

# BIBLE & BAGEL

## Romans – Our Common Faith

26 February 2016

There are those in the Christian world who say that God no longer has a place for Israel and because of their rejection of Messiah, He has also rejected them. In today's study we see that although the Jews have rejected Messiah, God has not rejected them. So what is God's plan to save the Jews and what is our role in it? Read on ...

### *Romans 10:14-21*

*14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"\* 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?" 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

*18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world."\* 19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation." 20 But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me." 21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people." NKJV*

In verse 13, Apostle Paul says that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, this is the principle stated in the Word of God, in Joel 2:32. Then he uses a question and answer method to discuss the situation of the Jews. He says they can't believe unless someone preaches to them. He quotes Isaiah 52<sup>i</sup> where God speaks about how His people (Israel) are oppressed and those who bring good news (gospel) to them are beautiful. We know this because at the end of Isaiah 52:7 speaks specifically about proclaiming the good news to "Zion" meaning Israel. He makes this point to show that faith can only come when someone hears the Word of God.

But he says that Israel has heard the good news, but Israel did not respond correctly. He first quotes Deuteronomy<sup>ii</sup> where God said that He would make Israel jealous by using the Gentiles and then he quotes Isaiah who speaks even more severely saying that that people who did not know God and did not seek for Him would find Him, whereas Israel who he called as His own people did not respond to His call but instead become rebellious<sup>iii</sup>.

Indeed, a few time in the Bible God called Israel, rebellious and stiff-necked but this does not mean that God does not love them and God no longer has plans for them. God says He loves them with an everlasting love, if we look back at the end of chapter 8 we see Apostle Paul saying that nothing can ever separate us from the love of Christ this also applies to the Jews, what they do does not make God stop loving them.

The point that God is making here is that He loves the Jews so much that to bring them to salvation He extended His salvation to the Gentiles. He did this so that Jews who witnessed the Gentiles' love for their God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,



would wonder, become jealous and turn back to him. God never wanted to reject Israel. Our role then as Gentiles who have believed in the Messiah and God of Israel is to have a heart for Israel and desire to see them come to salvation by faith.

### *Romans 11:1-6*

*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. 2 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, 3 "LORD , they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? 4 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."\* 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 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. NKJV*

Now Apostle Paul begins to address the Gentiles who say that God has totally rejected the Jews, he uses the style of the Pharisees of asking a rhetorical question and then answering it himself. He asks if God has rejected His people and some were thinking; his immediate answer to that was an emphatic NO! He points to himself as an example, identifying himself as being an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham and of the tribe of Benjamin. He points to the example also of Elijah<sup>iv</sup> who thought that all God's faithful people had been killed when in actuality God had hidden seven thousand of them. So he says that at the time of his writing there was a faithful remnant of believing Israel who had been saved by grace and not by works. The reason that Apostle Paul uses two examples here; himself and Elijah is because of the scripture that says "by two or three witnesses a matter is established"<sup>v</sup> so he uses two to support his argument.

One interesting point that Apostle Paul makes here is when he says that God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew, if we go back to chapter 8 we will find that it says that those God foreknew, He also predestined for glory. So within Israel at that time there was a group of people whom God was using to display His glory, the remnant, what we call today the Messianic Jews, who believe in Messiah and are saved by faith.

God's work is always larger than we think, sometimes we may feel like we are alone standing for the things of God and trying hard to do His will. This is exactly what Elijah felt like when he complained to God in the cave, we do not realize that God has many more of His people that we do not know about. This is especially true when we stand for God's purposes with Israel sometimes we may feel alone but God has people hidden away that we don't know about. Our task is simply to be faithful to what He has called us to do and if we are He will ultimately display His glory through us.

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<sup>i</sup> Isaiah 52:7

<sup>ii</sup> Deuteronomy 32:1

<sup>iii</sup> Isaiah 65:1

<sup>iv</sup> 1 Kings 19

<sup>v</sup> Deuteronomy 19:15

