

THE BOOK OF ROMANS



12. God's Plan for Mankind

Introduction

As we have studied the book of Romans we have learnt that all men are sinners. The Apostle Paul shows that the gospel is the answer to man's need, and that it is by faith in Jesus Christ that men are made righteous before God, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. This is the theme of Romans chapters 1 to 8. As we come to chapters 9 to 11 Paul brings up another issue. He answers the question: How was it possible that God chose Israel and yet most of them rejected the salvation that was offered to them? In his answer he shows that this has resulted in Gentiles coming to Christ.

Scripture Reading: Romans 9 - 11

1. Paul's Burden for his own People 9:1-5

- ☉ In these verses Paul expresses his sorrow that most of his own people have rejected the gospel. What blessings does he say that his people had received? Romans 9:4-5
- ☉ Although they had received these blessings, who are the only ones who can become children of God? Romans 9:6-8, 10:9-13, John 1:11-13

(The children of promise are the true children of God. We become children of God by believing in Jesus and confessing that he is our Lord. It is the same for everyone.)

2. Paul's Prayer for his own People 10:1-4

- ☉ What was Paul's prayer for his own people? Romans 10:1
- ☉ Some say, "It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you are zealous in what you believe." Why is this attitude wrong according to Paul in Romans 10:2-4?

(Zeal can be misguided. When zeal is not based on truth it cannot save you.)

- ☉ How do the verses in Romans 10:14-17 challenge you personally? Share.

3. God's Grace to Israel 11:1-8

- ☉ What example did Paul give to show that God had not rejected his people? Romans 11:2-5

(He uses the example of how Elijah thought he was the only prophet who had not worshipped Baal, when in fact there were 7000 others who had not done so.)

- ☉ What can we learn from this example and the fact that God always has a remnant?

(It should encourage us when we feel alone and assure us that God's plans will always come to pass.)

- ☉ There are two groups of people mentioned in these verses – the remnant who were saved, and those who were hardened. We may think this is unfair! How does verses 5 and 6 help us understand this? Also see Romans 11:32 and Ephesians 2:18.

(No one deserves to be saved. If it wasn't for God's grace and mercy there would not even be a remnant. Rather than being unfair, it is showing us how good God is.)

4. God's Grace to the Gentiles 11:11-15

- ☉ What has been the result of the Jews rejection of the gospel? Romans 11:11-15

(It has enabled salvation to come to the Gentiles and bring reconciliation to the world.)

- ☉ What does the example of the olive tree teach us about our links with the Jewish people and what should our attitude be towards them today?

(The Jewish people are like the root of the olive tree and we are like branches grafted on. It was through the Jews that Jesus came. This gives us a unique link with the Jewish people and we should appreciate that and pray for their salvation.)

- ☉ There is a serious lesson we can learn from Israel in Romans 11:20-25. What difference should it make to our lives when we know this?

(We need to be careful not to take God's kindness for granted. He is kind, but he can also be stern if we are arrogant. If the Jews were cut off because they did not walk in faith, then we can be too.)

- ☉ God's calling is irrevocable! What does God have in mind for Israel according to 11:23, 26, 29, 31?

(God's desire is still that they will be saved.)

Conclusion

As we come to the end of chapter 11 the Apostle Paul gives us the full picture. In the past he called the Jewish people to be his special people, and at that time the Gentiles were excluded. However he has allowed Israel to reject his salvation so the fullness of the Gentiles could come in. When that time comes, the Jewish people will be gathered in too. This is God's plan so that he can show mercy to all men. Praise the Lord!



