



Jewish Believers and Christians working together for Israel's salvation since 1963



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Shalom my friend! This month we continue our look at Romans 9, 10 and 11. Last month we concluded chapter 10, as we witnessed Paul heading off any objections his readers might have, by using the literary device of creating an imaginary opponent whose challenges he swiftly met and overcame.

At the end of chapter 10, Paul was answering the pathetic charges made by his alter ego, who was trying to shift the blame for Israel's unbelief in Yeshua. Ultimately, Paul points out that God has always caused Israel to understand His love and devotion by making them jealous of how He demonstrates love toward other peoples, and that God's greatness and love are so easily understood that even those who have no idea who He is can still discover Him. Despite God's clear presentation of Himself to Israel and to all the peoples of the world, Israel remains an unbelieving and contradictory people—and yet, God never retracts His hands from reaching out to them for their salvation.

Not Pushed Away

Now, beginning to go on the offensive, Paul continues building his case in Romans 11:1-6.

I say *this*, then: "Did God push away His people?" Let it not be! Indeed, I also am a יִשְׂרָאֵלִי, Yis'r'eliy [Israelite], of the seed of אַבְרָהָם, Av'raham, of the tribe of בִּנְיָמִין, Bin'yamiyn [Benjamin]. God did not push away His people whom He knew beforehand. Have you not

known—in reference to אֱלִיָּהוּ, Eliyahu [Elijah]—what the Scripture says? how he pleads with God regarding יִשְׂרָאֵל, Yis'rael: "ADONAI, they killed your prophets, they dug down your altars, and I was left alone, and they seek my life." But what *did* the Divine Answer say to him? "I left

to Myself seven thousand men who did not bow a knee to בָּעַל, Ba-al." So then, also in the present time, there has been a remnant according to the choice of *unmerited* favor (and if by *unmerited* favor, then it is no longer by actions; otherwise, the *unmerited* favor becomes *unmerited* favor no longer).

At this point, Paul begins to argue back, challenging his imaginary opponent, "Did God push away His people?" Immediately insisting upon the impossibility of such an outrageous proposal, he proclaims, "Let it not be!" Then, to prove his point, Paul—as one whom God clearly has not rejected—points to his own pedigree. He affirms the details of his lineage as a Jew (see Acts 21:39, 22:3)—that he is an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, and, specifically, a

member of the tribe of Benjamin. With this ancestry, Paul's claim as one of God's people is beyond dispute, and he can therefore speak with expert authority on the subject. In no way, and at no time, did God ever push away His people from Himself. On the contrary, "He knew [them]

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Update from Israel

Not long ago, I heard from our ministry friend, Aviel, sharing about two ladies he met recently. He wrote, "We put on an art exhibition at a local retirement complex, using the paintings of Marc Chagall to share the message of Messiah from the Bible. Around thirty people attended, and it was a lovely atmosphere. I stood next to Chagall's painting of the Akedah (the binding of Isaac), which also depicts the ram caught in the thicket. In the corner of the painting, Yeshua is shown carrying His execution stake. While chatting with people about the painting, I met Larisa and Natalia, who told me their life stories. Both had lived in St. Petersburg, Russia, eventually made Aliyah, and then

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beforehand”; God’s special relationship with Israel as His set-apart people precludes any possibility of Him ever doing anything to cause a separation.

Preserving the Remnant

As further evidence of this, Paul goes on to invoke the prophet Elijah, and bring his point full circle. After Jezebel had killed all of ADONAI’s prophets (1 Kings 18:4), Elijah returned the favor by slaughtering all of her prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:40). Upon learning of this, Jezebel essentially put out a hit on Elijah (1 Kings 19:2), sending him into hiding. Then, in an intense encounter with God, Elijah tried his best to explain to Him that he was now the only one left in Israel who had remained faithful to Him and His covenant (1 Kings 19:10, 14). This is where Paul picks up the account, with Elijah saying, “ADONAI, they killed your prophets, they dug down your altars, and I was left alone, and they seek my life.” But what, Paul asks, did the Divine Answer say to him? “I left to Myself seven thousand men who did not bow a knee to בעל, Ba-al.” So not only was Elijah *not* alone, but ADONAI had preserved seven thousand others who refused to apostatize and turn their backs on God. Elijah had no idea.

And this is Paul’s point: just like it was with Elijah, who could not fathom the possibility that God’s people could escape total separation from God, “in the present time, there has been a remnant.” The Remnant may be hidden—even from the ones who ought to know better—but it is there, nonetheless... the fulfillment of God’s promise to never leave nor forsake Israel. In fact, not only has God *not* pushed away His people, but He is actively *preserving* His Remnant—His Messianic Jewish Remnant—not because of anything any Jew has ever done to deserve it, but “according to the choice of *unmerited* favor.” God validates His covenant with Israel by keeping it with her no matter what she does or doesn’t do.

And this, my friend, is what today’s Jewish people also need to hear and understand: that no matter how far they have wandered from their God, in His unmerited favor, He will

miraculously survived serious medical problems. I listened carefully, and then began to ask them questions about life and God.

“We had a great conversation, and I explained how God created everything perfect, how sin entered the world, and how God in His mercy offered a way by which we can be saved and make peace with God. I read Messianic prophecies from our Jewish Scriptures, and invited them to consider Yeshua’s claims for themselves. When I asked them if they wanted to make peace with God through Yeshua, our promised Messiah, you couldn’t have expected two more dramatically different responses from

two women with such similar lives! Natalia suddenly became very angry, saying ‘I know that Yeshua paid for my sin, but I don’t want it!’ and then stormed away. But Larisa looked at me and said, ‘Well, I want to make peace with God through Yeshua!’ and I was blessed to lead her in a prayer of repentance and faith. Praise God for His grace and mercy to Larisa, and let’s pray that Natalia will be convicted of her need for Yeshua’s salvation!”



Aviel, Natalia, and Larisa



never push them away. ADONAI is waiting patiently for His children to return

and join the Remnant that He faithfully preserves, and He has made a way to do this through His Son, the Messiah Yeshua. This is why MJMI needs not only your prayers, but also your financial assistance: so that we can continue the critical work of proclaiming this message. Your donation of **\$10, \$25, \$100 or more** will help us accomplish our mission and vision to see all Israel come to know their Messiah. You can use the enclosed card and envelope, or visit www.mjmi.org to send your much-needed donation today. And if you aren’t already, please consider becoming a ministry partner, so that I will know we can count on your support each month.

Let us continue to pray for the Jewish people, that they will hear the truth and become part of God’s Remnant of Israel, through their savior Yeshua!

For the sake of the Messiah,

Kevin Geoffrey, President, MJMI