

ROMANS

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSTITUTION

STUDY TWENTY-SIX

The Jews: Forgotten or Set Aside?

Romans 11:1–14

God has a chosen remnant. Just because God isn't working in the majority doesn't mean He is not at work. God likes it when the odds are against us. Why? Only God can do the impossible.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE Jews fill a unique role in human history. Of all the people in the ancient world whom God could have chosen, He chose to make a covenant with Abraham and his descendants. The miraculous offspring of an elderly, childless couple became the nation of Israel, through whom God promised to bless the world.

Think about Israel's resilience despite many wars and much bloodshed and their perseverance through persecution. Consider the marvelous truths God communicated through Jewish patriarchs, prophets, and kings. Through the Jews came the Scriptures—the account of creation, the fall of humanity, and God's amazing plan to redeem the world and make all things new. The most elegant poetry of praise flowed from Jewish pens. And it was a Jewish virgin who gave birth to the one and only Savior, Jesus—echoing the Old Testament theme, “salvation comes through the Jews” (John 4:22).

Yet, today, we look through the ranks of Christianity, and the Jews are conspicuous by their absence. Indeed, some Jews claim *Yeshua* as Messiah, but their number is only a tiny fraction of the billions of Christians in the world. Why so few? Is God done with the Jews? In Romans 11, Paul declares, “God has not forgotten Israel.” The God of impossibilities who parted the Red Sea to rescue the Israelites has made a path of victory for His chosen people.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll pay close attention to Paul's strong evidence that God has preserved a remnant—and that His plan of restoration for the nation of Israel, as promised, will eventually come to pass. God can do the impossible!



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Think about God’s character as you approach Him. Remember the greatness of His power, the depths of His love, the steadfastness of His goodness, and the permanence of His faithfulness. Then, boldly tell Him how you’re counting on His strength to sustain you and relying on His steadfast love to satisfy your soul as you glean more precious truths from Romans.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

When God called Abram to leave his country, his people, and his father’s household, He promised that He would make him a great nation and would bless him—indeed, all people would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:1–3). Further, He promised to “give this land,” the land of Canaan, to him and his descendants (12:7 NASB).

God’s immediate *YES* to His promise came through Abraham’s son, Isaac. But the depth of human sin led to Israel’s failure. Just as we needed a greater Adam, we also needed a greater Isaac. So God sent the Messiah! Mary exclaimed, “He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever” (Luke 1:54–55).

According to Paul, God’s rescue and righteousness has been made available to both Jews *and* gentiles through faith in Jesus (Romans 1–8). But “What happened to the Jews?” To explain his answer, in Romans 9, Paul looked to the past, detailing *God’s selection* of the Jews. In chapter 10, he examined the present, explaining the *Jews’ rejection* of the Messiah. Now, chapter 11, Paul points to the future, anticipating *God’s ultimate plan* for the Jews.



Observation: Has God Permanently Rejected the Jews?

Read *Romans 11:1–14* carefully. Observe how Paul addressed the implications of the Jews’ rejection of Jesus.¹ Paraphrase Paul’s two questions in *11:1 and 11:11* and his responses.

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Paul gave four pieces of evidence to prove that God has not set aside the Jews forever. Let's look at the reasons that show God's plan for Israel.

Personal Reason—Romans 11:1

Paul presented himself—a Jewish Christian—as the first piece of evidence. Through Paul, how did God prove that He had not rejected the Jews according to *Romans 11:1*?

If God were finished with all the Jews when they rejected Him at the cross, Paul would not have been born again. But God has not rejected all.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Theological Reason—Romans 11:2

Paul pointed to God's foreknowledge of Israel in *Romans 11:2* as the second line of evidence proving that God has not forgotten His people. State his argument in your own words.

Biblical Reason—Romans 11:2–6

In *Romans 11:2–6*, Paul pointed to Elijah as an example of God's promise to the Jews. Elijah thought he was the only one serving God faithfully. What did God tell Elijah? What is Paul's comparison between the remnant in Elijah's day and the future faithful?

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Contemporary Reason—Romans 11:7–10

Paul's fourth piece of evidence in *Romans 11:7–10* is God's present discipline of Israel because they rejected His Son. What words and phrases did Paul use to describe Israel's hardened hearts? How is God using Israel's temporary discipline to benefit gentiles according to *11:11–14*?

Because the Jews have been set aside, the gospel turned to the gentiles—so undeserving, so irresponsible, so lacking in any spiritual roots—to be invited into this family of God based on faith in Christ. Magnificent!
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: God Has Chosen a Remnant!

God has not rejected “His people whom He *foreknew*” (Romans 11:2 NASB, emphasis added). Paul used the same Greek word translated “foreknew,” *proginosko*, in reference to our salvation:

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son. (8:29 NASB)

What is the connection of God's foreknowledge of His people with the hope of Israel's future restoration?

If He chose them, they're still His chosen, even though they don't choose to follow Him in return. God doesn't change because we change toward Him. That's a very common misunderstanding. God's heart is still for the Jews. He still sees them as a chosen people, but they have been temporarily set aside.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Paul described this chosen group as “a remnant according to God’s gracious choice” (Romans 11:5 NASB). In the article, “*Remnant*,” in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* available at biblegateway.com, read the section titled, “Theological Use.” How does the theological use of this term deepen your understanding of how God operates with Israel and with us?

Not only are we among the remnant—gentiles who have been brought in by God’s grace and favor—but also the Jews who have believed, those who have followed Christ. To the surprise of a number of people, there are pockets of converted Jews all over the world, even in Jerusalem. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

God has temporarily set aside Israel in His eternal plan to open the door of salvation to the gentiles and provoke Israel’s jealousy. Read *Romans 11:11–14* in the NLT, MSG, and J. B. Phillips translations. What illustration can you use to explain these verses to someone?

What is the future of the Jews? When this blindness is lifted, when this temporary time of being set aside ends, what do they have to look forward to? The Jews, once again, will be in their land under their own flag, exalting the Messiah who will be reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The God Who Does the Impossible

God promised Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age, and He did the impossible with the birth of Isaac in *Genesis 21:1–5*. What can we learn from God’s response to Sarah’s laughter in *18:10–15*? How does His response support Paul’s argument about Israel’s future?

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Jesus Christ will be enthroned as the leader of the world in the city of Jerusalem guiding the affairs of the world. There will be a perfect environment for a thousand uninterrupted years. Satan will be bound, and the absolute fulfillment of God's promises to Israel will take place. All of that is yet future. Why? God promised it. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

For more evidence on God's ability to do the impossible, interview the shepherd boy who slew a giant with a slingshot or his best friend who killed twenty Philistines only with his armor bearer (*1 Samuel 17:16–51; 14:1–15*). What lessons can we learn from the common faith that David and Jonathan had in God?

See how God turned an enemy of Christianity into a zealous evangelist in *Acts 8:1–4; 9:1–22; 1 Timothy 1:12–16*. How do these passages teach us that nothing is too hard for God?

Wherever you may find yourself today, the good news is that God is there. And God is at work. As difficult as your situation may be, it is not impossible to Him. That word is not in His vocabulary. He is working things out according to His will which includes His timing. Our responsibility is to wait and trust Him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Wait and Trust God!

Think about all the biblical principles that you've gleaned from this Bible study about who God is and how He loves it when the odds are against Him. What current impossible situations are you facing? How has the Holy Spirit used this passage to strengthen your faith?

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Sometimes, I'm convinced that God lets things go on until they become impossible for us to resolve them, and that's when He steps in. And often when He steps in, He does the most remarkable things and you think, Ah! Why did I ever think I could have stepped in and done something better than that?
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

You may be going through a difficult waiting period and feel shelved or alone, like Elijah. What promises from Scripture can help you navigate these tough times? What daily or weekly routine can you develop to remember that, unlike the world, God always keeps His promises?

God has not closed the book on the Jews. In the future, He will write the final chapter of the Hebrew saga when He restores Israel to their original place of favor, just as He promised in the Old Testament. God always keeps His promises!



A FINAL PRAYER

Faithful Father, thank You for Your work in my life! Help me to remember when You bring me to a place where I cannot see my way through, that's when You do Your great work! I count on You to keep Your promises, not only to Your chosen people but to all who've put their faith in Your Son, Jesus! I love You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2007, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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