

Series: A Future for Israel
"The Olive Tree" # 2
Romans 11:11-24
9-6-15 Sun PM

We are in chapter 11 which deals with Israel's future restoration.

Last week in vs. 1-10 Paul asked a very important question, "Has God cast away his people [completely] which He foreknew?" Paul goes on to explain why this is not the case: Paul himself, the believing remnant, and the partial blindness.

We pick up in vs. 11-24 and discover that there was a divine purpose in God setting aside Israel partly and temporarily. God has promised never to forsake those he foreknew.

TT- Paul presents the divine purposes of their unbelief and illustrates those purposes with two parables.

1. The Purposes of Their Unbelief [vs. 11-15]. Israel was in unbelief so that the Gentiles might be saved.

1. vs. 11-12: Here we see the divine purpose behind their rejection and unbelief.

v. 11a: Paul introduces his thought with a question, "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" Has their rejection or failure led to their final separation from God? Is God through with them in their unbelief?

v. 11b-12: The setting aside of Israel temporarily is so that the Gentiles would be offered salvation. This would in turn provoke them too jealously [see 10:19]. Their rejection is a blessing!

When the nation of Israel sees the Gentiles enjoying the salvation which could have been theirs, they will be convinced of their apostasy and rejection of Jesus. Paul lays the groundwork for his truth that Israel's rejection is not permanent and she will be restored in her fullness.

2. vs. 13-15: Paul addresses the Gentiles knowing their anticipated question, "Why is the apostle to the Gentiles concerned about the salvation of the Jews?"

Paul had two objectives- he wanted to glorify or fulfill his office, and the salvation of his brethren according to the flesh [9:2-3; 10:1].

v. 14: He wanted to provoke or stimulate his brethren to salvation.

v. 15: Here Paul contrasts receiving with casting away. Christ reconciled the world to himself at the cross for those who believe.

If Israel's blindness brought salvation to the Gentiles, what would her reception by God bring? We will see a mighty evangelistic movement in the last days with large numbers coming to Christ in the tribulation to enter the millennial reign [11:12, 25-27].

2. The Parables of Their Unbelief [vs. 16-24].

1. v. 16a: The first parable is about the first-fruit and the lump. Paul introduces the principle of dedication of first-fruits to God.

Numbers 15:20-21, Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave offering: as ye do the heave offering of the threshingfloor, so shall ye heave it. (21) Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave offering in your generations.

The first-fruits were to be given to the Lord. Because the first-fruits offering represented the entire portion, the entire piece of dough could be said to be holy, set apart to God.

Point: The first-fruits are Abraham. He was holy in the sense that he was set apart by God. If this was true of him, it is true of his chosen posterity. Israel is the firstfruits in God's program of salvation and set apart unto God. God will restore national Israel in the kingdom as promised.

Romans 4:13, For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

2. vs. 17-24: The second parable is the root and the branches.

Charles Ryrie says, "The olive tree is the place of blessing and privilege that was first occupied by the natural branches the Jews. The wild branches are Gentiles who because of the unbelief of Israel, now occupy the place of privilege. The root of the tree is the Abrahamic covenant that was promised blessing to both Jews and Gentile through Christ."

This metaphor of a root of a tree and its branches also points to the truth that God's program of salvation is rooted in the nation of Israel.

If the root is set apart, so are the branches. Abraham is **the root** in the sense that he was the first to be set apart by God to form a new society, distinct from the nations. If Abraham was set apart, so are those who are descended from him in the chosen line.

The olive tree is the place of divine blessing and privilege; God's covenant of salvation made with Abraham.

Paul issues a strong warning to the Gentiles about their understanding of what happened to unbelieving Jews.

Paul says don't be proud and self-righteous as the rejecting Jews, and don't disrespect the Jews.

Remember, the Gentiles have been grafted in by the grace of God and Gentiles and Jews come from the same root.

Point: Don't be high-minded because it would be easier to graft the natural branches back than wild branches in their place. This is the mystery that Paul talks about in v. 25.

v. 22: We have an apparent problem "cut off."

Let me read what the BBC says, "The Gentiles too could **be cut off** if they do not maintain that relative openness which the Savior found during His earthly ministry. It must be constantly borne in mind that Paul is not speaking of the church or of individual believers. He is speaking about the Gentiles as such. Nothing can ever separate the Body of Christ from the Head, and nothing can separate a believer from the love of God, but the Gentile peoples can be removed from their present position of special privilege."

It is all by the grace of God.

Next Time- "The Mystery" Romans 11:25-36