

THE PARTIAL HARDENING OF ISRAEL

Request: “Does Rom.11:8-10 refer to Jews who did not believe? If so, are their eyes blinded and their ears shut until the end of the church age?”

The phrase, “I say then (lego / p.a.ind / oun),” is used twice to divide Rom.11:1-36 into two sections (Rom.11:1-10) and (Rom.11:11-36). These verses deal with Israel’s problem of “partial hardening until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in.” (Rom.11:25)

Paul refers this to as a mystery doctrine and issues a warning: “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation.” (Rom.11:25)

Our lesson text begins with a rhetorical question and answer: “I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!” (Rom.11:1) [emphatic disclaimer]

We will examine our lesson text by the following three homiletical points.

- Israel’s rejection (Rom.11:1-3) God’s response
- Israel’s remnant (Rom.11:3-6) God’s grace
- Israel’s reversionism (Rom.11:7-10) God’s discipline

This lesson will study SIX aspects of the partial hardening until the fullness of Gentiles comes in.

1. Three witnesses are called to help us understand the history of the partial hardening that result in lost of privilege in the plan of God.

Paul (Rom.11:1) I’m an Israelite that did not loss his place of privilege but found his place as remnant.
Elijah (Rom.11:2-5) Elijah felt he was one lone remnant but was told there was 7000.
David (Rom.11:7-10) What’s the historical problem? The answer is apostate reversionism.

2. Paul refers to this whole discussion as one of the mysteries of the church age.

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of **this mystery**, lest you be wise in your estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” (Rom.11:25)

A mystery (to musterion) doctrine was not explained in the OT Scriptures (Eph.3:3-6). Paul suggests the need for a “boldness of the mystery of the gospel.” (Acts 15; Gal.2)

“To be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (Eph.3:6)

3. The partial (apo+abl. of separation / meros) hardening refers to a segment of Israelites who do no believe that Jesus is the messianic Savior (Rom.9:1-3; 10:1-4). They are not considered remnant.

The Greek word for hardening is porosis (callous, scartissue). This is the result of maximum reversionism: “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day.” (Rom.11:8) This is also called stiff-necked in Ex.33:3, Acts 7:51, and Rom.11:10.

“But as for Israel He says, ‘all the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.’ (Rom.10:21)

4. Mosaic Law was a big trap for those with negative volition towards the gospel of grace salvation.

“But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened.” (Rom.11:6-7)

It was also a problem within Apostolic church (Acts 15:1, 5-11; Rom.3:20-24; Gal.2:16, 21).

Israel’s failure was to choose Law and works over faith and grace (Rom.9:30-33) – “They stumble over the stumbling stone.” (Rom.9:32)

There were three types of Jews: racial, religious, and remnant:

(Rom.9:6-8) “As He says also in Hosea, ‘I will call those who were not My people, ‘My people.’ And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, ‘you are not My people.’ There they shall be called sons of the living God.” (Rom.9:25-26)

Remnant and regenerate Jews will be part of the Millennium (Zech.2:10-13).

5. The fullness of the Gentiles is a calling out of Gentiles to salvation in the gospel of grace salvation in Jesus Christ (1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Eph.2:8-9).

This is a calling out of Gentiles until the full number is reached that has been ordained by God for the Church. This is the concept of branches were broken off so that Gentiles might be grafted in (Rom.11:19-24)

“Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear.” (Rom.11:20)

“And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?” (Rom.11:23-24)

6. Gentile CA believers are enjoying the spiritual blessings of the Jewish Covenants. Paul was in hopes that this would make Jews jealous enough to get saved (Rom.11:11-14; Gal.3:28-29; 1 Cor.11:25).

Jews and Gentiles are both saved by faith in the gospel of grace salvation and lose their pre-salvation status (Rom.9:24, 32; 10:12-15, 17; 11:6; Gal.3:8; 16, 28; 1 Cor.12:13).

“For there is **no distinction** between Jew and Greek; for the same **Lord is Lord of all**, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him.” (Rom.10:12)