

## What's the Answer?

Introduction:

What's the answer depends of course on what the question is.

Does the fact that not everyone believes the gospel somehow render the gospel ineffectual?

We are in a passage of scripture this morning that addresses why not all the Jewish people believed the gospel.

Review

Paul desired that all his fellow Jews would be saved.

Paul was willing to give his own soul so that they would all be saved.

Romans 9:3 (ESV) For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

Paul prayed for the salvation of his fellow Jewish people.

Romans 10:1 (ESV) Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

Paul's fellow Jews had many religious advantages.

Romans 9:4 (ESV) They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

Romans 9:5 (ESV) To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

However, the promise to be saved did not extend to every physical descendant of Abraham or Isaac.

Romans 9:6 (ESV) But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,

Romans 9:7 (ESV) and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”

Romans 9:8 (ESV) This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.

Three weeks ago we considered the fact that in order to be saved, one must believe the gospel.

Two weeks ago we considered the responsibility that we have to share the gospel with all people so that they will be saved.

Romans 10:17 (ESV) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Today the issue is but what about those who know the gospel but do not believe the gospel. Does that somehow render the gospel ineffectual?

Theme Verse: Romans 10:16 (ESV) **But they have not all obeyed the gospel.** For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”

Did the word of God fail in some way?

Romans 10:17 (ESV) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Romans 9:6 (ESV) But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,

Theme: If faith comes by hearing, Why didn't all the Israelites submit to the Gospel?

Why didn't they repent and believe when they heard?

Romans 10:16 (ESV) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”

A series of questions are asked to derive an answer to the question as to “why didn't all the Israelites submit to the gospel?”

Romans 10:18 (ESV) **But I ask, have they not heard?** Indeed they have, for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”

Romans 10:19 (ESV) **But I ask, did Israel not understand?** First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry."

Romans 11:1 (ESV) **I ask, then, has God rejected his people?** By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

- I. Why didn't all the Israelites submit to the Gospel? Was it because not all the Israelites heard the gospel? - No

Romans 10:18 (ESV) **But I ask, have they not heard?** Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

- A. Isaiah said that the Israelites heard the gospel.

Romans 10:16 (ESV) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"

- B. Isaiah for one had shared the gospel with the nation of Israel.

Romans 10:16 (ESV) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"

- C. This is a quote from Isaiah 53 where Isaiah laments the fact that so few believed what Isaiah had said concerning the Messiah.

Isaiah 53:1 (ESV) Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

- D. They heard. So, one cannot blame the Israelites failure to obey the gospel on their not hearing the gospel.

- E. Application:

1. Not everyone who hears the gospel will believe the gospel.
2. That does not mean that the gospel is ineffectual.
3. We cannot expect that everyone who hears the gospel will believe.

- II. Why didn't all the Israelites submit to the Gospel? Was it because not all the Israelites understood the gospel - No

Romans 10:19 (ESV) **But I ask, did Israel not understand?** First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry."

A. No the Israelites prided themselves in their understanding of the word of God.

1. The Israelites viewed the gentiles as foolish for the gentiles did not have the word of God.

Romans 10:19 (ESV) **But I ask, did Israel not understand?** First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a **foolish** nation I will make you angry."

2. The Israelites prided themselves in their understanding of the word of God.

a. They were confident of their relationship to God.

Romans 2:17 (ESV) But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God

b. They were taught the word of God.

Romans 2:18 (ESV) and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law;

c. They were confident that they were ready to teach others.

Romans 2:19 (ESV) and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,  
Romans 2:20 (ESV) **an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—**

d. Nevertheless, they did not follow their own teaching.

Romans 2:21 (ESV) you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?

B. No the Israelites understood the gospel because they were furnished with the prophets who explained and applied the word of God.

1. Isaiah for one, took the gospel to the Israelites

Romans 10:20 (ESV) Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."

2. Isaiah faithfully presented the gospel message.

Romans 10:21 (ESV) But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

3. Isaiah had personally reached out to them as it were.

Romans 10:21 (ESV) But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

C. No the Israelites understood but stubbornly refused to submit to the gospel.

Their wicked stubbornness is manifested in four ways.

1. They were disobedient to the calls to acknowledge their sin and repent.

Romans 10:21 (ESV) But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

Acts 17:30 (ESV) The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

2. They argued against the truth that they had heard.

Romans 10:21 (ESV) But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

3. They not only rejected the message but also shot the messenger.

Romans 11:3 (ESV) "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life."

4. They not only did away with the messengers but they did away with any witnesses to the truth.

Romans 11:3 (ESV) "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life."

D. Application:

1. Not everyone who understands the gospel will believe and submit to the gospel.
2. In fact, some will actively oppose the gospel.
3. It must be realized that faith is not just a matter of understanding but submission. I have been using the word believe in association with the gospel, our text is using the word obey the gospel.
4. It is driving home the point that the person who rejects the gospel is doing so out of a heart of rebellion towards God. It is not that they can't believe as a result of inadequate information. It is a matter of the heart in refusing to take responsibility for their sinfulness.
5. We should make the gospel as clear, simple, understandable as possible. In addition we should demonstrate evidences for the truthfulness of the gospel. But when people obstinately refuse to believe it is not just a matter of making the gospel still clearer or finding even more persuasive arguments.
6. Often when people reject the gospel they become adamantly opposed to the gospel and those who present it. They seek to abolish any structures that bear witness to the truth.

III. Why didn't all the Israelites submit to the Gospel? Was it because God had rejected the Israelites that belonged to Him? - No

Romans 11:1 (ESV) **I ask, then, has God rejected his people?** By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

A. Did God's promise to His own fail? Aren't the Jews the chosen people?

Romans 11:1 (ESV) I ask, then, has God rejected his people? **By no means!** For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

- B. God did not reject His own illustrated in the person of Paul. Paul is an Israelite and he is not rejected.

Romans 11:1 (ESV) I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

- C. God has not rejected those who are truly His own. His own are the elect.

Romans 11:2 (ESV) God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel?

Romans 8:29 (ESV) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Romans 8:30 (ESV) And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

- D. There is a part of the larger Israel (the physical descendants of Isaac) who are the true Israel ( those who are the recipients of God's promise.)\_

Romans 11:4 (ESV) But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

Romans 11:5 (ESV) So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.

Romans 11:6 (ESV) But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

- IV. Answer: Why didn't all the Israelites submit to the Gospel? Well then what is the answer?

Romans 11:7 (ESV) **What then?** Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

- A. The elect were saved. God graciously brings them to faith through the word of God.

Romans 11:7 (ESV) What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

Romans 11:5 (ESV) So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.

- B. The rest were hardened. They continued in their obstinate rebellion and rejection of the word of God.

Romans 11:7 (ESV) What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

V. Concluding application.

- A. There are many evangelicals that view the “nation of Israel”, as a chosen people, in the same way that many of the Jews did. That is that the nation of Israel is to be understood as all the physical descendants of Abraham and Isaac.

- B. This false understanding of God’s promise to the Jewish people has significant ramifications.

- 1. This view affects our understanding of the role of Israel in future prophecy.

Romans 11:26 (ESV) And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;

Romans 11:26 must be understood in light of all that comes before it.

Romans 9:6 (ESV) But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,

Romans 9:7 (ESV) and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”

Romans 9:8 (ESV) This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.

2. This view affects our understanding of the “unfulfilled” promises of God.
- C. Understanding the doctrine of election helps us to understand that the gospel is not ineffectual when some fail to believe.
1. Faith comes by hearing.
  2. Hearing the gospel provides the power to believe.
- Romans 1:16 (ESV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- Romans 10:17 (ESV) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
- a. Without hearing, people will not believe.
  - b. However, not everyone who hears will believe.
- D. We should not seek for an alternative method of reaching those who fail to believe the gospel that they have heard.
1. There is no more effectual means of reaching the lost than in giving them the gospel that is the word of God.
  2. Any means of reaching the lost other than the gospel does not result in salvation.
- Romans 10:9 (ESV) because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
- \Romans 10:10 (ESV) For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
- E. We reach the wrong conclusion when we decide the gospel is no longer effectual because we fail to see as many people being saved as we think ought to be saved.
1. The fault is not to be found in the message.
  2. The fault is to be found in the heart of the recipient.

3. There is no remedy to the obstinate rejection of the gospel other than the grace of God.
4. Even this morning, most of us did not accept Christ the first time we heard the gospel.
5. If we know the Lord as savior we must rejoice in God's grace in our lives.