

Prophetic Fall Feasts of The LORD

Sept. 4, 2019 Lesson #34 Paul's Case For Israel: Gentile Warnings

Learning From Israel's Failure

Rom. 11:17-24 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. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. ²⁰ Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Using the analogy of the olive tree and its branches:

Paul shows the folly of spiritual pride and the need for a deep sense of humility and holy fear.

Foundational guidelines:

1. Paul is speaking of Israel and the Gentiles collectively.
2. He is not discussing the relationship of individual believers, but the place of Israel in God's plan.
3. Paul is speaking generally of the privileges and blessings which God bestows on His people.
4. The context of Romans 9-11 stresses the sovereignty of God and the certainty of His blessings in spite of the failure of His people.
5. Paul is striving to discourage pride and to encourage humility and fear of the Lord.

The underlying problem is that the Gentile believers, like the Jews, may soon forget that God's blessings in their lives are by His grace through faith and not of works.

Remember: Paul's words of warning to the Gentile Christians are based upon Israel's failures.

Deut. 4:32-38 God warned the Israelites they would soon forget that His blessings were based upon grace and not upon their worth. They were a greatly privileged people.

Deut. 8:11-18 God knew once the Israelites began to taste of God's grace in the land of Canaan, they would forget that all their blessings were bestowed on them in spite of their sin.

The Israelites did not heed these words of warning. Over and over, they turned from God to idols. They spurned God's grace and became proud in heart.

They believed God blessed them because they were superior to the Gentiles.

Their pride was self-righteousness so they ignored or denied their sin. felt no need for grace

When Jesus came, offering grace and forgiveness to "sinner," the majority of Israelites did not think they needed Him nor did they want a Messiah like Him.

They disdained and rejected the salvation He offered to sinners.

Ultimately, they put Him to death.

Consider: Now the Jews are the heathen and the Gentiles are being offered forgiveness and salvation by grace through faith.

As Gentiles believe and enter into the blessings of God, Paul warns they too will forget that God's blessings are by His grace alone.

They will begin to look down on the Jews who have not believed and who are suffering divine discipline.

Gentiles will become arrogant about their privileged status and repeat the sin of the Jews.

Counter Spiritual Pride: Paul desires his Gentile readers learn from Israel's failure and that they respond to God's grace with humility and praise toward God rather than with pride.

Apparently, Paul knew from some contacts in Rome there was a problem with creeping spiritual pride on the part of the Gentile Christians against their fellow Jewish believers and against unbelieving Jews. This attitude would lead to:

- division in the church
- anti-Semitism that would choke out the witness to the Jews, and
- the spiritual ruin of those who continued down that path.

Paul warned the Gentiles: They were obligated to Israel. Therefore they dared not boast of their new spiritual position.

Paul uses the illustration of an olive tree and its branches:

To counter this problem of spiritual pride. He warns the Gentiles against spiritual pride 3x in Romans 11:18, 20, 25.

Gentiles: You are not the root. Gentiles are branches from a wild olive tree that have been grafted into the cultivated tree.

Gentiles: You are supported by the root of the Good Olive Tree.

Gentiles: You are no better than the Jews but you were grafted into the Olive Tree by God's grace alone.

Gentiles: If you do not curb your pride, you could be broken off as the unbelieving Jews were.

Gentiles: I encourage you to share the truth of the Gospel with unbelieving Jews.

Show that in God's sovereign plan, the branches were broken off because of unbelief but God's Word shows they will be grafted back in when they believe. [Rom. 11:23]

God is moving salvation history toward that end. [Rom. 11:25-26]

Rom. 11:18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. [Do Not Be Arrogant Toward The Branches]

- ❖ Don't let this become your mindset.

Arrogant: exaggerating or disposed to exaggerate one's own worth or importance; don't manifest a feeling of superiority

Question: Could the false doctrine of replacement theology be a variation of arrogance toward the branches - the Jews?

❖ This easily incites the leaven of subtle anti-Semitism.

The Gentile branch begins to feel arrogant toward the branches.

He fails to see that he is grafted in AMONG the Jewish branches. [11:17]

Doesn't understand: Israel's failure is temporary and partial.

Act as though there are no branches except Gentile branches.

This is how the Jews felt toward the Gentiles.

If one wanted to enter God's blessings, one had to become a Jew.

Does the Gentile branch believe that God has removed Israel from His plan and purpose?

Does he think it is all over for the nation of Israel?

Remember: The Gentile is a grafted in branch; Nation of Israel is the tree.

It is not a Gentile tree which may support a few Jewish Christians.

It is a Jewish tree which supports some Gentiles.

Illus.: Relationship between a dog and a flea. The dog = Israel; The flea = Gentile Christian

How foolish for the flea to despise the dog and think the dog is dependent upon him.

All the flea does for the dog is make him itch. All the Gentile does for the Jewish unbeliever is make him jealous. How foolish for fleas to look down on the dog.

How foolish for Gentile believers to disdain the Jews!

Paul's Message: Guard Against Spiritual Pride

I. Salvation Is By Grace Alone.

Consider: Spiritual pride creeps in when we forget that salvation is by grace alone and not because of anything good in us. No one deserves salvation.

A. God's grace toward Abraham was the basis of the Jews' privileged position as God's chosen people.

Most agree that the root is the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Gen. 12:1-3 God promised to bless Abram and make from him a great nation so that in him ALL the families of the earth would be blessed.

Deut. 7:7-8 God chose the Israelites for the sake of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Rom. 9:11-13 God chose those men by His sovereign grace alone.

Question: What did Paul mean by the first piece of dough and the lump in Rom. 11:16?

If the first piece of dough is holy [Abraham], then the rest of the lump is consecrated also.

Consider: Paul's point is that God will keep His promises to the fathers by keeping their descendants as His people and saving the bulk of them at the culmination of history.

B. God's grace toward the Gentiles is the basis of our receiving the blessings of Salvation.

Rom. 11:17 Paul calls the Gentiles a wild olive and says they were grafted in among the Jews so they became a partaker of the rich root of the olive tree.

Normally, a branch from a cultivated olive tree would be grafted into a wild olive tree.

Paul's illustration goes against nature.

Rom. 11:24 God's grace in grafting the "wild olive" Gentiles into the cultivated tree was contrary to expectations. They did nothing to deserve such blessing.

Rom. 11:18 Paul deflates Gentile pride: "But if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you."

Gentiles receive God's salvation because He chose to be gracious to Abraham and promised to bless all the nations of the earth through him.

John 4:22 Salvation is of the Jews.

Paul's Message: Guard Against Spiritual Pride

II. By Maintaining Your Faith.

Paul is talking in national terms in the sense the Gentiles as a whole could be cut off from God's grace, just as the Jews were.

- Maintain Your Faith: Faith in Jesus Christ alone cripples our pride.
- Maintain Your Faith: Faith excludes boasting.

Saving faith means I rely on Christ to do for me what I never deserved and what I could never do for myself. He took my penalty for sin on the cross.

- How can I boast in myself for that?

Maintaining faith before the God who shows mercy on me will guard me against spiritual pride.

Gal. 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Paul's message: Guard Against Spiritual Pride

III. By maintaining fear before the God of goodness and severity.

Rom. 11:20b-21 Be not high minded, but fear:

²¹ For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

Consider: As long as any bent toward sin remains in us, we need to fear God and fear our own propensity to sin.

I Cor. 10:12 Let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

Take heed lest he also spare not thee: Keep in Context!

- ❖ Which branches were broken off by God? Unbelieving Branches
- ❖ He is not talking about individual Christians who are Gentiles or Jews.
- ❖ He is talking about the Gentile world. Currently, the offer is on the table for the Gentile world to come to know Christ just like the offer to Israel.
- ❖ Israel rejected to come to Christ by faith and God cut them off as a nation.
- ❖ If you reject it as a Gentile world, then God is going to cut the Gentiles off.

Rom. 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

- ❖ The door will be shut when God is through building His church.
- ❖ God will turn back to Israel.

Note: According to Bible prophecy, the professing Gentile church will be "cut off" because of apostasy. I Timothy 4, II Timothy 3, and II Thessalonians 2, all indicate that the professing church in the last days will depart from the faith. There is no hope for the apostate church. But there is hope for apostate Israel! Why?

Because of the roots of the olive tree. God will keep His promises to the patriarchs, but God will break off the Gentiles because of their unbelief.

No matter how far Israel may stray from the truth of God, the roots are still good.

God is still the "God of Abraham, 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!

4 Reasons We Should Maintain Fear:

A. We should fear because spiritual pride is a constant, insidious danger.

Insidious: awaiting a chance to entrap; treacherous; harmful but enticing, having a gradual and cumulative effect; developing so gradually as to be well established before becoming apparent.

Paul saw spiritual pride as dangerous enough to repeat his warning 3x. [11:18, 20, 25]

The Gospel of God's grace should humble us.

Our flesh is so prone toward pride that it just keeps oozing out of any crack that we don't repair.

Example: Spiritual pride > the pride of being doctrinally correct.

We must grow in sound doctrine or we will be spiritually unstable. [Eph. 4:13-15]

We must maintain the fear of God as we grow in sound doctrine or that doctrine will puff us up with pride. [I Cor. 8:1]

If I am doctrinally correct, it is only because God graciously opened my eyes to TRUTH.

B. We should fear because we are so prone to compare ourselves with others rather than with Christ.

Rom. 11:18 Do not be arrogant toward the branches.

Branches refers to the Jews who had rejected the Gospel and were temporally cut off.

It is easy for us to look down on unbelievers with disgust and think: They deserve to be judged.

Note: We rarely compare ourselves with godly people or with Christ.

C. We should fear because we are prone to drift from justification by faith alone into justification by works.

One reason the Jews were cut off from salvation: They sought to establish their own righteousness by keeping the law. [Rom. 9:31-32; 10:3]

Now that the Gentiles have graciously been grafted into God's promises, they turn around and are arrogant towards the unbelieving Jews.

Gentiles: If it weren't for the mercy of God, you would still be in your sins.

We only stand in faith [Rom. 11:20] and not by our works.

Spiritual pride subtly creeps in and makes us want to take at least some credit for our salvation, so that we even boast in our faith.

D. We should fear because we behold the goodness and severity of God.

Rom. 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

We tend to skip over BEHOLD which occurs over 1000x in the Bible as a flashing warning light: "Slow down! Open your eyes! You need to think about this."

We all are prone to behold God's goodness, but we aren't so apt to behold His severity.

Rom. 11:8-10, 25 "To those who fell" refers to the Jews who were currently cut off from God's mercy due to judicial hardening.

- ❖ If you reject the goodness or kindness of God, He can cut you off.
- ❖ He is talking to the Gentile world; not individual believers.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: "The best corrective against pride...is to know God, His character and the truth about Him. The main place to behold the goodness and severity of God is at the cross. There the severity of His righteous judgment did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all. [Rom. 8:32] There the kindness of His tender love forgave all our sins and adopted us as His beloved children the instant we trusted in Christ. Guard yourself against form of spiritual pride by remembering that salvation is by grace alone and by maintaining faith in Christ and fear before the kindness and severity of God."

Rom. 11:23-24 And they [Israel] also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

- ❖ The unbelieving branches who are physical descendants of Abraham
- ❖ God is able to graft them back into the Olive Tree.
- ❖ To The Gentile world who rejected Him, they are cut off and not grafted back in. Why?
- ❖ They were never part of the Olive Tree to start with.

Consider: The goodness and severity of God can be seen in the two comings of our Lord.

His 1st Coming: Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost. He came to be gracious to sinners.

His 2nd Coming: Jesus will come to judge the wicked. The severity of God will be eternally and irreversibly evident when He returns to reign upon the earth.

Throughout eternity, you will either enjoy His goodness or endure His wrath.

The difference is determined by belief or unbelief.

We must believe that we are a sinner, without any hope of God's favor, deserving only of His eternal wrath. We must believe that God sent His Son to die in our place, to pay the penalty for our sins, and to provide us with His righteousness. We must believe that He has done all that is necessary for our eternal salvation.

Consider: Israel is now thinking: The Gentiles are getting all the presents or blessings.

I thought they were ours. Didn't God promise?

God's severity toward Israel will be instrumental in bringing them into the realm of His kindness and grace.

One day God is going to pour out His Spirit of grace and supplication on Israel's remnant.

"Israel, My beloved, come to Me."

Hab. 3:3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran.

What is in modern day Jordan? Petra or Bozrah

Recall Matthew 24:15-16 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.

Habakkuk seems to say: "Oh I saw Him come for the salvation of His people."

Witness #5 God Himself Romans 11:25-36

The very character and work of God are involved in the future of Israel.

Men may dispute about prophecy and differ in their interpretations, but let every man realize: He is dealing with God's people, Israel and God's timing.

What has happened to Israel is a part of God's plan.

God's Timing: The blinding or hardening of Israel as a nation is neither total nor final: it is partial and temporary. How long will it last?

Rom. 11:25: "Until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

Today, God in His grace is visiting the Gentiles and taking out a people for His name [Acts 15:12-14). When this present age has run its course, and the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then God will once more deal with the nation of Israel.

God's promise in Rom. 11:26: And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Isa. 59:20-21 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. ²¹ As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever. [Read Isaiah 60 to complete the picture.]

God's covenant in Rom. 11:27-28 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. ²⁸ As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes.

God's nature: Rom. 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Mal. 3:6 "I am the Lord, I change not."

God's Grace: Rom. 11:30-32 "Because of the unbelief of the Jews, you Gentiles were saved," said Paul. "Now, may it be that through your salvation Israel will come to know Christ."

Wiersbe: Having contemplated God's great plan of salvation for Jews and Gentiles, all Paul could do was sing a hymn of praise. Only a God as wise as our God could take the fall of Israel and turn it into salvation for the world! His plans will not be aborted, nor will His purposes lack fulfillment. Paul summoned five witnesses, and they all agreed: there is a future for Israel. When Israel recovers from her "fall" and enters into her "fullness," the world will experience the riches of God's grace as never before. When Jesus Christ returns and sits on David's throne to reign over His kingdom, then Israel will be "reconciled" and "received," and it will be like a resurrection of life from the dead.

Who would ever have thought Jewish evangelism would have been achieved by Gentile evangelism? Who would have imagined that by turning to the Gentiles Paul was doing Israel a great service? No one. In verses 33-36 of this chapter, Paul concludes by praising God for His wisdom, a wisdom which far surpasses anything men would have devised or even imagined. Who would have imagined that the salvation of the Gentiles would have been accomplished through Israel's disobedience rather than her obedience? Yet this was God's way. In achieving His purposes His way, God receives all the glory.

Rom. 11:33-36 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

³⁴ For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

³⁵ Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

³⁶ For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.