

SBC – July 21, 2024
Romans 11:16-24 (NKJV)
“You Stand by Faith – Be Humble”

48

Prayer:

Slide # 1
Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** **9:1-11:36** (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical:** 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

Romans is a letter that emphasizes how we can be right with God on the basis of FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ. The KEY verses are found in Romans 1:16-17.

Slide # 2

Romans 1:16–17 (NKJV)

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation **for everyone who believes**, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed **from faith to faith**; as it is written, “**The just shall live by faith.**”

There is a lot of emphasis on FAITH here. But note in the key verse of Romans 1:16 Paul says, “***for the Jew first***”. The gospel priority was the Jews first. Paul in Romans 9-11 shows us that God’s salvation program runs through the Jew. God, from the very beginning, chose Israel to be His channel of blessing to the whole world. And that is certainly true in relation to the gospel. Hence, the priority of the Jew!

However, since the Jews rejected both Jesus as their Messiah and the way of faith, God has turned to the Gentiles who have been much more receptive.

So, the question then is this: What about Israel? Is God done with Israel? Paul's emphatic answer in Romans 11 is "NO"! Here Paul explains God's plan of salvation and how it intersects with both Jew and Gentile. He shows that God has a multilayered plan that involves both Jew and Gentile to the end He "***might have mercy on all***" as Paul goes on to say in Romans 11:32.

Last time we saw that the Jew's rejection of the Messiah turned out to be to the Gentile's spiritual benefit. However, God now wants to use the conversion of the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy. And Paul shows that the Jew's spiritual restoration will ultimately to the greater good for the Gentiles as well.

Therefore, the Gentiles should note that God is not done with Israel but that the BEST is yet to be in terms of their eventual spiritual restoration and that in turn will result in even greater spiritual blessing for the entire world.

God blessed the Gentile world even in Israel's fall, but He will do so much more in their restoration. This should cause all Gentile converts to be pro-Israel in the sense of wanting to seek their spiritual good because of their special place in God's plan. To bless Israel spiritually is to further your own spiritual good.

They say a good preacher will state the truth, then illustrate the truth, and finally apply the truth. Paul has **stated** the truth of God's salvation plan involving both Jew and Gentile; now he is going to **illustrate** it in our study today, and then at the end of the chapter, he will make **application**.

In illustrating his point Paul begins by using two metaphors as seen in verse 16.

Slide # 3

Romans 11:16

- Firstfruit – Whole lump
- Root - Branches

Paul then goes on in verses 17-24 to develop the metaphor of the root and branches. In the process Paul uses the idea of two trees to illustrate his point.

Slide # 4

Wild Olive Tree (Gentiles)

- Branches Grafted In
- **FAITH**

Cultivated Olive Tree (Jews)

- Branches Broken Off
- **UNBELIEF**

Let's now unpack Paul's illustration showing what God is doing in relation to the Jews and the Gentiles in His plan of salvation – with the ultimate point being that God is NOT done with Israel.

Last time we left off we saw that in the future there will yet be a time of spiritual “fullness” for Israel (Rom. 11:12), a time of “life from the dead” (Rom. 11:15) where the nation of Israel will experience a spiritual revival which take place in conjunction with the Second Coming of the Lord. Building on this Paul now says...

Romans 11:16–24 (NKJV)

16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

These two metaphors are thought to basically be saying the same thing and both are taken from the Old Testament. In Numbers 15:17-21 we find that children of Israel upon entering the Promised Land were to take the first-fruit of their crop and make a cake or a loaf that would be offered to the Lord.

This firstfruit was set apart for God in recognition that the entire harvest was actually from God and actually belonged to Him. And this firstfruit was seen as a pledge of more to come, but it all was seen as “holy” – that was set apart for God.

The point was that this firstfruit was only representative of a whole crop that was yet to follow – and that it all was seen as set apart.

Some think the firstfruit here represents the present grace remnant of saved Jews but it is more likely in view of the overall context that the firstfruit here has in view the patriarchs of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob and their covenantal relationship with God (cf. Rom. 11:28).

Paul's overall point is that God still has a destiny for the people of Israel as a whole. They are destined to fulfill God's purposes as His covenant nation.

The patriarchs were set apart to God in covenant relationship – but ultimately there will also be application for the whole nation of Israel. What defined the firstfruit will ultimately define the whole lump. Ultimately as Paul says in Romans 11:26 “all Israel will be saved”.

Again, Paul makes the same point in reference to the metaphor of the root and the branches. Again, it seems that the root here is in reference to the patriarchs (especially Abraham) and their set part covenant relationship with God.

On the basis of 11:28-29, the [firstfruit] and the root probably refer to the Jewish patriarchs who were upheld by the covenant promises of God. – *The Moody Bible Commentary*

Slide # 5

Romans 11:28–29 (NKJV)

28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, **but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.**

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

The nation of Israel is built on the patriarchs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with special emphasis on the Abrahamic Covenant. This is the ROOT!

The patriarchal root was set apart for God and so are the branches – the descendants of Abraham through Isaac, and Jacob. They are still the chosen people set apart for God's special purposes. They are ultimately a people of destiny (Deut. 7:6-8; Jer. 2:2-3). That was true of the patriarchal ROOT and it is true of the national BRANCHES (the Jewish people as a whole) which follow.

By deduction what this means is that the fall of national Israel is only temporary!

In verse 16 there are two analogies with one point. However, Paul only develops the second one related to the root and branches as seen in his illustration of the olive tree. As seen in Jeremiah 11:16-17 and again in Hosea 14:4-6 the olive tree was a symbol of the nation of Israel.

17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,

A contrast is being drawn here. Some (not all) of the branches were broken off. This refers to Jewish unbelievers. They are not truly connected to the root – not spiritually. They are not truly Abraham’s spiritual children and thus have no part with him in partaking of the good of the covenant promises.

Slide # 6

John 8:39–40 (NKJV)

39 They answered and said to Him, “**Abraham is our father.**” Jesus said to them, “**If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.**”

40 But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. **Abraham did not do this.**

These broken off branches correspond to the “fall” of Israel (v. 11); to the “failure” of Israel (v. 12); and to “being cast away” in verse 15. This is the present condition of unbelieving Israel which largely defines them as a nation at this point – with the “election of grace” excepted.

In contrast believing Gentiles were like a branch from a wild olive tree that has been GRAFTED IN among the Jewish heritage and now partakes of the spiritual blessing (the root and fatness of the olive tree) related to the Abrahamic Covenant. Thus, the Gentiles now tap into the good of the cultivated olive tree. The grafted in Gentiles now share in the place of favored spiritual blessing originally given to Israel.

Cultivated trees were fruitful but wild olive trees bore little if any fruit. The normal procedure was to graft a cultivated branch into a wild olive tree and not vice versa. Notice Paul in verse 24 says his illustration here is “contrary to nature”. The Gentiles were a “wild olive tree” and were grafted in among the Jews. That is, we became partakers of the spiritual blessings that connect with the Jewish heritage (cf. 4:11, 16, Gal. 3:6-8, 29).

The spiritual blessings bestowed on the Gentiles are a result of being grafted into the Jewish heritage. The Gentiles are now partakers of the SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS promised to Abraham but not of the NATIONAL LAND promises made to Abraham. It is important to realize that the Church partakes of the spiritual blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant and not the land promises.

Slide # 7**Genesis 12:1–3 (NKJV)**

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.

2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”

In the Abrahamic Covenant God promised Abraham three things – namely 1) Land, 2) Descendants, and 3) Blessing. We as Gentiles, (as the Church) partake of the blessing aspect of the Abrahamic covenant which is further developed in the New Covenant.

Slide # 8

The Abrahamic Covenant is the most important of the Covenants for understanding the Bible. The rest of the Bible, from Genesis 12:4 through Revelation 22:21, is, in essence, commentary on how God brings to pass the three basic promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

– **Mark Robinson**

Slide # 9**Galatians 3:6–8 (NKJV)**

6 just as Abraham “**believed** God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

7 Therefore know that only **those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.**

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that **God would justify the Gentiles by faith**, preached the **gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”**

Slide # 10**Galatians 3:14 (NKJV)**

14 that **the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus**, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit **through faith.**

Galatians 3:29 (NKJV)

29 And if you are Christ's, then you are **Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Note Paul at this point is using metaphorical language to make a general overall point and should not be pressed too far. These broken off branches represent people that were never saved. Yes, they physically were part of the "tree" of Israel, but they were never spiritually connected. This "broken off" position thus represents unbelieving Israel that has temporarily been set aside as Paul indicated in Romans 11:15.

18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

Since Gentiles have now entered into this favored spiritual position they might be tempted to boast against the branches thinking themselves to be spiritually superior and special. But Paul warns these Gentile converts that if they boast they should realize that they ***"do not support the root, but the root supports you."***

Again, the channel of spiritual blessing runs through Israel to the Gentiles not the other way around. It runs through the patriarchal ROOT as seen in the Abrahamic Covenant. The Gentile is merely "grafted in". The Gentile is thus indebted to the Jew. As Jesus said, "salvation is of the Jews" (Jn. 4:22). The Gentiles should remember this and not get arrogant or haughty in their newfound spiritual position. There must not be a "holier than thou" attitude. We must not be cocky, gloating, or put down the Jew.

In Romans 2:17 Paul says the attitude of the Jew was to make their boast in God. Now the converted Gentiles are prone to do the same thing. This is the essence of "spiritual pride" leading to prejudice and Antisemitism. However, in salvation there is no place for boasting except in Jesus (Gal. 6:14).

Converted Gentiles should humbly recognize their dependence upon the Jewish ROOT system. Our spiritual roots ever remain Jewish.

As converted Gentiles we are "grafted in". Wil Varner who served for many years with Friends of Israel and then as professor at the Master's Seminary would often sign off his letters in this way: "Grafted in but grateful!" That should be our attitude!

19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.”

The argument itself shows an arrogant attitude. As if the reason the branches were broken off so that the Gentile might be grafted in. This really is not the reason in the sense that is not the whole story. God didn't just arbitrarily decide to cut off the branches so that He could make room for the Gentiles as if they were all that special. The Gentile might say this but they would be WRONG!

Though that was not the real reason the branches were broken off, Paul accepted the statement for the sake of argument.

– *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

One commentator says the spirit of this is, “Well, well!” suggesting that is not the whole story. The REST of the story is that they were broken off because of UNBELIEF and the Gentile converts now STAND BY FAITH!

Note that Paul makes the determinative issue that of being unbelief versus faith. It is interesting to me that he does not put the emphasis on election at this point. When it comes to responsibility Paul puts the emphasis on human response – the response of faith or unbelief. When it comes to the divine side he puts the emphasis on God's GRACE CHOICE. Both are true. How they fit together is a mystery.

Slide # 11

Romans 11:4–7 (NKJV)

4 But what does the divine response say to him? “**I have reserved for Myself** seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”

5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to **the election of grace**.

6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but **the elect have obtained it**, and the rest were blinded.

This is the God-side of the equation as both GRACE and ELECTION are shown in Romans to be totally God-sided realities.

Yet, at the same time the other side of the coin emphasizes human responsibility.

Slide # 12

Romans 11:20 (NKJV)

20 Well said. **Because of unbelief** they were broken off, and **you stand by faith.** Do not be haughty, but fear.

Romans 11:23 (NKJV)

23 And they also, **if they do not continue in unbelief,** will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

Here Paul makes the defining issue to be that of human response and human responsibility – namely the issue of FAITH.

We see this same tension in Romans 9.

Slide # 13

Romans 9:11 (NKJV)

11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the **purpose of God according to election might stand,** not of works but of Him who calls),

Slide # 14

Romans 9:30–32 (NKJV)

30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;

31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 **Why? Because they did not seek it by faith,** but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

This is then followed up by Romans 10 in which the issue of human responsibility in the matter of faith is stressed throughout.

Slide # 15

10:3 “have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”

10:10 “with the heart one believes...with the mouth confession is made...”

10:11 “Whoever believes on Him....”

10:12 “...rich to all who call upon Him.

10:13 “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

10:14 “How then shall they....”

10:16 “not all obeyed the gospel.”

10:21 “a disobedient and contrary people.”

Every one of these references in Romans 10 assumes the reality of human responsibility in the matter of FAITH! And yet this is not contrary to “the election of grace” emphasis in Romans 11:4-7. From the God side of things salvation is all of grace, but from the human responsibility side we must believe. Both are true! Grace undergirds and drives everything but there is no denying the reality of human responsibility in the equation.

The Bible puts it PERFECTLY when it says, “by grace you have been saved through faith” (Eph. 2:8). It’s all of GRACE and yet also THROUGH FAITH. That is the full equation and you dare not leave any of it out.

As a “Biblicist” I don’t have this tension between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility all figured out and neither does anyone else as Paul plainly tells us in just a few verses in Romans 11:33. I do know that Paul right here in Romans 11:20 says the reason the branches were broken off (why Israel was cast aside) was because of UNBELIEF. He puts the onus squarely on the shoulders of human responsibility!

On the other hand, he plainly states in this verse that the reason the Gentile converts are standing is because of FAITH. Thus, the determinative issue here is clearly made to be UNBELIEF versus FAITH!

And note “faith” is clearly shown to be non-meritorious which is why Paul says to those standing by faith not to “be haughty, but fear”.

Paul at this point is speaking in general terms regarding categories of people – namely unbelieving Jews and believing Gentiles. He is pointing out that arrogance is totally inconsistent with FAITH!

Slide # 16

Habakkuk 2:4 (NKJV)

4 “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.”

In keeping with living out faith is humility not arrogance. Fear is the idea of a reverential fear of God in contrast to self-oriented cockiness. Humble reverence for God is to define the people of FAITH.

Pride is the besetting sin of mankind in general but even after we are saved we continue to wrestle with this sin closest to the breast.

Years ago, Dr. H. A. Ironside, who was pastor of the prestigious Moody Church in downtown Chicago, felt that he was not as humble as he should have been. So he asked an older friend what he could do about it. The friend suggested, “Make a sandwich board with the plan of salvation in Scripture on it. Put it on and walk through the business district of Chicago for a whole day.”

Ironside followed his friend’s humiliating advice. After he got home, as he took off the sandwich board he caught himself thinking, “There’s not another person in Chicago that would be willing to do a thing like that.”

Spiritual pride is an insidious enemy that we all continually must guard against and fight. It was one of the main sins of the Pharisees. They thought that they were a notch above their fellow Jews ([John 9:28-34](#)) and far above the despised Gentile dogs. To confront such pride, Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the publican who went up to the temple to pray ([Luke 18:9-14](#)). The Pharisee thanked God that he wasn’t like the publican. But how many times have you read that story and thought, “Thank God that I’m not like that Pharisee!” – **Steven Cole**

Spiritual pride has no place in “saved by grace through faith”!

Slide # 17

Branches were broken off and others grafted in solely on the issue of faith, not race, ethnicity, social or intellectual background, or external morality. Salvation is ever and always by faith alone (cf. 1:16-17; Eph. 2:8-9). – **John MacArthur**

You stand by your faith means “You stand only by your faith, nothing else!” – **The Moody Bible Commentary**

Converted Gentiles! We stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear!

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.

At this point Paul is speaking in broad brush terms related to categories of people and not individual salvation. If God has set the Jews aside because of widespread UNBELIEF He could also do this same thing in regard to the Gentiles. They as Gentiles should not think that they will always necessarily have the “special status” privileged position just because that is the present situation. Things could change!

This warning has gone largely unheeded in the history of the church these last 2000 years as we have seen Gentiles who thought that they could remain in the place of blessing apart from genuine faith in Christ (substituting in its place ritualism, religion, rationalism, etc.). ...If God judged unbelief in Israel, will He not judge unbelief among the Gentiles? – **George Zeller**

If the Gentiles (in general under the broad umbrella of Christendom) come to BOAST against the Jews, it means they too have lost sight of GRACE and in reality are walking in UNBELIEF. We should expect God to set that brand of Christendom characterized by UNBELIEF aside just as He did the Jews.

It is worth noting the New Testament teaches that the trajectory of the professing Church in the latter days will be more and more towards apostasy to the point there will be a completely false church that will emerge to be the “bride” of the Antichrist in contrast to the true Church that will be raptured. Revelation 17 calls this false church “the great harlot”. When the true Church is gone the center of blessing will once again shift back to Israel with the arrival of two special witnesses on the scene (cf. Rev. 11). Many in Israel will get saved.

There will be 144,000 Jewish evangelists who will go forth in the spirit of the apostle Paul and will win multitudes to the LORD (cf. Rev. 7). This will mark a major shift away from the Gentiles and back to the Jews which is the very thing Paul warns about here in Romans 11.

As we come to verses 22-24 note that they are a summary of the entire issue under discussion.

In these verses [Romans 11:22-24] Paul summarized his whole discussion of God's sovereign choice in temporarily putting Israel aside corporately and proclaiming righteousness by faith to all mankind. – *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

Again, Paul at this point is talking in terms of categories of people in the sense of Gentiles versus Jews and not in relation to individual salvation. This is important to note because otherwise this would sound like one could possibly lose their personal salvation. But Paul in chapter 8 has emphatically emphasized the security of all believers in Christ ending the chapter with the fact that absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse said, "A man walking along the deck of a ship might fall. His fall might hurt him, but it wouldn't be the same as if he fell off the ship. A believer when he sins falls on the deck, but he's never lost overboard. Christ has seen to it," said Barnhouse, "that no wave – not death or life, or angels or principalities, or powers or things present or things to come, or height or depth shall ever sweep us off the deck. Fellowship is forever. Like David, we might have to pray, 'Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,' but we would never have to pray, 'Restore the salvation,' because it's not lost, can't be lost." (Shared by John MacArthur)

This [Rom. 11:22] does not suggest that a Christian can lose his salvation; it refers to Gentiles as a whole (suggested by the sing. **you**) turning from the gospel much as Israel as a nation had done.

– *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

So, Paul here at this juncture in Romans 11 is thinking in terms of categories of people – specifically about Gentiles generally in contrast to the Jews generally.

The Church Age has mostly involved a movement of God among the Gentiles with only a smattering of Jews coming to true faith.

Paul wants us to think about both the goodness and the severity of God.

Any adequate doctrine of God must include these two elements [His goodness and His severity]. When we ignore His goodness, God seems like a tyrant; when we ignore His severity, He seems like a doting Father. – ***NIV Study Bible***

God's "severity" is a subject studiously avoided by many modern scholars who prefer to believe in a God who will take everyone to heaven. The Scriptures clearly reveal otherwise. – ***Henry M. Morris***

Those who fell (unbelieving Israel) have experienced the severity of God's displeasure. In contrast the Gentiles (generally speaking) have been greatly blessed as they in faith have experienced the favor of His goodness.

Severity is the idea of the removal of favored status and the resulting harsh consequences of persisting in rebellion.

Goodness refers to a special favored status involving the blessings of salvation.

Slide # 18

Romans 2:4 (NKJV)

4 Or do you despise the riches of His **goodness**, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the **goodness of God leads you to repentance?**

Paul has already noted that it is the UNBELIEF of Israel that has brought about God dealing with them in severity and it is FAITH that has resulted in the Gentiles experiencing the goodness of God.

But then note Paul's warning in general to the Gentiles as a category of people: They have known God's goodness but this status will continue ONLY "if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off." During the Church Age there has been a steady stream of Gentile conversion and responsiveness to the Lord in faith, but if this dries up, they too will be cut off from the place of God's special blessing!

The mark of the genuine is that they continue! The mark of apostasy is that it does not continue.

Slide # 19

1 Corinthians 15:1–2 (NKJV)

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,
2 by which also you are saved, **if you hold fast that word which I preached to you**—unless you believed in vain.

Slide # 20

Colossians 1:21–23 (NKJV)

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has **reconciled**
22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—
23 **if indeed you continue in the faith**, grounded and steadfast, and are **not moved away** from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Slide # 21

1 John 2:19 (NKJV)

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for **if they had been of us, they would have continued with us;** but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

Revelation 3:10 (NKJV)

10 Because you have **kept My command to persevere**, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

The warning to the Gentiles generally is to be humble because you stand by FAITH alone, and as a category if we don't continue in that mode we too will be cut off. God cut the Jews off because of UNBELIEF and we would expect that He would likewise cut off apostate Gentiles.

The thought here in some ways parallels what Jesus said in John 15:6.

Slide # 22

John 15:6 (NKJV)

6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

Jesus spoke here of *dead* branches; such a branch **is thrown away and withers**. The “burned” branches refer to professing Christians who, like Judas, are not genuinely saved and therefore are judged. Like a dead branch, a person without Christ is spiritually dead and therefore will be punished in eternal fire (cf. Matt. 25:46). Judas was with Jesus; he seemed like a “branch.” But he did not have God’s life in him; therefore he departed; his destiny was like that of a dead branch. – *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

We, as converted Gentiles, should be very thankful and humble – never presumptuous. We should not assume that we as a category of people are any better or more special than the Jews. God will judge an apostate Gentile Church just as surely as He judged apostate Israel. Many professing Gentile Christians get to the same place as the Jews thinking that because they have “religion” they are okay. In truth they are still lost in their UNBELIEF.

The Jews were removed because they failed to believe and the Gentiles remain only because of their continued trust.

– *ESV Study Bible*

The positions can be reversed, and if this occurs, it will not be due to any fickleness in God, but to the nature of the human response. Gentiles can become objects of God’s sternness and Israel can just as easily become the object of His kindness. - *Expositors*

Note again the tremendous weight put on human response and human responsibility as the consistent issue is made to be one of obediently responding in FAITH!

23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

Note the singular condition stated here for Israel to be restored is BELIEF! The problem all along has been Israel’s unbelief. And if they do not continue in unbelief but rather come to faith well, then they will be grafted in again. “God is able to graft them in again.”

Note the combination here is human responsibility to believe and also God is ABLE to graft them in. Both God's sovereign power and human responsibility are represented here. Ultimately it is God's doing but He does it in response to FAITH!

Israel as a nation (generally speaking) has been cut off from God's spiritual blessing because of unbelief. But if that changes – if they come to BELIEVE, then on that basis God will restore them. This is Paul's point. And as we read to the end of the story, we see this is exactly what is going to happen.

Slide # 23

Jeremiah 23:3 (NKJV)

3 “But **I will** gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

Jeremiah 23:5–6 (NKJV)

5 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

6 In His days **Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely;**
Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR
RIGHTEOUSNESS

Therefore, the Gentiles should not be arrogantly putting themselves up and the Jews down. God is ABLE to yet restore the Jews and ultimately, He will!

What Paul is communicating via this allegory is that the blessing of God (salvation) is channeled through Abraham (the Abrahamic Covenant) as ultimately found in Jesus the Messiah. One either taps into this reality by FAITH or they are CUT OFF from it through unbelief. The whole issue is made to turn on the issue of FAITH! And Paul then applies this truth to the two great people groups of the Jews and the Gentiles.

Slide # 24

ROOT – AB Cov – Blessing (Gen. 12:1-3)

MESSIAH – (Matt. 1:1)

Salvation is of the Jews – (Jn. 4:22)

FAITH v. UNBELIEF

24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul is illustrating the point that grafting the Gentiles into the position of blessing promised to the Jews is really the HARD part (humanly speaking).

However, if God can do that (which He has), well then, He certainly can graft Israel back into her true heritage.

As Paul said in Romans 9:4 – it is to Israel that the covenants naturally belong.

If God was able to do what is “contrary to nature” in grafting in the Gentiles, how much more will He be able to graft back in the natural branches? It will not be a difficult thing for God to restore NATIONAL Israel once they come to FAITH!

If Gentile PRIDE gets to thinking they are now the special ones and look down on the Jews in their state of being set aside, they need to realize it is much more natural for God to restore Israel and connect her with the original promised blessing made in conjunction with the patriarchs, than it was for God to bring the Gentiles into that sphere.

As Paul said back in verse 15 this restoration of Israel will be as it were “life from the dead” and God specializes in raising the dead. Indeed, God is ABLE!

No matter how far Israel may stray from the truth of God, the roots are still good. God is still the “God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex. 3:6; Matt. 22:23). He will keep His promises to these patriarchs. This means that the olive tree will flourish again. – **Warren Wiersbe**

Have you ever seen a turtle on a fence post? Well, if you ever do, one thing you can know for certain...

Slide # 25



If you see a turtle on a fence post the one thing you know is that someone put it there. This is our position as Gentile Christians. We did not get into our exalted position by ourselves. It's all of GRACE. By grace we are saved through faith. All glory goes to God. All we are is grafted into the great promises made to the patriarchs which are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah.

We didn't put the post in place – that is the apparatus that allows us to be in an exalted position. This is God's doing corresponding to the Abrahamic Covenant that has made allowance for all the families of the earth. We didn't put ourselves into the position of exaltation which is arrived at by faith alone all because of GRACE alone. Underneath it all is the amazing hand of God Whose ways are past finding out. All is of God! All is of grace!

So let us be humble! Let us be grateful! “**Grafted in but grateful**” should be our motto!

And if you are not saved – you too can be grafted in – you too can tap into the blessings of salvation if you will but come to Jesus and put your faith in Him as your personal Lord and Savior!

Romans 10:12 (NKJV)

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

All you need to do is in FAITH call on Him to save you!

Have you made that call?

Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation.