

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

## Israel's Rejection Not Total / Not Final Romans Chapter 11

- After explaining man's need for mercy and a call to faith in the first eight chapters, Paul then begins a discussion about Israel and how she fits into God's plan. Now when you read chapter 9 and the information in chapter 10 we discussed last week, a person may get the impression that God was finished with the Jews. They rejected His Holy Anointed Son, condemned Him to death and crucified Him. Now, "That's it! I'm bringing salvation to the Gentiles. I've had it with these stiff-necks in Israel." But Paul knew that wasn't true and he bluntly refuted the thought that God had given up on the unsaved in Israel.
- Many in Israel did accept Christ including Paul. We always like to point out the unbelief of the Jews, but keep in mind that all the first Christians were Jewish. When the twelve were endowed with the Holy Spirit, they immediately ran from the house into the street and began witnessing in numerous tongues. Acts chapter 2 tells us that very day three thousand were baptized and converted.
- It is clear that believing Jews had a future in God's plan along with believing Gentiles who entered the church. The two became one people (God's people) and Paul wrote of them all as spiritual descendants of Abraham because they shared the faith of the faithful Abraham. Regardless of birthright, Jew or Gentile, **believers** make up spiritual Israel. This doesn't mean that Paul loved only believers and the rest could go to hell. Far from it. In chapter 9 Paul said that he would give up his own salvation if it meant all of Israel would be saved. He loved Israel and he spent his entire life diligently working for the salvation of as many as possible. Verse 23 of chapter 11 Paul expresses his hope that unbelieving Jews would not continue in unbelief.
- Look at chapter 11. After all that Paul has said, the present condition of Israel, Israel's need for the Gospel, and Israel's rejection of the Christ and the Gospel, Paul tells us that Israel's rejection is neither total or final. Look in verse 1. Again as he's done throughout Romans, he begins his point with a question. He says, "So, has God thrown His people away?" And he gives the obvious answer. "Of course not." And he says, "I am an Israelite." God had not given up on him. He uses himself as evidence that God is still working with Israel. After all, Paul himself was a rebellious Israelite who rejected Jesus.
- Paul uses the story of Elijah and the Baal prophets' showdown in I Kings (I Kings 19) to make his point. In verse 2 he says that God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Now this could be interpreted one of two ways. It could mean that God would not reject those He knew would accept Jesus. Or secondly, that God knew only a portion of the nation of Israel would remain loyal and God chose to use them anyway. Regardless of the interpretation, God working through Israel does not guarantee the salvation of all Israel.
- Then Paul goes into the story of Elijah. After doing in all the prophets of Baal, Jezebel swore to kill Elijah so he fled for his life. He came to the point while sitting under the broom tree where he felt he was at the end of his rope and said,

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

“Lord, take me now.” He prayed to die. Basically, Elijah told God, “What’s the point? I’m alone in my faith and I’m tired of running.” But God says, “You are not the only one.” God tells the pessimistic Elijah that he is not the only true worshiper. The entire nation of Israel had not bowed down and become servants of Baal. In fact, seven thousand had remained loyal and God would continue to use the faithful.

- The point Paul is making with this is that regardless of how many rejected the Messiah, God would continue to use the faithful to accomplish the task of delivering the Gospel to the world. The fact is that at no time has the entire nation been true to the Lord. Look in verse 5. Paul is saying that we have the same things happening now (in Paul’s time). Just like in Elijah’s time, there is a remnant who is loyal to God and has not rejected Jesus. The very fact that this remnant exists, proves that God is continuing to work through His people. The history of Israel shows that God continued to use Israel even when only a small minority genuinely followed God. And Paul is reasoning that God will continue to do that.
- Notice also this remnant is saved by grace. They didn’t earn this status by keeping the law better than others. Israel’s main concern had always been trying to please God with good works. Unlike those in Israel who had rejected the truth of the gospel, this remnant had accepted God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Those who remain true to God do so through faith in Jesus Christ. God extended His grace when in His mercy, He sent His Son to deal with our sin.
- Look in verse 7. Paul drives this point home again. Israel didn’t find the right standing with God that it was looking for. Paul already told us why back in chapter 9 (9:31). Jews had a genuine zeal for God but they sought righteousness through the law and Paul calls it being blinded here in verse 7. Now, nobody knows more about the law than Paul. And here he gets support from the law and the prophets. He quotes from Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms.
- God has given them a spirit of stupor. They have eyes but they can’t see, ears but they can’t hear. Why? Disobedience separates us from God. The further we get from God, the more hardened and calloused our hearts become. We become less sensitive to God’s will. We can’t hear that still, small voice that Elijah heard (I Kings 19:12).
- He quotes from Psalms (69:22-23) in verses 9 and 10. He says their table has become a snare. This means that their blessings have turned into burdens. Paul uses their own Scripture to show them that their spiritual blessings should have led them to Christ. But, these blessings became a snare that kept them from Christ. He says here that it was a stumbling block. Their religious practices and observances became substitutes for the real experience of salvation. Let’s not thumb our spiritual suspenders just yet because many of us fall into the same trap today.
- Fortunately, this doesn’t have to be a permanent condition. We can change. We can turn away from disobedience and receive God’s mercy. Paul knew this first-hand. This is what Paul’s point is. Israel’s rejection was neither total nor final. Today the story is the same. The unbelieving can turn away from their rejection of God’s truth and receive His mercy.

# The Christian Arsenal

[www.christianarsenal.com](http://www.christianarsenal.com)

- Let's move on to verse 11. Paul begins again with a question. Have they (Israel) stumbled just to fall? Paul is asking, "Has Israel reached a point of no return? Is their hardened condition so bad that they have reached a point of spiritual ruin that they can't return from?" Paul says, "Absolutely not." There is future restoration for Israel. But because of their rejection, because of their turning from God, salvation came to the Gentiles.
- Now we Gentiles weren't just "fortunate" to be in the right place at the right time. Flip back to chapter 9:25-26. Read. Paul is quoting Hosea here. A promise that Gentiles would be saved. Isaiah chapters 11 and 60 both make it clear that Gentiles would share in Israel's kingdom upon Israel's rise and entering her kingdom. The problem is that Israel didn't rise. She fell. But God is faithful. He kept His promise and introduced a new factor. The church. In the church, believers, Jew and Gentile, are one in Christ. So does this mean that God has abandoned His kingdom program for Israel? Paul says here, "Of course not." Israel is set aside until the time comes for God to fulfill His plans for them.
- This is good news for everyone including Israel. Look in verse 12. The Jewish rejection of Jesus resulted in His death and resurrection. Even though the Jews didn't intend for it to be this way, their rejection help accomplish God's plan to bless all the families of the world. This produced an even greater blessing for everyone. And because of this, the numbers of Jews who would ultimately accept the gospel would be greater as well. Paul's hope is that through the success of the ministry to the Gentiles, Israel would be restored to obedience.
- Skip down to verse 25. As a non-Jew or a Gentile Paul tells us to not be wise in our own opinion, or in other words don't be conceited. Don't think that God has preferred them over the Jews or that they have earned His favor. This was the thinking that caused Israel to stumble. God is using the time of the Gentiles or the church age to bring about a change in Israel resulting in their salvation.
- The point is that God has not "washed His hands" of Israel because of their unbelief. His promises have not been invalidated. Look in 30. The final result is that everyone, Jew and Gentile, stand on equal footing before God. We are all sinners in need of mercy. Everyone who comes to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ is shown mercy. The gospel excludes no one.
- What has happened to Israel is all part of God's plan and His timing. Israel's rejection and hardening is neither total or final. Today God is building His church. Individual Jews are being saved of course, but when this present age has run its course and the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, God will once more deal with the nation of Israel.
- In Malichai God said "I am the Lord, I change not". God's calling of Israel cannot be changed or taken back. God will be consistent with Himself and true to His word no matter what men may do. His plans will not be aborted nor will His purposes lack fulfillment.