

“Grace & Peace to You”

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Voice of China and Asia

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ROMANS LESSON 74 PART 1: THE OLIVE TREE & THE MYSTERY

ROM 11:17-20 *But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.¹⁹ [But] Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but [the reason] you stand fast [is] through faith.*

To illustrate the position of Jews and Gentiles in God’s plan of redemption, Paul uses the imagery of a **Cultivated Olive Tree** (the JEWS) and a **Wild Olive Branch** (the GENTILES). The JEWS are like **Olive Branches** that have been **“cut-off.”** This is by their own refusal to believe. Meanwhile the GENTILES are like **Wild Olive Branches** that have been **“grafted-in”** to the **Tree** to draw life from the **Root** (Abraham’s Faith).

THE OLIVE TREE AND THE BRANCHES

Some Basics:

- Grafting was a common practice of their day... as it continues even today – the purpose is to use the “root” development of an older tree to produce fruit through younger branches that are grafted-in
- **Natural Olive Tree...** **“The Root”** – Abraham – **“He believed, and it was counted as righteousness”** [GEN 15:6]
 - **The Branches** – The Jews AS “religion” (*not just by ancestry*)
 - **Broken Branches** – Jews who rejected the Messiah – **“...were broken off because of their unbelief** [vs20]
- **Wild Olive Branches** – Gentiles who have received the Messiah –
- **“Contrary to nature...”** [vs24] – In nature the **“Natural Olive tree”** refers to that which is **fruitful** ... the **“Wild Olive Tree”** was Fruitless / Non-productive... Fruitless branches would NEVER be grafted into a Cultivated tree... they would remain fruitless and render both the Roots and the Tree unproductive.
- **BUT God did JUST THAT!** He took the **“unfruitful Gentiles”** and grafted them INTO the Cultivated Tree of the **“Roots of Abraham”** ... and **MADE Them Productive...**

ROM 11:17-24

*But if **some** of the branches were broken off...*

- From Pentecost Jews have realized Jesus as their Messiah... This will precede throughout the time of The Tribulation... Multitudes will come to salvation...
- **BUT** many have “hardened their hearts” and followed the in the way of the Synagogue in Antioch: **“you count yourselves unworthy of Eternal Life – ACTS 13:46]**

...and you, although a wild olive branch, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree...

- Gentile believers receive of the same **“Life”** as God has offered to the Jewish Believers...

- They are “...the ones who share the faith of Abraham...”
- For “...if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring [branch], heirs according to promise.” [Gal 3:29]

18 do not be arrogant toward the branches.

- Arrogant... – A strong word of “abusive glorying” over an opponent – “taunting”
- DO NOT now take a place of “rejecting” the Jews / Israel... the Gentiles DO NOT REPLACE ISRAEL!

If you are... remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.

- Gentiles receive LIFE from the same source... There are NOT “2” Churches – The BODY of CHRIST!
- “CHRIST is the SEED... not us” – We are Abraham’s Seed because we are IN HIM (CHRIST) ...

19 Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”

20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but [the reason] you stand fast [is] through faith.

- Why were they “broken-off” – NOT because God was DONE with them... OR He wanted “you” instead...
- It was their UNBELIEF... NOT because they were Jews / Israel ...

ROMANS LESSON 74 PART 2: THE OLIVE TREE & THE MYSTERY

So do not become proud, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

- Proud – [Lit Proud in thinking] – a pride that can act abusively to others – seeing self as “above those...”
- Fear – A fear that realizes God and His Word as the Rule and Authority for life and conduct...
- It is NOT on basis of Race / Origin / Ethnicity / Status / Effort
- UNBELIEF on YOUR part will result in your Loss...

22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God:

severity toward those who have fallen...

- Those who have NOT Believed... God DOES NOT make another way... They Believe OR they Perish
- Although the Jews ARE God’s People... They MUST accept the Messiah: Jesus Christ

but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness.

- ONLY because of FAITH – NOT because you are Gentiles
- The ONLY way to continue in His Kindness is BY FAITH... Gentiles are ONLY be saved By FAITH...

Otherwise, you too will be cut off.

- Gentiles as a group... NOT individuals... If you think you are “safe” being Gentiles... Think Again...

23 IF they DO NOT CONTINUE in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.

- HERE is a REAL Miracle... the JEWS can be “re-grated” – IF they BELIEVE!
- GOD has the Power... JUST as He had the Power to graft a “wild Olive branch” into the True Olive Tree...

24 For if YOU were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree... and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree... how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

THE MYSTERY & THE MERCY OF GOD

ROM 11:25-27 *Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.* ²⁶ *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”;

²⁷ *“and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”*

It can be said that these final verses of **ROMAN 11** are a culmination of what has been presented in **CHAPTERS 9 – 11**. Paul introduced the subject in **ROMANS 9:6**, asking rhetorically *“HAVE God’s purposes in history failed, since so many Jews, God’s specially chosen people, rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah?”* Our studies have shown that Paul strongly denied this, and he has been giving reason after reason for an entirely different view: **That the conversion of Gentiles has been according to God’s wise and perfect plan, and it precedes His plan to save Israel.**

THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S PLAN

In the earlier portion of **ROMANS 11**, Paul has argued for the conversion of the mass of Jewish people. *Now he moves from argument to prophecy*, stating the certainty of the blessing that shall one day be realized... This means that what he has to say now is in the nature of **special revelation**.

This is the significance of the word **mystery** in **VERSE 25**.

11:25 *Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware...*

- **Don’t be conceited...** – as he has argued since **CHAPTER 9**, whatever is happening to Israel be NO occasion to see yourselves as NOW superior to the Jews...
 - The Church has NOT replaced Israel as recipients of ALL the Covenant Promises...
 - Israel’s “blindness / hardness / rejection” is TEMPORARY... meant to be remedial NOT Terminal...
- **Don’t Be Uninformed...** – If you have read Paul’s Letters, you are aware of his use of this phrase. He uses it to draw attention to a critical truth that NEEDS your attention (*usually one that you have been taught before*)
- **To overlook THIS is NOT good...** – Revelation and Growth in God’s Word is progressive, and CERTAIN things are essential to the proper understanding of OTHER things...

“...of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

- **This Mystery...** – Something concealed but NOW understood through revelation to the NT Apostles & Prophets... It was purposely hidden until the time for it to be known and proclaimed...
 - Their “understanding and application” ARE authoritative for the Church
 - OT writers “saw them” but could offer NO insight until God gave it to the NT writers [**1 PETER 1:10-12**]
 - Mystery of the Gospel [**EPH 6:19**]; Mysteries of the Kingdom [**MATT 13:11FF**]; Mysteries of the One Body [**EPH 3:3; 6**]; Mystery of Our Resurrection Bodies [**1 COR 15:51**]; Mystery of Lawlessness [**2 THESS 2:7**]; Mystery of God “Completed” [**REV 10:7**]
- **Partial hardening [dullness]** ... – This is NOT the hardening of stubbornness, but a dullness... no interest... casual indifference...
 - FULLY describes Israel today... they have NO interest, NO passion, NO concern for God’s Messiah
 - It is “partial” – NOT “every Jew” ... Not the Race “as a Whole” ... Not the Nation “All together”
- **The Fulness of the Gentiles...** – Fulness here is best understood as “the full number” –
 - NOT all the Gentiles will accept the Christ ... BUT God has the number...
 - *“God is NOT WILLING that any... but that all should reach repentance”* [**2 PET 3:9**] – HE KNOWS WHO...

ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED...

11:26A *And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written...*

- *In this way...* –
- *ALL Israel...* – Certainly does not refer to every single Jew... many had already perished... many MORE before the “Full-number” of the Gentiles... Multitudes during the Tribulation...
- This is Israel “collectively” – when the Messiah appears at the 2nd Coming those who “recognize their Redeemer... those who “have faith” will fall before Him in Reverence and Acceptance... Many will NOT...

ZECH 13:7-9 [vs8-9] *In the whole land, declares the LORD, **two thirds shall be cut off and perish**, and **one third shall be left alive**.⁹ And I will put **this third** into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘They are my people’; and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”*

ZECH 12:10 *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.*

11:26B-27 *“The Deliverer will come from Zion, **HE** will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;*

²⁷ *“and this will be **MY** covenant with them when I take away their sins.”*

- These verses are a “mash-up” of similar passages from the OT: ISA 59:20-21; 27:9 / PSA 14:7; 53:6
- God had promised His people that HE would Deliver them... Purify them... and Restore them...

MERCY ON ALL

ROM 11:28-32 *As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.*

- *As regards the Gospel...*
 - *they are enemies...* – SO were YOU... -
 - *for your sake...* – their disobedience led to the Gospel being presented to you...
- *As regards election...*
 - *they are beloved...* THEY have always been HIS OWN
 - *for their forefathers...* – A promise TO Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ... -
- *Gifts and callings “irrevocable”* – THIS cannot / will not change...
- *“You were”* - Disobedient... obtained mercy... – EPH 2:2; 5:6; / TITUS 3:3FF
- *“They are NOW”* – but they will receive mercy... –
- *ALL to disobedience...* ALL receive mercy... -

33 *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*

34 *“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”*

35 *“Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”*

36 *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*