

## Romans Chapter 11 - John Karmelich

Title: God's Clicker!

I remember the first time I ever heard a sermon on Romans Chapter 11. To describe it, visualize going into a large store with an employee at the door counting customers with a clicker. In a sense God has a clicker! To get the reference, realize there's a specific number of people who become Christians before God tells Jesus in effect, "That's a wrap (of the total number of believers within the church), so now it's time for the 7-year tribulation show, (for a lack of a better term) that ends with Jesus ruling over all the world from Israel". The amazing part to me is every time anyone truly accepts Jesus to be His Lord and Savior, God adds a click. I believe Satan scared of the clicker! Only God knows what the final click is. Satan has worked throughout history to draw people away from God! Satan also tries to make believers ineffective witnesses for Him. If you have doubts about this, ask if there's a finite or infinite number of people in heaven? If it's finite, there must be a final believer, so thus a need for a "clicker" so to speak!

Let me put the "clicker" in perspective of this chapter. Paul has been pounding the pulpit (so to speak) that the only way to salvation is by faith in who Jesus is. Remember the reason God called Israel to be His people was to be a witness to the world the around them of who He is. Collectively they failed the thing they were called to do. This was not a surprise to God. In fact, Paul gives several Old Testament quotes to say in effect God knew this would happen! It is one reason God turned to non-Jewish people to spread the word about Him. That was done due to Israel's collective failure to be a witness for Him. At the same time Paul makes the point that there are always saved people form a Jewish background in the church age. It also leads to the question, "Does that mean God is done with Israel as an entity?" It's the BIG NO answer, simply because God made an unconditional promise that Jesus will rule the world one day from Israel. That means Israel must exist when it happens, and they must believe He is God!

That lead to something I never thought about until I started studying this chapter again. In the book of Revelation, we read of 144,000 "Jewish Evangelists" preaching for Jesus. I always pondered, why is it in that book? Why were these people necessary? What dawned on me is, if the rapture occurs prior to the seven year "Revelation stuff" (again for a lack of a better term)! That means new people are needed to preach the Gospel since Christians are not around. Can I prove that's His plan? No but it makes a lot of sense if there's a lack of Christians to witness to the world around them! I've always argued there are lots of people who get saved in that period, but they are not part of the church! Consider that the last 4 verses in the book of Daniel Chapter 9 speak of 70 "sevens", appointed for God's focus on the nation of Israel. In Hebrew the word for seven can mean seven days, weeks, or years. It's logical that it refers to years, as 69 seven-year periods accurately cover the time frame from when the prediction began till the time of Jesus. The final seven-year period where God focuses on Israel again logically is again that the seven-year tribulation period the bible mentions a lot is once again where God focuses on Israel. If the church is a big "parenthesis" between the 69th and 70th "week" then to me, the church era ends prior to that final 70th week. Which means again, we're back to the "clicker" God is using the mark the church age! I obsess on this because in effect that's the story behind Romans Chapter 11! As I like to say, we must accept the fact God's in charge and that's His plan whether we like it or not! I realize many Bible scholars view the end times differently, just telling you how I see it!

OK then time to fill in some details on this chapter now that I've told that story! Chapter 10 focuses on life for Jewish people in the church age. Short version is they can get saved the same way a non-Jewish person does by believing in Jesus. That leads to the question, is God done with Israel as an entity? God promised unconditionally that Israel as an entity would be saved one day! It doesn't mean all those who

come from a Jewish background are saved. It simply means if Jesus will rule the world from Israel that we Christians accept as part of His Second Coming, He needs a believing Israel to rule from! Paul will use an Old Testament example to prove there are always some Jewish people who are saved. Way back in 1st Kings 19:18, the prophet Elijah was having a pity party that there are no believers except him. It led to God saying there are still 7,000 believers in Israel. Paul uses that historical fact to state that it's a matter of God's grace and mercy for any person to be saved! Throughout God's history of dealing with Israel as an entity there were always saved people in that nation! Paul then states two (Old Testament) predictions that only a small percentage of Jewish people get saved.

By Verse 11 Paul states one reason God planned it this way was to make the nation of Israel jealous if non-Jewish people got saved without Jewish people as a witness to them! His point this always was a plan of God to do it that way. So, one day after the full number of believers (who form the church) are saved and God then focuses on Israel as an entity again, He has every right to do it that way!

One thing to remember as one reads this chapter is the focus is not on individual salvation but group. I believe salvation is individual in terms of believing Jesus is God, etc. However, Chapter 11 focuses on salvation of the church as an entity and Israel as an entity. Verse 12 states the point that Israel failed to be God's witness to the world so in effect He did it without them, to lead lots of non-Jewish people into salvation! Israel's failure to be His witness benefited us Gentiles (anyone who isn't Jewish) so consider the great benefit when God focuses on Israel as an entity again one day in the post church era!

It may help to remember that the Christian church is a "sub-set" of saved people. Paul states the church was a mystery in Old Testament times. The church age ends when the rapture occurs which I'll argue is before the final seven-year tribulation period as that final seven God focuses on Israel again. I'm saying many non-Jews will get saved during that time, but the focus of that period from God's perspective will be on the salvation of Israel as an entity. That in effect is the main point of this chapter! Yes, I believe non-Jewish people will be saved "after the final click", but they will have less of an eternal reward than all of us who were saved during the church age!

Paul then makes the point that the root of all believers is Jesus. He argues how Gentiles were grafted to be a part of that church. Think of a new root added to an old tree to preserve it. Paul is working up to a point that just as many Jewish people are not chosen for salvation, so are many who think they're saved not being saved. Again think "group entities" here: It's not about Christians losing their salvation. Paul is saying some people who think they're saved won't be! As I preached in the last lesson it's about those who miss heaven by "18 inches" because they got Jesus "head knowledge" but haven't accepted Him in their hearts (those who don't change their life based on their belief)!

In Verse 25 we get the "God's clicker" verse. Since I already beat that point to death, I'll move on. The rest of the chapter is doxology. (Praise to God for His plan!) Yes, there are some neat facts about that plan, but I'll let it go. I want to end this lesson with another of my "why should I care points!" It's fairly easy to think, "I'm saved and can't lose it, so why should I care if God has a clicker?" As Christians, He has called all of us (not just missionaries etc.) to make disciples of all nations so He desires us to add to the "clicker" total! Since none of us know who is saved, He left it up to believers to bring other people into the kingdom! In effect, that's why we were saved in the first place. With that said, hope we all do "move the clicker" towards God's goal of completing the church! BTW Romans isn't done. Paul put a doxology here simply to praise Him for His plan to save both Jewish and non-Jewish people!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on one of the links below. It is still a joy to study and teach this and again I'm grateful

for you reading this. If you're new here, you are always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading this!

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That's it. Hope you enjoy it. Don't forget to fire up a prayer prior to your reading.