 11:14 **"If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them."**

Paul has explained **"provoke to emulation"** in Romans 10:19 **"...Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you"**. Paul is hopeful that if an unbelieving Jew sees saved Gentiles who worship God **"in spirit and in truth"** John 4:24 then **"falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth"** 1 Corinthians 14:25.

That is how it should be for any church to **"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without"** Colossians 4:5 on any vexatious issue e.g. personal, family, financial, social, spiritual etc. and to **"walk honestly toward them that are without"** 1 Thessalonians 4:12 i.e. what you see is what you get from this local body of believers.

Today's believer should therefore seek to ensure that **"by the grace of God"** 1 Corinthians 15:10 he fulfils 2 Corinthians 2:14 **"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place"**.

2. *In what way did Paul make the most of his ministry? Are there similar ways for us today (Romans 11:13)?*

Romans 11:13 states **"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office"** but Paul did not limit his ministry to Gentiles, focusing on them only after sustained Jewish resistance to **"the gospel of Christ"** Romans 1:16 as shown in Acts 18:4-6 **"And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."**

In principle, today's believer should simply pray for **"a door of utterance"** Colossians 4:3 wherever it is whatever the circumstances, as Paul did.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" Colossians 4:2-4.

3. *Why is it foolish today for Christians to feel superior to non-Christians (Romans 11:17-24)?*

The question is misleading in that Romans 11:17-24 refers to literal, physical Jews of the nation of Israel. Non-Christians as a whole are not part of the context. Paul is showing that today's believers *spiritually* acquire the blessings of God upon Israel as for example the Lord states through Moses and Peter respectively.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" Exodus 19:5-6.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" 1 Peter 2:9.

These blessings accrue to today's believer only by default, however, in that God is ever ready to re-bestow them upon repentant Israel even by taking them away from Gentile believers who become "wise in your own conceits" Romans 11:25 e.g. by professing that God is all through with Israel as a nation and/or that the church has replaced Israel as Paul states in Romans 11:22-23 "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again."

That is why Paul exhorts for today's believer "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith...Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" Romans 12:3, 16.

4. What condition is necessary to remain in the 'tree of Israel' (Romans 11:20-23)?

See *Question 3* and Romans 11:22-23, 12:3, 16 and note Peter's exhortation that is a further rebuke to any and all Gentile believers who become "wise in your own conceits" Romans 11:25 e.g. by professing that God is all through with Israel as a nation and/or that the church has replaced Israel. "...Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" 1 Peter 5:5-6.

5. What two things about God does Paul want us to consider (Romans 11:22)? Why?

Romans 11:22 states "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." The two things are therefore:

- a. God's severity.
- b. God's goodness.

These are attributes of God that are in perfect balance as Jeremiah explains and as today's believer should always keep in mind. "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" Jeremiah 9:23-24.

6. How will 'all Israel' be saved (Romans 11:25-26)?

Romans 11:26 explains how all Israel with respect to its faithful remnant i.e. "All the families that remain" Zechariah 12:14 will be saved at the Second Advent in that "...There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" as both Isaiah and Zechariah prophesied.

"Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" Isaiah 66:8.

"For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" Zechariah 3:9.

Today's believer should of course urge salvation upon unbelievers now as Paul exhorts.

"(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" 2 Corinthians 6:2.

7. *What is Paul's summary on God's dealings with Israel?*

See Romans 11:28-29 **"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance"** focusing upon the permanence of the nation of Israel in spite of their opposition to **"the gospel of Christ"** Romans 1:16 and note the following that reveals the Biblical distinction between Israel and the Church.

As **"the Holy One"** Isaiah 40:25, God is specifically **"the Holy One of Israel"** and distinct in that sense, with respect to His holiness and His special relationship with the nation of Israel, whom He is addressing, see Isaiah 40:27 **"Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?"**

See with respect to **"the Holy One of Israel"** 2 Kings 19:22, Psalm 71:22, 78:41, 89:18, Isaiah 1:4, 5:19, 24, 10:20, 12:6, 17:7, 29:19, 30:11, 12, 15, 31:1, 37:23, 41:14, 16, 20, 43:3, 14, 45:11, 47:4, 48:17, 49:7, 54:5, 55:5, 60:9, 14, Jeremiah 50:29, 51:5, 31 occurrences in all.

Psalm 147:19-20 show how God deals especially with Israel. Jeremiah 31:35-37, 33:19-21, 25-26 emphasise God's special relationship with the nation of Israel and its permanence.

"He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD."

"Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD."

"And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers."

"Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them."

Note that the Church is **"the body of Christ"** 1 Corinthians 12:27 not **"the seed of Israel."** That term is never applied to the Church anywhere in the New Testament. If Isaiah 53:10 is applied to the Church with respect to **"his seed,"** **"it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda"** Hebrews 7:14 but **"the seed of Israel"** must apply to *all* Israel such that **"all Israel shall be saved"** Romans 11:26. Note that Paul refers to **"all Israel"** as late as Acts 26:7 as **"our twelve tribes"** not only Judah, Paul himself coming from a different tribe, namely that of Benjamin, Philippians 3:5 **"of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin."** Paul's description of **"the seed of Israel"** or **"the stock of Israel"** is clearly separate from the Church.

8. *How can Paul's description of God encourage us to trust and praise Him (Romans 11:33-36)?*

Noting Romans 11:33 **"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"** today's believer for individual peace and strength should apply Isaiah 26:3-4 **"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."**