

## God's Plan for the Jews, Part 1

Laura had a special surprise for her son, Buddy. On her lunch break she ran by the ice cream shop, bought Buddy's favorite sundae, and took it to his daycare. She knew he would be thrilled.

The daycare director met Laura at the door. "I was just about to call you," she said. "Buddy started a fight and hit another boy so hard it made his nose bleed." There was no doubt about it, Buddy beat up the most unpopular, rejected boy in the daycare. Laura scolded her son, telling him, "I was bringing you a special treat, but now I find that you've been fighting."

"I don't want your old ice cream; I want to go home!" Buddy yelled. Laura took the sundae, Buddy's very favorite treat, and gave it to the boy Buddy hit. "You're right," Laura said, "you don't want it and you don't **deserve** it, either. This little boy, who you treated so badly, gets to enjoy **your** ice cream sundae."

What does this story have to do with this week's lesson? Read the following verses to find out.

**Rom. 11:1** "I say then, Hath God \_\_\_\_\_ away His \_\_\_\_\_?"

Why would Paul ask such a question? Remember that the earlier chapters of Romans proved that **everyone is a sinner** and **no one can be justified by doing religious activities** (such as living by the Jewish Law). **Justification comes only by faith in Christ**; but most Jews rejected Jesus Christ while many Gentiles (non-Jews) accepted Him. One might think these facts showed that God had completely rejected His people (the Jews). Paul insisted this was not so, and used his own salvation (since he was a Jew) as proof.

**Rom. 11:2** Has God cast away His people (the Jews)?

**Rom. 11:3** Paul reminded them of Elijah (1 Kings 19:10-18). What did Elijah tell God?

**Rom. 11:4** How did God answer Elijah's concern?

**Rom. 11:5** "At this present time also there is a \_\_\_\_\_ according to the election of \_\_\_\_\_."

Just as there was a faithful remnant in Israel in Elijah's day, there was a remnant of Jews in the First Century who believed in Jesus Christ; and there still is today. God has **not** cast away the Jews; in fact, He still plans to save many Jewish people.

**Rom. 11:6** Does salvation come by grace or works?

**Rom. 11:7** Israel tried to be right with God through their rituals and sacrifices. Did they obtain that?

Who actually obtained it?

**Rom. 11:8** This verse quotes **Isaiah 29:10**. What did God give Israel?

Why did He do this?

Temporary spiritual blindness has come upon the Jews (Rom. 11:25). The remaining verses explain why.

**Rom. 11:9-10** These verses quote **Psalm 69:22-23**. What had become a snare to the Jews?

What became darkened?

**Rom. 11:11** What did Israel's spiritual fall bring to the Gentiles?

Paul hoped the salvation of the Gentiles would make the Jews jealous so they, too, would turn to Christ.

Verse 12 says Gentiles benefit from the Jews' rejection of Jesus!

**Rom. 11:13** What was Paul's role?

**Rom. 11:14** The word **emulation** means jealousy. As in verse 11, Paul hoped the salvation of the Gentiles would make the Jews jealous. What was his ultimate goal?

**Rom. 11:15** If the Jews' rejection of Jesus means the salvation of the world, what will their turning to Christ be?

**Rom. 11:16** The few Jews (such as Paul and the apostles) who were saved in the First Century were like first fruits, which guaranteed a greater harvest to come. God plans to save **many** more Jewish people.

**Concluding Thoughts:** Think back to the story at the beginning of this lesson. Buddy displeased his mother and rejected her gracious gift. As a result, his gift was given to the other boy, whom he disliked and abused. Buddy missed the gift that could have been his, and it was given to another. But even though he rejected his mother's gift, Buddy was still Laura's beloved child.

Similarly, the Jews are God's chosen people. He has a covenant relationship with them and still plans to save many of them. The Jewish people are temporarily blinded, however, to the truth that Jesus is their long-awaited Messiah. Their rejection of Jesus has led to many Gentiles receiving new life in Christ.

Living out the Gospel includes understanding that God has a plan for the Jews. Gentile believers should love, respect, and pray for the Jews. Thank God that He saved you. Do you know someone who is Jewish? Pray that he or she will recognize Jesus Christ as their promised Messiah and receive the wonderful gift of salvation.

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**Project:** Memorize **Romans 10:17**. Ask God to save many Jews.