

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32ⁱⁱⁱ

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

ⁱⁱⁱ **About the Second Reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32**

In chapters 9-11 Paul has been wrestling with the problem of the rejection of Jesus by those whose whole history and relationship with God was a preparation for the Messiah. On the surface this looked like a frustration of God's purpose, but Paul establishes God's sovereignty in the working out of salvation history.

Israel, not God, is responsible for its own rejection of the gospel, for Israel has failed to understand the meaning of its own tradition. Paul sees Israel's history as fulfilled in Christ (10:4, 9), but Israel has insisted on righteousness by works (9:31-32). Nonetheless God has foreseen and provided for this, too. Israel's failure is partial, for a remnant has believed (11:5); and it is temporary, for it is not irremediable (11:11). Because of the Jews' resistance, the gospel has been taken to the Gentiles, but this mission's success will lead to the Jews' restoration (11:25-26).

For both Jews and Gentiles, "disobedience" will be seen to have been a stage on the way to faith (11:30-32). Paul as usual speaks corporately, that is, of the destiny of groups as a whole rather than of individuals. God's intent is to "be merciful to all" without distinction, for all are in need of mercy.