

# Romans 11:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

## Analysis

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Paul opens with a rhetorical question: **Hath God cast away his people?** (μὴ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ;). His emphatic response—*mē genoito* (μὴ γένοιτο, "God forbid!")—is the strongest Greek negation, expressing horror at the suggestion. Paul then offers himself as proof: **I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.** This triple credential establishes his ethnic identity as evidence of God's continuing faithfulness to Israel.

The question addresses a theological crisis: if Israel rejected the Messiah, has God rejected Israel? Paul's personal testimony demonstrates that God's promises remain intact. The mention of Benjamin is significant—this was Saul's tribe (1 Samuel 9:1-2), and Paul bore the same name before his conversion. Benjamin was the beloved son of Rachel, and the tribe remained loyal to Judah when the kingdom divided. Paul's existence as a believing Jew proves God has not abandoned His covenant people.

## Historical Context

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Written circa 57 AD, Paul addresses growing tensions between Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome. The Jewish community had been expelled by Claudius (49 AD) but was returning by this time, creating friction with the now-Gentile-majority church. Paul's argument counters any supersessionist theology suggesting the church had replaced Israel.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does Paul's personal testimony serve as evidence for God's faithfulness to His covenant promises?
2. What does this verse teach about God's character regarding His covenant commitments?
3. How should the church today view its relationship to ethnic Israel in light of Paul's emphatic 'God forbid'?

## Interlinear Text

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Λέγω	οὖν	μὴ	ἀπόσωτο	ὁ	θεὸς	τὸν	λαὸν	αὐτοῦ
<b>I say</b> G3004	<b>then</b> G3767	<b>God forbid</b> G3361	<b>Hath</b> G683	G3588	<b>God</b> G2316	G3588	<b>people</b> G2992	G846
μὴ	γένοιτο·	καὶ	γὰρ	ἐγὼ	Ἰσραηλίτης	εἰμί	ἐκ	
<b>God forbid</b> G3361	G1096	<b>also</b> G2532	<b>For</b> G1063	<b>I</b> G1473	<b>an Israelite</b> G2475	<b>am</b> G1510	<b>of</b> G1537	
σπέρματος	Ἀβραάμ	φυλῆς	Βενιαμίν					
<b>the seed</b> G4690	<b>of Abraham</b> G11	<b>of the tribe</b> G5443	<b>of Benjamin</b> G958					

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Corinthians 11:22** (References Abraham): Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

**1 Samuel 12:22** (Parallel theme): For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

**Philippians 3:5** (References Israel): Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

**Acts 26:4** (Parallel theme): My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

**Acts 22:3** (References God): I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

**Romans 9:3** (Parallel theme): For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

**Romans 3:4** (References God): God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

**Hosea 9:17** (References God): My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

**2 Kings 23:27** (References Israel): And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

**Psalms 94:14** (Parallel theme): For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.