**Romans 11 – Grafted in**

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Romans 11 is the final chapter of a section in “middle Romans” that has created a lot of debate within the church for over a thousand years. Words like; God’s sovereignty, election, predestined, and chosen are peppered throughout these chapters, often leading theologians to build doctrine on certain verses in these texts, while ignoring other verses throughout the Bible.

One topic that is present in each of these chapters is the subject of “Israel”. Paul writes emphatically and passionately about Israel, and is very concerned for Israel’s salvation.

As we mentioned previously, Paul uses these three terms when talking about the *Jewish People;*

“Israel”, “The people of Israel”, and “Israelites” are used interchangeably, depending upon which version of the Bible you are reading. The same three words can have three different meanings.

ISRAEL / ISRAELITES / PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

### “The chosen people (Jews) of the promised land of Israel” (Jews that are adherent or not adherent to the word of God living in the literal land of Israel).

### The *non-believing* Jewish people anywhere in the world.

### The *believing* Jewish people everywhere, and also the Gentiles (non-Jews) who were “grafted in”. (See Romans 11:19)

### \*He is certainly NOT talking about just the “Church”, he never calls the church “Israel” to the exclusion of the others. That is **known as** *“****R****eplacement* ***T****heology”* ***or Supersessionism*** – a false doctrine that undermines God’s promises and purposes for Israel and the Jewish people.

*[ I was sent a sermon video last week by a friend who had just left his church because the Pastor was preaching a series about Israel with the statements that; “God replaced Israel with the church”, “The nation of Israel is nothing special to God”, “Islam has more in common with Christianity than Judaism does”. Sadly, the Pastor does not seem to be aware that the deception he is under is causing people to leave the church (thankfully), and the blessing of God to be lifted away from his ministry. ] (NOTE: I very rarely advise someone to leave their church unless there are serious foundational flaws in the teaching. This is one. It’s the equivalent of telling someone not to board a plane that has at least one faulty wing).*

We very clearly see Paul’s heart for Israel expressed in the beginning of the previous two chapters, and he addresses their salvation in this one.

**Romans 9:2-4 “**I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel.”

**Romans 10:1** “Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.”

It’s important to note that Paul makes an important statement about Jews and Gentiles in chapter 10;

**Romans 10:12-13** “For there is *no difference between Jew and Greek*: The same Lord is Lord of all, and gives richly to all who call on Him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

It’s important not to undermine the fact that through Jesus, EVERYONE can be saved, and ALL are considered sons and daughters of God, when we believe upon Jesus, and God loves each of us equally. As Paul stated very clearly in the beginning of this letter;

**Romans 2:11** “God does *not* show favoritism.”

But what does that mean for the promises and purposes that God clearly laid out in scripture for Israel and the Jewish people? Has that been dissolved? Has he jettisoned the Jews and replaced them with the church? Has He reneged on His promises and abandoned His Covenants with His people?

You’ll find that Paul answers with a resounding “No!” That’s what chapter 11 is about.

In chapter 10, however he addresses the fact that the Jews in large part have rejected Jesus, their Messiah;

**Romans 10:16 “**But not all the Israelites accepted the good news.”

The response to this statement sets up the beginning of ROMANS 11.

This chapter is a cornerstone chapter on the subjects of Israel, The Jewish people, and the salvation of His people. So much can be learned from this chapter alone, that in some seminaries, Jewish Studies students are required to memorize this chapter in its entirety.

**Romans 11**

**1**“I ask then: Did God reject *his people*? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.”

Right away we see “Israel” referred to as “His People”, He is specifically talking about Jewish people, and in this case those who rejected Him.

***Deuteronomy 7:6*** *“For you [Israel] are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, his treasured possession”.*

Paul addresses the fact that Israel has been unfaithful to God and rejected the Messiah. He states unmistakably that God still remains faithful to them regardless, just as he did in chapter 3;

**Romans 3:3-4** “What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? Certainly not! Let God be true and every man a liar.”

Back to Romans 11;

**2**God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don’t you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: **3**“Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me”? **4**And what was God’s answer to him? “I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”

This is in 1st Kings 19 when Ahab and Jezebel were trying to kill Elijah for speaking God’s truth to a very evil Israel. In fact *1st Kings 16 says “[Ahab] did more to arouse the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him.*”

Elijah wanted to give up on Israel, but the Lord would not let him.

**5**So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. **6**And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

**Grace** (gr. charis – gift), cannot be earned, or worked for. It must be received freely, otherwise it’s not grace.

**7**What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were hardened, **8**as it is written:

*“God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day.”* ***9****And David says: “May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them.****10****May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.”*

**11**Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. **12**But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!

This is astonishing. Paul is saying that that the Jew’s rejection, was part of a prophetic plan to allow non-Jews to be saved. AND, that their salvation is intended to make the Jews envious so that they too would accept the Messiah.

**13**I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry **14**in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.

Back in Galatians 2, it was decided by the leaders in Jerusalem that Paul would be the “Apostle to the Gentiles, and Peter would be the Apostle to the Jews. But Paul never gave up on his fellow Jewish people, and always had a passion in his heart that they would be saved.

**15**For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? **16**If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

Paul begins using analogies here; first dough, then an olive tree. When he says if part of the dough (the starter dough) is Holy, or the root of a tree is Holy, then the whole loaf or tree will be as well.

It’s important to understand that Holy does not mean flawless, faultless, or perfect; it means *“set apart for a specific purpose”.*

Here is where Paul goes into his famous Olive Tree analogy, where he compares Israel to a cultivated Olive tree, and Gentiles as branches from wild, or uncultivated olive trees. He says some branches were cut off because of unbelief, and some wild olive tree branches were *“GRAFTED IN”* among the others. The grafted in branches become healthy branches, sharing in the nourishing sap, and are now part of the tree and supported by the root (and trunk) which is Israel. They did not *replace* Israel.

**17**If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been ***grafted in*** among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, **18**do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.

**19**You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” **20**Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. **21**For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

The analogy comes with a very stern warning. You were grafted in by grace through faith, (which you did NOT deserve). Do not dare “boast against the cut-off branches, or think yourself superior to those natural branches which were cut off. If you too fall into unbelief, you could be cut off as well!

**22**Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. **23**And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. **24**After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

**25**I do not want you to be ignorant of *this mystery*, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number 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 turn godlessness away from Jacob. **27**And this ismy covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

“This Mystery” has baffled theologians for years. What does Paul mean that; *“Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved.”*

There is clearly some eschatological significance with Jews rejecting Messiah, The fullness of Gentiles coming into faith, then Salvation to Jews in the end.

Jesus himself said this about the end times;

**Luke 21:24** “Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

He said to the Jews living in Jerusalem who rejected Him,

**Matt 23:39** “For I tell you that you will not see Me again until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Other End Times Prophecies:

* **Zechariah 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, a when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him.
* **Revelation 1:7** “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will mourn on account of him.”
* **Rev. 7:4** “Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.”

*Clearly, Israel and the Jewish people play a huge part in end-times prophecy.*

They are enemies, but they are loved…

The same Jews who rejected Jesus, also rejected Peter, killed Stephen and James and now are rejecting Paul. They were enemies of the gospel. But Paul does not maligned them and say that they are no longer chosen and loved by God;

**28**As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, **29**for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.

His gifts and callings are irrevocable. God is the ultimate Promise Keeper, he does not go back on His word and forsake His people. Remember what He told us;

**Romans 9:14-16“**What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! **15**For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,  
    and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” **16**It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.

God maintains the right to extend mercy to whomever he pleases. He can choose to forgive anyone, or to bless anyone He pleases for His own purposes. He is God.

Omnipotent – Able to do all things, Allowed to do anything. *Power AND Prerogative.*

**Mercy, like grace, is *“undeserved”.***

*GRACE = “undeserved favor”, MERCY = “undeserved pardon”.*

***If it’s earned or depends on human effort, it’s neither mercy nor grace.***

**30**Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, **31**so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may nowreceive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. **32**For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Never forget, that we stand free and uncondemned because of God’s mercy which *we don’t deserve*!

* **Romans 3:23** “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
* **Isa. 64:6** “But we are all like an unclean *thing,* And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags.”
* **Romans 3:10** “There is no one righteous, not even one.”

***Quote****: “there but for the grace of God go I” “there but for the mercy of God go I”*

Our response to God’s mercy and grace should be humility and thankfulness. We should receive His love graciously and with gratitude, and be willing to show his love to those whom He also loves, even those who have rejected him.

The chapter ends with what is called the **Doxology.** I like to call it the “**Disclaimer”.** *Because it basically tells us that we’re not smart enough to know the depth of God’s wisdom and knowledge.*

There is so much about God that we don’t understand. There are so many Mysteries concerning; His will, His ways and His wisdom. He tells us that his ways are higher than ours, His thoughts are wiser.

Paul, who seemed to know more about God than anyone else around, having written half the New Testament writes this;

**1st Cor. 13:12 “12**For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”

God’s wisdom and knowledge are too deep for us to fully know. Therefore, we must approach Him by Faith (Trust),

* Trusting in His Word and His Character when theological concepts are too difficult for us to understand,
* Trusting in His love and wisdom to have mercy on whomever He will have mercy.

**Question: Who can you have mercy upon, as God has had mercy upon you?**

Closing verses:

**33**Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!  
    How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!  
**34**“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”   
**35**“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?”   
**36**For from him and through him and for him are all things.  
    To him be the glory forever! Amen. <>