

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

ROMANS LESSON 6 (Chapters 11-12)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12: 1). Welcome to our study of the Book of Romans. In Romans 11 and 12 the apostle Paul is going to discuss how Israel’s rejection of Christ is not necessarily final, as well as Israel’s need to live by basic Christian principles. The background of Romans 11 is actually found in Romans 9 and 10. In Romans 9 Paul showed that Israel had rejected Christ, and as a result would be lost. In Romans 10 the apostle showed that Israel was in desperate need of the Gospel. Some of these Israelites were therefore wondering what advantage there was to being an Israelite. Weren’t the Israelites “God’s chosen people”? In Romans 11 Paul makes two basic points. In the first half of the chapter he observes that Israel’s rejection was not **total**, while in the latter half he notes that Israel’s rejection was not **final**. Romans 11:5 discusses the fact that Israel’s rejection was not total, in that Paul said that God had preserved “a remnant” of Israel. “Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” Paul wants the Israelites’ to know that their election is **not** based on **works**. Rather, their election **is** based on **God’s grace**. As a result, a remnant of Israel will be saved. But who composes that remnant? The answer, of course, is that the remnant is composed of those who obey the Gospel, who put their faith in Jesus, and who are willing to confess Him as Lord and the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10). God has always preserved a remnant of those who were willing to obey Him. In the Great Flood, God preserved a remnant. Eight souls were saved because they obeyed the will of God. In the destruction of Israel by Assyria, and of Judah by Babylon, there was a remnant that was saved. Through that remnant God was working His purpose of bringing Jesus into the world. The remnant (the ones who obey God’s will) represents those who will be saved. In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus said,

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

We today need to be concerned that we are a part of the remnant, and that we obey the Gospel so that we are living the life that God wants us to live and doing what is right. Not everyone is going to be saved. Jesus said that “few” would be saved. Are we a part of that remnant?

Concerning Israel’s rejection not being total, Paul wants the people to understand that if Israel is going to be saved by the Gospel, then those who are part of the remnant will be saved by the grace of God and not by their own works. The idea of grace and works is a very important part of the Book of Romans, and in order to understand this section we need to have a proper understanding of that. Notice, then, Romans 11:6—“If by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.” In this verse Paul is showing that there is a

type of work that is mutually exclusive of grace. This is why he says that if salvation is by works, then it cannot be grace because the two are mutually exclusive. To understand the Book of Romans, and Paul's overall argument, you must understand the difference between two different types of works and how one of those excludes grace, while the other goes hand in hand with God's grace. In Romans 9, 10, and 11 the type of works that Paul is discussing is meritorious works. The Jews thought that just because they were children of Abraham they were automatically the children of promise and that they were automatically going to Heaven. In Luke 3:7-8 John the Baptist rebuked the Jews sternly when he said,

"Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones."

The Jews had the mindset that said, "We are children of Abraham, and we are automatically on the right path because of that, regardless of what we do or say." Paul's point was that meritorious types of works (such as going to the temple, offering sacrifices, and being of the correct lineage) were mutually exclusive of God's grace. It is not possible to have **both** meritorious works **and** God's grace. Today the modern application is something like the person who tries to say enough "Hail Mary's," go to worship enough, or give a certain high-dollar amount in order to try to earn or merit salvation. These types of things are mutually exclusive of the grace of God.

But there is a type of work—known as conditional works—that is not mutually exclusive of God's grace. These are things that we must do in order to be pleasing to God. James discussed these types of works when he said in James 2:18, "Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." If you said that you were a faithful child of God, and I said to you, "Prove it," how could you do that without doing something, and without meeting the conditions set forth in Scripture for a person who is a faithful child of God? Even then you would not have earned your salvation. We are still "unprofitable servants" (Lk. 17:10) because even after we have done all we have been commanded to do, we still have not "earned" our salvation. To be saved, we have to carry out the conditional works of God. In Luke 6:46 Jesus said, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation to all those who **obey** Him" (Heb. 5:9). So, in the context of the Book of Romans, Paul is writing to Israelites who think that they have "merited" their salvation. He said, "No, you have not! Salvation is by grace, and if you say it is by works then you have excluded the grace of God." We need to realize that we cannot earn our salvation, but that it is offered to us by God's grace. Nevertheless, God's grace must be combined with man's obedience. How do we know that? In Ephesians 2:8-9 Paul wrote, "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." We are **not** saved by meritorious works. But we **are** saved through works of faith. God's grace makes salvation **available**, and our faith is what makes it **accessible**. We must do what God says for us to do to be saved.

Along these same lines, Paul also wants the Israelites to realize that although their rejection of Christ is not total, it also does not have to be final. In Romans 11:7ff., Paul shows the Israelites that although they were taken out so that the Gentiles could be brought in (like a wild olive branch that had been grafted onto an olive tree), the Israelites could be brought back in **if** they were willing to obey the Gospel of Christ. That is the only way they could be saved. Paul wants the Israelites to realize that while God has a tender side, He also has a severe side. If we obey the Gospel, we see the tender side. If we fail to obey it, then we will be subjected to the severity of God. In Romans 11:22 we see the balanced nature of

God. Paul wrote, “Consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.” The idea is that those in Israel who rejected the Gospel and did not obey it will experience the severity of God. The goodness of God, on the other hand, will come to those who obey His Word. What a blessing and privilege this is for the child of God who can receive the goodness, mercy, love, and help of God. But if a person rejects God’s Word, then he receives the severity of God. When a person falls short of God’s will, it is a very severe thing. The writer of the Book of Hebrews said, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.... Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 10:31; 12:29). Today, you need to ask yourself if you are going to receive the goodness of God because you have obeyed the Gospel, or if you are going to receive the severity of God because you are not one of His faithful children.

Now I want us to think about Romans 11:26—a passage to which many people appeal who advocate Zionism in order to show that one day “all Israel” will be restored so that Jesus can return to Earth to set up His kingdom in order to save all of Israel. “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.’” Some people come to this passage and say, “It says that ‘all Israel will be saved.’” First, of course, we need to understand the language in this verse. The Greek word *houto* is used for the English phrase, “and so.” That word does not mean (as Greek lexicons and scholars will tell you) “as a result of,” but rather “in this manner” (which is how the English Standard Version translates it). Paul has just mentioned the Gospel of Christ, and is saying here, “In this manner” (that is, through the Gospel of Christ) all Israel will be saved. If Israel is going to be saved, that salvation will come only through obedience to the Gospel. Second, however, it is possible to examine the context and see that this is what Paul is discussing. In verse 26 we see that the Deliverer will come out of Zion and will take away ungodliness from Jacob. In verse 27 we see phrases such as “My covenant” and “I will take away their sins.” The Deliverer is Jesus, and comes out of Zion (from the tribe of Judah—Heb. 7:14) through Jacob. He is the Savior. Verse 27 tells us that it is in God’s new covenant where forgiveness of sins is granted. If Israel is going to be saved, it will be through Jesus and obedience to the Gospel so that Israel’s sins can be washed away at the point of baptism as Israelites become members of the Lord’s body. That is the very important point that the apostle Paul is trying to get across here. He is not teaching that we need to send millions of dollars every year to Israel so that its glorified status can be restored because Jesus will one day return there. Let’s be clear that the “Israel” that inhabits the Middle East today is no longer God’s people. Israel, as a nation of people, is no longer God’s chosen people. God’s chosen people today are Christians—those who have obeyed the Gospel of Christ and who are true to the will of God.

Moving away from this point, Paul gets down to the practical side of the Book of Romans when he notes that if people obey the Gospel, then God expects them to live a certain way. Look at Romans 12:1-2.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

If a person is going to obey the Gospel, this is how God wants that person to live. People are to live as “a living sacrifice.” To the Israelite mind, the idea of a sacrifice (something that goes to the altar and dies for someone else as a symbol of the taking away of sins) would be very clear. But Christians are not to be **dead** sacrifices. Rather, they are to be **living** sacrifices to God. If you really want to understand what it means to be a faithful child of God, this is one of the best examples. You must first sacrifice. You have to die to self.

In Luke 9:23 Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." You must realize that you were bought at a price, that you are not your own, and that you must glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are His (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Thus, there is the idea of sacrifice where we die to self but are living sacrifices in that we live for Jesus each and every day. Yes, we must die to self, but that is not the end. We must put the old man down and rise up to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4) so that we can live for Christ every day. Paul was the perfect example of this. In Galatians 2:20 he wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Have you died to self? If so, have you taken the next step by being a living sacrifice for Jesus every day? Notice that for a Christian, such is our reasonable service. Have you ever thought about that? In view of all that God has done for us, it is only reasonable and right that we should die to self in order to live for Him. That means, of course, that we must be conformed to this world no longer, but instead must be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We must change the way we think and act so that we no longer live in a worldly fashion. We must repent and do the things that God wants us to do.

As a born-again child of God (a Christian), there are certain things that we must come to understand. One of those is that in the body of Christ there are many members, but there is only one body. Notice what Paul says in Romans 12:4-5. "As we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." There are many members (people) in the Lord's church. All of them are not the same, but there still is only one body. Ephesians 1:21-23 teaches us that the body is the church. The two words—"body" and "church"—are synonyms (one and the same). If there is only one body, how many churches are there? We learn from Ephesians 4:4, Matthew 16:18, and 1 Corinthians 12:13 that there is only one church. If we are a child of God, then we are in the body of Christ. The Lord adds us to His church (Acts 2:47). God did not create a multitude of denominations. He created one church. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." We cannot be pleasing to God unless we are part of the chosen group—the church—that God set in place. Just as the Israelites were God's chosen people in the Old Testament, so the church is the place where God's chosen people reside today. Anyone who is willing to obey the Gospel can become a part of the church.

Concerning our lives inside the body of Christ, Paul says in Romans 12:9 that the responsibility that each Christian has is to hate the evil and love the good. This is a powerful passage concerning our relationship to evil and good: "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good." We must avoid hypocrisy, love the Lord, and love each other. In so doing, we abhor (passionately hate!) that which is evil. In 1 Thessalonians 5:22 we are commanded to "abstain from every appearance of evil." But it is not enough just to hate the evil. We also must cling to (be glued to) the good. We are to run away from the evil, just as Joseph did in Potiphar's house when Potiphar's wife tempted him. But running away from evil, in and of itself, will not make anyone a faithful child of God. Rather, we must flee youthful lusts and sin (1 Tim. 6:11). Plus, we also must run to and cling to that which is good. There is a sense here of having no association with sin. And there is a passionate plea to glue ourselves to that which is right. A person can come out of the world of sin, but if that person does not quickly become associated with and involved in good things, it is likely that such a person would return to the world. We therefore need to not only abhor evil, but also to cling to that which is good by being involved in the good works of the church and do what God wants us to do.

Another basic principle for Christians (and there are many in Romans 12) is found in verse 17. What should be the attitude of Christians toward those who do evil to them? Should we adhere to the old adage that suggests, “Don’t get mad; get even”? No, that is not what the Bible teaches. Notice Romans 12:17—“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.” Suppose someone curses you. Should you curse them back? Suppose someone hits you. Should you hit them back? No, Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek. Suppose someone cheats you in a business deal. Does that give you the right to do them wrong in a business deal? No. We are to repay no one evil for evil, and have regard for good things in the sight of all men, especially those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:9-10). In Matthew 5:39 Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek, to go the extra mile, and to do whatever we can to do right, even to those who may harm us. The adage, “Don’t get mad; get even!,” is not an adage that a Christian must ever use. Rather, we are to use our godly talents to bring evil people to the Lord. One way to do that is by doing good unto those who might do evil to us. In Romans 12:20 we are taught that if we do good to those who do evil to us, it is like pouring coals of fire upon their heads because it can shame them, make them realize how ungodly they have been, and help them see that we are trying to do right.

In the context of this, the idea of vengeance arises. Let’s say that we do not get mad in order to get even, but we still are angry about what has happened to us. Should we want someone who has treated us badly to have calamity fall upon them? Should we look for things that will cause them harm or pain? No. The Bible says that vengeance does not belong to us. Rather, it belongs to God. In Romans 12:19 Paul said, “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” We are not to give place to wrath in our lives. We are not to be people who are so motivated by anger that we go out and look for opportunities to do evil. We must not want to take a person into the alley and beat him up because he did us wrong. We may be upset and angry, but we still must try to do good. The solace that we have in all of this is “‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” If someone does us wrong, we need to stop and realize that we might be able to save that person’s soul by doing good unto them. We also can take solace in the fact that on the Day of Judgment, if the person who has done us wrong has not obeyed the Gospel, then God, the Great Judge of all men, will repay evil for evil. “‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” We do not have to worry about “getting back at people” or doing them harm. Instead, we must want them to be saved, change their evil ways, and go to Heaven. But if they continue in their evil state and continue to do harm to God and His cause, then God will take care of those people. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.... Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 10:31; 12:29). One day God, according to His wrath, will deal with those people who have not obeyed the Gospel. In Matthew 25:41, Jesus said to the slothful and wicked, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” There is a place reserved for the devil and his angels, and for those who do that which is not right. Hell is a place for people with whom God is angry. Does God want all men to be saved? Absolutely! But by the very nature of their actions or inactions, God will punish those who do wrong. We do not have to worry about taking vengeance on anyone because God will deal with that.

Instead of rendering evil for evil, Romans 12:21 teaches us that Christians must “not be overcome by evil,” but must instead “overcome evil with good.” We are not to be overcome by evil. We must not let someone else’s evil overtake us. We must not let sin creep into our lives. We must not get caught up in the world. Instead of letting evil overcome us, we as Christians must stand up as soldiers of Christ and do battle against evil. We overcome evil not with military power or with more evil, but “with good.” Good always will be victori-

ous over evil. Jesus, the greatest Man to ever live, defeated the devil (Heb. 2:14). God's people, even though in the minority, have always defeated their evil enemies when God was with them. The same is true for us. Instead of getting caught up in evil, Paul wants us to realize that we may have to suffer as a Christian. Someone may bring evil to us or harm us. But we must understand that God is in control, and that good always will triumph over evil. How true that is! If we live a good Christian life, even though there may be many people around us who are evil, we can be sure that our good is going to overcome evil because ultimately we will be saved.

Are you a child of God? Have you obeyed the Gospel? Do not be like the people of Israel who rejected God. Fortunately, their rejection was not total or final. There was still a chance for them to be saved. And there is still a chance for you, too. Have you obeyed the Gospel of Christ? Are you one of God's chosen people? You can become a Christian today by doing what the Bible says. The Bible makes it abundantly clear what a person must do to obey the Gospel. A person must be willing to hear the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Once a person has heard the Word, he then must be willing to believe by placing his confidence and faith in Christ. Hebrews 11:6 says that "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." A person then must be willing to change his life. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." That is the idea behind repentance. We change our will, which then leads to a changed way. Jesus said, "Unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:5). A person then must be willing to confess that Jesus is the Son of God. Romans 10:10 says, "With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." A person must make the good confession (Mt. 10:32-33). But realize, too, that in order to become a child of God, to be one of God's chosen people, and to become a member of the body of Christ, a person must be baptized for the remission of sins. In Acts 2:36 Peter said, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." The next verse says that the people were cut to the heart and cried out, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" The answer in Acts 2:38 was, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The Bible then tells us in Acts 2:41 that "those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." Acts 2:47 then says, "The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." Those who obeyed the Gospel were taken out of the world by the Lord and made a part of the church, the chosen people of God. Have you obeyed the Gospel? We love you and want you to go to Heaven. If we can help in any way, feel free to contact us.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR ROMANS LESSON 6 (CHAPTERS 11-12)

1. According to Romans 11:5, what had God preserved of the people of Israel?
2. According to Romans 10:9-10, who composes the “remnant of Israel”?
3. How many people, according to Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 7:13-14, will compose the remnant?
4. By what, according to Paul’s teaching on Romans 11:6, will those who compose the remnant **not** be saved?
5. By what, according to Paul’s teaching on Romans 11:6, **will** those who compose the remnant be saved?
6. In Luke 3:7-8, what did John the Baptist urge the Jews of his day to produce in order to show that they were a part of the remnant that would be saved?
7. According to James 2:18, how is faith evinced in a person’s life?
8. According to Paul’s teaching in Romans 11:22, who will see the severity of God?
9. According to Paul’s teaching in Romans 11:22, who will see the goodness of God?
10. In Romans 11:26 Paul says that “all Israel will be saved.” Who is the “Israel” of whom Paul is speaking?
11. In Romans 11:26, who is “the deliverer” of whom Paul writes?
12. In Romans 12:1-2 what did Paul urge people to do?
13. In Romans 12:1-2, what did Paul urge people **not** to do?
14. According to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, to whom do our bodies and spirits belong?
15. How, according to Acts 2:47, is a person placed into the church?
16. According to Ephesians 1:21-23, what word is a synonym for “the church”?
17. According to Romans 12:4-5, how many bodies are there?
18. According to Ephesians 1:21-23, Romans 12:4-5, and Matthew 16:18, how many churches are there?
19. In Romans 12:17 what did Paul admonish Christians **not** to do?
20. In Romans 12:19, what did Paul admonish Christians **not** to do?
21. In Romans 12:21, what did Paul admonish Christians **to** do?