

ROMANS 11:6-10

Paul makes a definitive statement contrasting grace and works, which is one of the main themes in Romans 9 - 11. The question is then posed, "What then?" He then contrasts the unbelieving nation as a whole with the remnant who have believed.

What about the subject of the "election" and the "blinding" of the rest? Is this a pre-determined choosing of some and a judicial blinding of the rest as some tell us? Or, is a philosophical system determining the understanding of these verses, rather than an exposition of them?

6 **And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.**

This verse helps clarify the previous verse: *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."*

1. Verse 5 doesn't say "...there is a remnant **according to election**..."

It says "there is a remnant **according to the election of grace**."

God chose that people (in this case, verse 5, Jewish people) would be part of the remnant based on grace and not works.

Romans 9:	30	What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.
	31	But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.
	32	Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;
Romans 10:	3	For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness , have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.
	4	For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.
	5	For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law , That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.
	6	But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)
	7	Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)
	8	But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; Bold added

The "election of grace" is that God chose that people will be saved by grace and not their own efforts.

2. Verse 6 builds on the Romans 9 and 10 verses and presents a definitive statement and contrast between grace and works.

Israel (nationally) did not receive righteousness because they tried to attain it through works. Gentiles collectively) did attain righteousness because they sought it through faith (grace). This is a general truth as some Jewish people have believed (grace) and some Gentiles have not believed (works).

Romans 4:14-16 parallels the teaching here in verses 5-7.

14	For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:
15	Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.
16	Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

Now the question is asked about what now happens with Israel. Most of the rest of chapter 11 answers this question.

First, Israel (nationally) has not obtained what they sought for (righteousness) because they sought it by works (see the above verses of Romans 9 and 10).

"...but the election hath obtained it..."

What should one understand about this statement about the election **has obtained it** (righteousness)?

Are we to understand that the "election" speaks of God's determination before the foundation of the world that there are certain people that He chose to be the elect (i.e. saved)? The context of this passage, in light of what has preceded this beginning from Romans 9, answers the this question about "the election."

Is "the election" those who God has chosen to be saved? ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!

All one needs to do is go back and read verse 5 (and verse 6 if further clarification is needed). The "election" are those who have believed (grace).

Also, notice that "the election" has "obtained it."

Vincent's Word Studies

Obtained (ἐπέτυχεν) - The simple verb τυγχάνω means originally to hit the mark; hence to fall in with, light upon, attain.

"The election" attained righteousness because they received it by faith (grace) and not by works.

Ephesians 2: 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

The gift of God is salvation not faith (Romans 6:23)! Faith is not a work!

Bible students, both recent and older, refer the "that not of yourselves," to the whole matter of bring saved, not to the faith.

F. F. Bruce of England, said "The fact that the demonstrative pronoun 'that' is neuter in Greek (*tauto*), whereas 'faith' is a feminine noun (*pistis*), combines with other considerations to suggest that it is the whole concept of salvation by grace through faith that is described as the gift of God. This incidentally, was Calvin's interpretation." *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, pp. 51-52

Similarly, A. T. Robertson said: "'Grace' is God's part, 'faith' ours, *And that (kai tauto)*. Neuter, not feminine *tattle*, and so refers not to *pistis* (feminine) or to *charis* (feminine also), but to the act of being saved by grace conditioned on faith on our part. Paul shows that salvation does not have its source in men, but from God." *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. IV, p. 525

M. R. Vincent succinctly said, "*And that*. Not Faith, but the salvation." *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. III, p. 376

W. E. Vine wrote on the use of "gift" here: "of salvation by grace, as the gift of God, Ephesians 2:8." *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Vol. II, p. 146

Romans 4: 1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?
2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.
3 For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God**, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.
5 **But to him that worketh not, but believeth** on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. **[Bold added]**

"...and the rest were blinded..."

Is this a pre-determined judicial blinding by God that some people can't be saved? ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!
What were they blinded by? The next 3 verses tell us what caused the blindness.

8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

Where was this written? Isaiah 29:10, but look at the context of Isaiah 29:10.

- 10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.
- 11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:
- 12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.
- 13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:
- 14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

They were blinded because they gave lip service to God and followed God through their traditions (works for salvation). Their choice to follow works for righteousness led to their blindness.

"The spirit of slumber. The spirit of slumber is not different from slumber itself. The word spirit is often used thus. The word slumber here is a literal translation of the Hebrew. The Greek word, however, (katanuxewv), implies also the notion of compunction; and hence in the margin is rendered remorse. It means any emotion, or any influence whatever, that shall benumb the faculties, and make them insensible. Hence it here means simply insensibility." Albert Barnes NT Commentary

"As it is written. Isa 29:10. The deep sleep spoken of by the prophet was sent because Israel abused its opportunities. They who love darkness will finally be left in darkness." Peoples New Testament Commentary

"The rest were blinded; i.e. those who are not elected; they are left, by God's just judgment, to their own ignorance and obduracy; as also to Satan, who doth increase it in them, 2Co 4:4. The antithesis requires that he should have said: The rest have not obtained; but he speaks this of purpose to show the cause of their not obtaining, i.e. their own blindness of mind and hardness of heart." Matthew Pooles Commentary

"According as it is written, Isa 29:10 Compare De 29:4; Isa 6:10 God hath given them a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear. He threatened, you see, to punish their perverseness when it should come to a certain degree, by abandoning them to increasing stupidity and obstinacy, and he hath done it even unto this day; for their blindness continues notwithstanding all the extraordinary things which have been done, even in our own age of wonders, for their conviction."
Philip Doddridge NT

"A spirit of stupor. By their failure in faith they had become spiritually insensible." Teacher's Commentary

The blindness was brought upon them by their embracing of man-made traditions (a works salvation) which resulted in God giving them over (blinding them) to the truth of grace.

Is this blindness total upon all Israel? NO!!!

There is a remnant within Israel who will believe. There always has been a remnant! But, the nation, at this time, is blinded. And, in Romans 11:23 we are told that those in the nation that have been "cut off" (blinded) can be grafted back in again - "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again." Clearly, then, the blindness is not pre-determined destiny that is irrevocable but a condition brought about because of a trust in works for salvation rather than grace, which can be reversed by recognizing it is faith (in Messiah), not works, that saves.

"Has God cast off His elect nation of Israel? No, for there is also within the nation a remnant who are "choice" as far as grace is concerned, an election of grace. It is not enough to enter into the choice nation, one must enter also into the chosenness of grace. Israel, apart from the remnant, did not manifest the right-standing they sought, because they sought it through externals and not through faith. Only the remnant who sought it in God's way achieved it. The rest were blinded to the clear indications of the messiahship of Jesus. Because they focused on the works of the Law as central, they 'stumbled st the stone of stumbling.' Paul asserts, however, that this stumbling is not final (Roman 11:11) but that eventually the temporary hardness on the part of Israel will cease and all Israel (Romans 11:25) will enter God's strategic purpose for blessing."

Paul Marston and Roger Forster, God's Strategy in Human History, page 146

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:

In Psalm 69:21 we have a prophecy of Jesus "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

Psalm 69:22 Let their table before them become a snare; And when they are in peace, let it become a trap.
23 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see; And make their loins continually to shake.

"Their table" speaks of all the blessings of Israel. Peace can bring about complacency and becomes a trap. Israel rejected their Messiah and, as a result, their blessings become a curse.

"Let us remember that, at this junction of the composition, David, following the law of recurrence, changes the viewpoint. He no longer impersonates Messiah; but seeing what the people of Israel would do in rejecting Him and in putting Him to death, he, in a sympathetic attitude, **prays for God's punishment to come upon those who willfully reject the Messiah.** As I set forth in the first section of this discussion, David blocked out the picture of his sufferings and those of the Messiah in the first twenty-one verses of the psalm. Then in verses 22-28, he went back over the picture and added some details that were not given in the first part of Psalm 69. In doing this, King David simply spoke as an observer who is standing off and seeing the sufferings of the Messiah. Knowing that what they do to Him is unjust and seeing things from the divine standpoint, he prays that the Lord would take the situation in hand and deal with those who thus execute King Messiah."
David Cooper, Israel's Hymnal: Psalm 69

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

Psalm 69:23 is continued here and the blindness is a result of their rejection of Messiah - NOT that they were blind and rejected Messiah.

Willful rejection of Jesus and God's plan will lead to hardness of heart (blindness).

"When Exodus 7:13 is properly understood, it changes the whole tenor of the exodus narrative. Again, remember that the phrase, 'The **LORD** hardened his heart' does not appear until Exodus 9:12 (after the sixth plague). This means that he states *seven* times that either Pharaoh's heart was *strengthened* (i.e. KJV 'hardened') or that Pharaoh strengthened his own heart, before it ever states that the **Lord** strengthened Pharaoh's heart. Would not this fact suggest, when we arrive at Exodus 9:12 to find the Lord strengthening Pharaoh's heart, that this activity of the Lord is, while at the least, the Spirit's ceasing to strive with Pharaoh any longer, also and arguably more than just this - namely, the Lord's allowance for the Enemy to more intensely affect Pharaoh's heart?...In fact, one could argue that the omission of any suggestion that the Lord 'hardened' (*strengthened*) Pharaoh's heart prior to Exodus 9:12 is really an argument for Pharaoh acting in unqualified free will." Daniel Gracely, Calvinism: A Closer Look, pages 263-64

Psalm 106 8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, That he might make his mighty power to be known.
9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: So he led them through the depths, as through a wilderness.
10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
11 And the waters covered their adversaries; There was not one of them left.
12 Then believed they his words; They sang his praise.
13 They soon forgat his works; They waited not for his counsel,
14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, And tempted God in the desert.
15 And he gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul.

Hebrews 6 4 For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,
5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,
6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

"For *it is* impossible...If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance;"

"The choice must be made by these Hebrews between going back to the sacrifices or on to faith in Christ as High Priest. But their spiritual declension if persisted in, would result in their putting themselves beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit. This is implied in 3:7,8 where they are warned that if they desire to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, they should not harden their hearts, the implication being clear that they would have no more desire to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. This shows that the 'impossibility' of 6:4,6 resides in the condition of their hearts, not in the grace of God."

Kenneth S. Wuest, Hebrews in the Greek New Testament, page 112-13