

Parson to Person

ROMANS 11 PART 11

“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ‘LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life’? But what does the divine response say to him? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And 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.

What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: ‘God has given them a spirit of stupor eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day.’ And David says: ‘Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.’

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.’ Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore 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. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 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; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’ Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! ‘For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?’ ‘Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?’ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:1–36 NKJV).

Paul having told the Romans that there was a danger of being “cut off” has encouraged a thorough study on the doctrines of eternal security. We have discussed affirmations, problem verses, problem people (licentiousness and false teachers) and now are ready for a discussion on chastening.

Inasmuch as the doctrines of eternal security inspire licentiousness in some persons (professing and possessing believers), and inasmuch as I teach and believe that there is no future condemnatory judgment for the genuine believer, I do believe that there is a present accountability for Christians (lay and leader alike). That accountability often comes by way of a grief in the soul. However, for the stubborn, God may use either

circumstantial or interventional chastening. Either way, the Lord will direct His own and bring about a greater glory for those He is molding.

The author to the Hebrews wrote, *“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it”* (Hebrews 12:5–11 NKJV). The citation is inspired by a passage in the Proverbs where we read, *“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her”* (Proverbs 3:11–18 NKJV).

The fact is God desires great things from His people—and is at work in and through us for His own good pleasure. For this reason, He died for us, redeems us, and sets us apart for a specific purpose—glorification: His and ours. The believer is not to fear judgment, but should, in all honesty and integrity, reverence the Lord, recognizing that our day-to-day temporal actions are important. For this reason Paul wrote, *“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified”* (1 Corinthians 9:27 NKJV). This disqualification here is not a disqualification for heaven but is indeed a potential disqualification from ministry. Therefore, Paul aims to live in such a way as to glorify the Lord—and bring glory to and for others.

Moreover, as a leader, Paul understood what the author to the Hebrews suggested when he wrote, *“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you”* (Hebrews 13:17 NKJV). Here the author not only encourages the Hebrews to make the job of the leaders easier by willful submission but also points out that the leaders themselves give account for the work they do and the way they do it.

I realize that many may suggest that this accounting might occur in eternity future (and in some ways they may be correct), but I would suggest that we understand this as applying to the present future—here and now. Leaders who misbehave will either repent of error or face the potential of a “present future” chastening of the Lord. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are all capable of failure and disaster. Chastening may indeed be needed when leaders (or the laity) refuse the gentle and clear guidance of the Lord. If so, it is to aid in the furtherance of what God intends for the genuinely redeemed—His people.

Love you all,
Pastor Paul