

The Israel of God Part 5 of 8 – Romans 11, Part 1

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The True Israel of God

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Now this is, as I mentioned before, part five in our series on the truth of the Israel of God in Christ. God doesn't have a people outside of Jesus Christ. There is nobody that qualifies as the people of God if they are outside of Jesus Christ. It would almost seem as though I wouldn't need to say that, but I do, because modern theology says that the Jews are God's chosen people even though they deny Jesus Christ and that somehow they have a special covenant outside of Christ. There is nothing outside of Christ. Nothing.

Now, in this series, I know that many people have not heard, you've heard it, but for those that would listen in on the radio, there will be some that will never have heard these doctrines before. There may be some that will tune in on this particular message, not hearing the previous ones and it will be a lot for them to bear, and I would say to those that tune in in the middle of this series, we're on part five, if some of these things strike you, or you want to have a better understanding of it, then they ought to write to us and ask for the whole series. We'll be offering the whole series, however many parts that ends up being. It'll be at least seven. We'll see how the Lord leads after that and we'll happily send the whole series of CDs on this vitally important subject. It's a life-changing subject. It's the very thing that'll put steel in your backbone. You know why? Because you'll be depending upon Christ and nothing else and the steel in our backbone comes by his power, not our power. When we're trusting him and we are completely not trusting ourselves, that's when we are at our strongest because God is invincible. Where you can attack us and we'll fall, but God is invincible, and when our faith is put fully on Jesus Christ, then we become a force to be reckoned with; to the degree that we turn from Christ and put our trust in real estate, genealogies, bloodlines, we grow weaker.

If you're dealing with the subject of the Israel of God, many people will hear it, and it's a powerful message. The first time I heard it, I thought to myself, "Oh no, that can't be true," and it offended me because I used to believe the Jews were God's chosen people, and that, "I'll bless him them bless thee and curse them that curse thee," applied even to the unbelieving Jews, that God still had some sort of covenant with them, irregardless of their unbelief, and so we're still obligated to bless them; 1948 being the hand of God, we have an obligation to bless Zionism. That was my belief for many years and the first time I heard the doctrine of we're the Israel of God, I resisted it because it offended me because it was screaming to me, "You have been wrong," and people don't like to say, "I

was wrong," and so it was offending me. At the same time I was being offended, immediately, I mean within the first five minutes of the first sermon and I'm not a fickle fella that's going to change his views at the drop of a hat, and you ought to know that by now. I'm telling you, in the first sermon, in the first five minutes, it was like a dart went through my heart, "There's something he's saying that is touching the core of the truth that I've never seen." But then I'd say, "But the overall picture can't be right." And invariably, I would go back to Romans 11. Romans 11 is that little special chapter you have in your back pocket, particularly as a dispensationalist or a Christian Zionist to say, "See, no, no, he's got to be wrong because all Israel shall be saved." And that's what I did. I used Romans 11 to resist this truth for a while, "All Israel shall be saved. Hath God cast away his people which he foreknew? See, there it is. The Jews are still God's chosen people." And that was my thinking, although I was being hit with a barrage of scriptures that I never dealt with before. We were grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel. At one time we were strangers and aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel. Now we've been made nigh by the blood of Christ. I didn't really believe that before and I knew it. And if I was questioned by the minister about it, I'd say, "No, no, I believe that," but I didn't know what I was talking about. You gotta face it. And there will be people listening to me that will have to face it. Most won't. That's human nature, but a remnant will, and we preach for, ultimately, their benefit, not knowing who they are. God knows. We scatter the seed far and wide.

And so I want to talk about this truth of the Israel of God. Many will say, "Well, all Israel shall be saved," and they think that means all the Jews will be converted at the end. Some believe that all the Jews will be converted just prior to the return of Christ and I would disagree with that, but that's nowhere near as offensive as the other camp that says they'll be saved at the return of Christ, and not all dispensational say that, but there is a group that does. They say all the Jews will convert, or at least the vast majority of them will convert when they see Christ come in the clouds and they'll quote Revelation 1 and verse 7, they'll look on him whom they've pierced, and they'll see him come back, and they'll mourn and they'll say, "When they see Jesus come in the clouds, then they'll know he was the Messiah, and all Israel shall be saved," like Romans 11. I have a problem with that. First of all, I think it's heretical to believe it and it is absolutely contrary to the fundamental elementary principles of the gospel, Sunday school gospel. I'll tell you why I say that, three reasons. Number one, you're teaching a second chance doctrine and today is the day of salvation, not when the Lord returns. That's a day of judgment. Today is the day that you face your sins and receive Christ as your Savior. There is no second chance at the return of Christ. That's it. We've got now. We've got today. Not only that, but the apostle very clearly in Hebrews chapter 11 taught us that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. That's why it's faith. To say that the Jews will universally look up in the clouds and see Christ come on the clouds, and they'll say, "Oh, now we realize," and they'll confess then, "He is the Messiah," they'll be confessing he's the Messiah by virtue of sight, not faith, and if we say that they're saved in that day, we're saying there's a whole category of people that will be saved without faith, they'll be saved by sight. And the truth is, the scripture says, "every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess." If that's true, how come the Gentiles aren't saved on that day as well? And if you say that they are, that's

Universalism. See, there's some serious problems with this. Why is it that, and that's my third point, why is it that the Jews can be saved by sight? What about all the Gentiles that look up and see him come on the clouds with fire in his eyes as a judge then they'll confess too, "every knee will bow and every tongue will confess." They'll confess too. So he'll say, "All right, the Jews confess me. I'll give you eternal life because you saw me coming and I was scary, but the Gentiles can go to hell." Can we really think that God operates that way?

So these contradict really basic elementary principles of the gospel and we're not going to quit preaching the truth. It's very dear to me because once you see it, you can't let go of it. You've got to embrace the truth that honors Christ, not that which dishonors him.

Romans 11 is not a dispensational diatribe on the beauty of Zionism or any other sort of apartheid kind of theology or philosophy. Romans 11 is about the truth of who the people of God are because of Jesus Christ. Romans 11 is about Christ being the center of all the promises, particularly the promise given to Abraham. Romans 11, so far is it from disproving what we've been teaching the last four weeks, Romans 11 is one of the most beautiful passages that actually verse by verse, phrase by phrase, endorses everything we've been saying, that there's a remnant from amongst the Jews that believe. Those that don't are cut off. And that the Gentiles were one time strangers and foreigners and aliens from this Commonwealth of Israel, we were Gentiles without God, without hope in the world, but the mystery of the gospel was that we would be grafted into that Commonwealth of Israel. We would no longer be strangers and foreigners, Paul says in Ephesians 2, but fellow citizens of obviously the Commonwealth of Israel. And that doctrine is absolutely the heart and soul of what the whole of Romans 11 is about. How they can think, and I used to think, "I've got Romans 11 as a defense against this Israel of God truth." How dead wrong I was. I was wrong. Now the question is, who listening to me will be able to say, "I was wrong"? You know, get over it. Acknowledge it and grow in grace. I'm not going to hold being wrong against you. Why would I do that? I was wrong. See? But you've got to be willing to do it. You've got to humble yourself before the word.

So let's turn to Romans 11 and we need to get down to business. Romans 11 and we'll start right at the first verse, and we can't, in one sermon, I can't speak to the degree that we could and should in every phrase otherwise we'd have to turn this into a series on Romans 11, which we could easily do. I don't think because of the length of the series already that I want to do that, but we will hit the heart and soul of Romans 11 while going through these first 29 verses. Verse 1, Paul writes, "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." So the dispensationalists will look at that and they'll say, "See, there's the proof. The Jews are still God's chosen people. Paul asked the question, has God cast away his people? And Paul said, no, God forbid. The Jews are still God's chosen people. 'I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee' still applies to the Jews over there in the Middle East." Now, I can't tell you how far off from the truth that interpretation is and consider what Paul is saying. Paul asks a question, has God cast away his people? Has he broken his covenant that he made with Abraham? Will the Lord no longer bless Abraham's seed?

Will Abraham's seed no longer be called out? Will God no longer bless the children of Abraham? Will he not keep his promise of a kingdom, of Messiah? Will not the promises be fulfilled? Has he broken his promise? Does he no longer have his people? Have the children of Israel come to an end? And the answer is no. See, the problem is the Christian Zionists and the dispensationalists, what they're failing to understand is how that promise given to Abraham continues to be fulfilled under the new covenant. That's what they're not understanding. They'll try and represent us as denying the promise made to Abraham, it's all over. We're not saying that. We're saying, "Oh, it's absolutely fulfilled and it's fulfilled in such a wonderful way." They're not understanding that and that, hopefully, through this series, they'll be able to understand, and through this chapter.

"Has God cast away his people? God forbid," Paul says, "for I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin." So is God done with the seed of Abraham? Is it all over? And Paul says no, and exhibit number one to prove the answer is, no, is Paul says, "look at me." Now why does he say, "look at me"? Because he's Jewish? "No, God isn't done with his people, because I'm Jewish, so obviously he's not done with his people." Is the point that Paul's making is his Jewish credentials prove God isn't done with his people? No, that's not the point. The point is that Paul's a Christian. It's the fact of Paul being a Christian that is the proof that God is not done with the children of Abraham. Not by the fact...if it's just a matter of being Jewish, Paul could have said, "God forbid, for Caiaphas is also an Israelite. Has God cast away his people which he foreknew? There's still a Jewish people. Look at Caiaphas." Paul couldn't argue that way. So the point that Paul is making is, "Yes, I'm a physical descendant from Abraham, and how do you know that God is not done with his people? Because I'm here, and I'm proving to you that I'm one of his people." And the proof isn't that he's Jewish, the proof is that he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

See, God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Foreknowledge means two things in the scripture. Number one, a simple generic meaning, God knows things beforehand but also, in many instances, it's referring to the elect. The foreknown are those that are foreknown before the foundation of the world, those that God has called out to be his people, and foreknowledge specifically referring to the elect. And the Lord has foreknowledge of the wicked too but sometimes the word itself is being used to apply to the elect and that's how it's being used here. So God has not cast away his people, which he foreknew. Paul was foreknown of the Lord before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy and without blame before God in love, being pre-destinated. Can we say that of Caiaphas? Dare we say it of Caiaphas?

"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying," now this is what Elijah said to the Lord, "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." The prophet is saying, "Lord, I've been serving you, the whole nation has turned from you, and I'm alone." Why does Paul bring up that example? See, Paul asks the question, "has God cast away his people?" And then he uses Elijah as an example. "Here the whole nation seems to have turned from him. They've killed all the prophets. Now they're looking to slay me and I'm the only one left."

And so what's the point? "I'm the only true seed of Abraham left. They've all turned murderers, they've all turned apostate against the truth and I'm the only one left."

Of course, the Lord encouraged the prophet and said to him, "Well, not quite." Verse 4, "what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." Now, that may sound like a lot to you and I, but in the congregated mass of the whole nation, that's just a little tiny minority. So there was a remnant that believed. They were all physical descendants of Abraham, but there was only a remnant that believed. Those that believed were proof of God's calling in keeping his promise to Abraham. An unbeliever is not proof of God keeping his covenant with Abraham. An unbeliever is not proof of that. A believer is.

And so Paul continues the argument in verse 5, "so then at this present time," just like then in the days of Elijah, "so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." You see, Paul's saying there's two kind of Jews. As it was in the days of the prophet, you had Jews that believed, 7,000, and then the rest that don't. Two kinds, the believers and the unbelievers. He's saying the same thing is true today. At this present time, there is a remnant, and the subject matter is within the confines of Israel, that's the subject matter, you know, "hath God cast away his people, for I also am an Israelite." So amongst the Israelites, there are two groups of people. There's the remnant that believe, like Paul, or like Elijah. There's the remnant that believe, they're called the election and then you have the others.

And in verse 6 he says, "And if by grace," which by the way means, let me say this, again verse 5, "even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Who are the ones that qualify as being the remnant according to election or the election of grace? The believing Jews. Doesn't that mean that the unbelieving Jews are not the elect? If the election of grace applies to the believers, obviously those that don't believe are not numbered amongst the elect. Now we say the chosen people, that means election, God chose them. I'll tell you who God chose, those who walk by faith. Abraham, David, Moses, not the scribes and Pharisees, the elect. There's the election and then there are those, mind you, Jews, who are not elect. Well what in the world does that mean? Isn't that my point?

Verse 6, "if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace" See, salvation, election, the covenant, is all by God's mercy and grace through faith, not by the works of the law otherwise we're going to have to lump in the Caiaphas's of this world. "But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." And we do not believe, I do not believe for one, that salvation was by works in the Old Testament, by grace in the New Testament. Let somebody else teach that. We're not going to.

Now, verse 7 is the key that will unlock the door to the whole chapter. Until you pay attention and meditate, I mean meditate, when you study Romans 11 on your own, you say, "Okay, I understand it," and you move on. No, no, don't move on so quickly. There's something about meditating upon the word. Meditate upon what is being said in verse 7,

because it will be the key that unlocks the whole chapter. Paul says in verse 7, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." The subject matter is Israel. There are two groups of people that fall within the category of the title of Israel, the election, A, and B, the rest. Now when Paul says Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, and he's speaking about Israel, physical Israel obviously, he's speaking of physical Israel as a whole, as a whole the nation did not obtain that which they were seeking for. Well, let's ask ourselves a question, what would Israel have been seeking for? What would the nation of Israel have been looking for? Well, obviously they were looking that the promises given to Abraham would be fulfilled in them, that they would be God's people, he would be their God, that they would receive his blessing of promise given to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee," they were looking for the coming of Messiah in fulfillment of the promise to David, that the kingdom that God promised to them, that they would enter into it and live and rule with Messiah forever and ever. That's what Israel will be looking for, all those things. They didn't receive them. The nation as a whole did not receive that which she was looking for, however, a small group did. Not will, did. Not will someday in a millennium, did. See, what Israel hath not obtained, the election has obtained it in verse 7. The election, and you can read that it's equally valid to say the elect, the elect hath obtained it, that little remnant that believed. Just like the 7,000 in Elijah's day, there's the election and then there's the rest that want to kill the prophets and that did. But there's 7,000 that wouldn't bow their knee to Baal. They're the election and the rest, which actually constitutes the vast majority of the Jewish nation at that time, the rest were blinded.

So again, you have the concept of two groups of Jews, the elect and the non-elect, and dispensationalists don't think in terms of the Jews in any capacity being the non-elect. They are if we believe the Bible, that is, those that walk in unbelief, just like any Gentile. God's no respecter of persons. But the election hath obtained it, the promises given to Abraham, and the rest were blinded. And then think of this, verse 8, "According as it is written," speaking of the blindness of the majority of the Jewish nation, "as it is written, God hath given them," now, these Old Testament quotations, they're not talking about the Gentiles. The context Paul is using it is talking about the blind portion of the physical descendants from Abraham. "God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear; unto this day." That's why the apostle tells us that there's a veil over their eyes in the reading of the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ.

"And David saith," verse 9, "Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway." I mean, I'll bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee. Does it apply to Judas Iscariot, the son of perdition? Really, all we're saying is it's about faith. The true sons of Abraham have faith like Abraham and this judgment on those that don't, judicial blindness, ultimately, when brought to the nth degree, that's reprobation.

Verse 11, "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid." Have they so stumbled that there is no hope? Have the Jews been so utterly cut off that they're beyond any redemption? Has God...? No, "God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." So now listen, when Christians receive the promises made to Abraham through Christ, which was the gospel that was preached unto Abraham, and they say, "We've been grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel, and we stand side by side with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," that will provoke the Jews to jealousy but when we say, "We're a church born at Pentecost, we're a completely separate entity, different from the promises God gave to the nation," why should they grow jealous over that? And the truth is, they don't. Listen to them. They're not jealous of that. "You can be a church. You can play make-believe." No, we're talking about something substantive, our identity. We've been brought into their covenant, see? Now, when the Gentiles enter into their covenant, hopefully, and we would like to see this, there'd be a remnant of Jews that would be provoked to jealousy and say, "Hey, we want what they've got because we were always looking for it. Now they have it. What was wrong with us?" And then they receive Christ as their Savior. Wouldn't we all want that? Well, that's what hopefully can happen for some.

Verse 12, "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world," because the apostle said, "All right, I now, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. You've deemed yourself unworthy of eternal life." Pretty hard words but historically that's what happened. But, we're told in verse 12, "if the fall of them be the riches of the world," because now that gospel comes to us as Gentiles throughout the world, "and the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentile, how much more their fullness?" If the Israel of God is blessed through the reception of the Gentiles, wouldn't it even be nice and even more wonderful if the Jews could turn back and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Wouldn't that be nice? Of course it would. Wouldn't their fullness, meaning believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, wouldn't that be wonderful and great? Wouldn't that add to our number? Wouldn't that be...? Of course it would. That's up to them. They must yield not to me, they must yield to Messiah Christ.

Verse 13, "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them." Paul's still hoping to provoke the Jews to jealousy and notice, you know, when the dispensationalists read later on in this chapter, "and so all Israel shall be saved," there will be a universal salvation of the Jewish people at the end or just before the end, I would say then why did Paul say that his hope is that he might save some of them? Is Paul conflicted about the future of the nation? Nope. His hope and prayer is that some of them would be saved. It'd be wonderful if they all could be but just like all of the Gentiles are never going to be saved, same thing is true with the Jewish people. They're human beings descended from Adam like everyone else. So Paul hopes that some would be saved.

Verse 15, "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" So, first of all, note that they were cast away. See, Paul says in verse 1, "Hath God cast away his people?" And then I say to you, when Paul says "God forbid," he says, "No, he hasn't cast away those whom he has

foreknown," which refers to the elect amongst the Jews, the believing Jews. And if someone says, no, that refers to all of them, I would draw you to this verse, "for if the casting away of them be," so some of them were cast away. So when Paul says they weren't cast away, he's talking about those that are foreknown. He's talking about the remnant. He's talking about the 7,000. He's talking about those that received the blessing of the promise, the election. He's not talking about the rest. He's not talking about those in unbelief. The unbelievers were cast away. Cut off.

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world," now God bringing the Gentiles to himself through Christ and they joining that covenant, "what shall the receiving of them be," those branches that are broken off, "what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" So when a Jew denies Christ, he has no participation in the covenant made with Abraham just like when a Gentile does, but when a Jew receives Christ, we have a picture of life from the dead because that Jewish fellow who denied Christ was a walking dead man. He was spiritually dead, just like any Gentile who denies Christ is a walking dead man, spiritually dead, and when anyone's saved, it's life from the dead. They say when a Jew is saved, he just completes his Jewishness. No, he doesn't. It's life from the dead. He's not sort of saved, and when he acknowledges Christ, that's just adding the last 10%. False doctrine. Contrary to elementary principles of salvation. No matter who it is, when they receive Christ as their Savior, they become a new creature. True for the Jews, true for the Gentiles.

Verse 15, "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Of course. Verse 16, "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy," or to put it another way, using a different analogy, making the same point, if the root be holy, so are the branches. Now people can argue about who or what the root is and some will say, well the root is Jesus, you know, the root of Jesse, and just because you can find the word "root" elsewhere that's talking about Christ, that doesn't mean every time you see the word "root" used, it's talking about Christ and sometimes people make that mistake. But if you applied the word "root" as referring to Christ, you'd still come out with the right doctrine. If Christ is holy, so are those that emanate from Christ. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Now the Jews that deny Christ, who are unregenerated, lost in their sins, like Gentiles, they are not holy. They're sinners.

So if the root is holy, so are the branches. So only those that are tied to Jesus Christ are holy because we have his righteousness imputed to us by God's grace through faith, but I don't believe that the root is a direct reference to Christ and my conclusion is going to end up the same way anyway. I believe the root is speaking of Abraham and the promise and the covenant made to Abraham. If the root, "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness," if the root is holy, so are the branches. The promise was to Abraham and his seed. If the root is holy, Abraham, so are his branches. The true seed of Abraham will be like Abraham. You see, the Jews in John 8 boasted, "We are the sons of Abraham." Jesus said, "You go about to kill me. This did not Abraham." And Jesus made the point, "If you were the sons of Abraham you would do the works of Abraham but you seek to kill me. You're not the sons of Abraham." In fact in that instance he went on to say, "the children of the devil." Now you can't be God's chosen people and the children of

the devil at the same time. Jesus was talking to somebody and being the sons of Abraham requires that you believe like Abraham, that you love God like Abraham, that you follow Abraham, and if Abraham was alive in Paul's day, he'd confess Jesus as the Christ, the son of the living God. If the firstfruits be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches, so either way, whether it be Christ or Abraham, you end up at the same conclusion, it's by faith, you see.

"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." Now there's a lot there. Verse 17, and some of the branches be broken off. Again, has God cast away his people? That's the opening line and the answer is no. No, he has not cast away those whom he has foreknown and the elect are known by their faith, just like Abraham was known by his faith. But those that don't walk in the faith of Abraham, they are cast away. They're broken off. And if some of the branches, two types of Jews, remember verse 7 is the key, two types of Jews, this whole chapter is about two types of Jews, the believers and the non-believers, the election and the rest. The election receive the promises of the covenant, the rest are blinded and broken off, and if some of the branches be broken off, verse 17, and thou, speaking to the Gentiles, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in amongst them. Now make sure you got that image. You've got the cultivated olive tree, the one that's been in the vineyard of God all this time, and he nurtures it, and he cares for it, and he prunes it. He sent the prophets to it and Moses and David has worked with them. This is a tree that's been cared for. And the Gentiles, without hope and without God in the world, outside the boundaries of the vineyard, and then the Lord looked at the tree and said, "This tree needs some serious pruning now because they killed my Son. I'm going to show them they need to be faithful to me." And he takes the branches of unbelief and breaks them off of the tree. They are no longer attached to that tree.

Then the Lord does the most amazing, gracious thing. He leaves the confines of his vineyard, and there's this cultivated olive tree which had been cared for and loved by God through the centuries, and the Lord goes out into the wild forest and finds a wild olive tree, some rough-hewn, heathen, Gentile type of person, maybe the prostitute in the street, for all we know, and he saves them by grace through faith, and he takes that branch off of that wild, unruly, unloved tree, he takes the branch off that tree and carries it gently back into the vineyard and then he very carefully, what, starts a new tree? Did he plant a new tree and say, "Here's another tree. I'm growing another one. I planted it on Pentecost." That's not what he did. He went back to that tree that already existed and he carefully found a way to graft that into the tree so that all the nutrients from that tree that's always existed, Israel, so it could be participant of the blessing and the root and fatness of that olive tree and become one with that tree. Who teaches that now? Not too many. That's what he did.

Now we're happy to be there, see? In verse 17, "if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree." We were at one time outside the Commonwealth of

Israel, as wild olive trees, without hope, without God in the world, but now we've been made nigh, and now we have been grafted in. Now we are no longer aliens and foreigners, but fellow citizens. We were grafted in. It's not a church born at Pentecost. We were attached to the Israel of God that walks by faith and now God's Israel has expanded to include the Gentiles and he's purified and purged the tree to remove the unbelievers. In Old Testament Israel, they had to live with the unbelievers because they were all in the confines of the nation. They were circumcised. And so you had the wheat and the tares. But under the new covenant, the Lord does a more perfect work and so because he's done that for us as Gentile believers, these words of exhortation, "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee," which is telling me, for one thing, the idea that the church was born at Pentecost is completely confusing people. It's completely confusing people. I say this often, Abraham didn't join a Gentile church. We were grafted into Abraham. Abraham didn't join us. We joined him. And God at first dealt with singularly the Jewish nation. There came a time when they filled up the measure of their sins. The Lord says, "That's enough as far as you being a physical nation is concerned. But I won't break my promise. In fact, I'm going to fulfill it in a way that's so far beyond what you ever dreamed. It's the mystery of the gospel that you haven't been contemplating, but it was hidden in that Old Testament, now revealed by the apostles." And he would call out the Gentiles, and they would be adopted sons and daughters, they'd be the immediate family. Then through the last 2,000 years, if you look at this banqueting table that the Father has set up, it seems like the table goes for an infinity to accommodate the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Gentiles that would be brought into this family through the course of 2,000 years. It's an amazing thing. Abraham would become the father of many nations. His seed would be like the stars of heaven. Without understanding that the Gentiles have been brought into that, that prophecy still has not been fulfilled, not even close.

Most of the people that claim to be Jews have years ago converted the Jews over in the areas of Russia and stuff and they can't even really trace any ethnic heritage to their forefathers. Most Jews today, if maybe not all of them, they can't say, "Well I'm of this tribe and that tribe." It's gone. It's lost. They couldn't even come up with a Levite. I mean they may try and make some claims but in the last two thousand years the bloodlines have been so mixed it's an impossibility. Do you think that's an accident? Or is that the blessing of God? "So you know what, if I leave you the body of Moses you'll make a shrine out of it. And if I leave your bloodlines pure you'll make a shrine out of that too," which was part of the problem with the Pharisees. So you see the apostle says to the Gentiles, "Don't boast against the branches because you don't bear the root. The root bears you. Abraham was here before you. You've been brought into the Commonwealth of Israel. Don't you turn around and say, 'Ah, so God is done with the nation of Israel physically.'" And so now he's dealing with the Gentiles and that slowly morphs and it slowly morphs until you say, "We are God's chosen people because we're Gentiles." And that's, in essence, what part of, there's more to it than that, but part of what's happening with British Israelism. America, England, Germany, they'll include Canada and some others but they say the lost tribes of Israel and they're looking at bloodline and I don't care what historical proof they come up with, my response to that is what does that have to do with anything? Even if the European people were the actual descendants from the

tribes of Israel, which I don't discount as being an absolute possibility. It may be we are the physical descendants from Abraham. You can make a case by chasing the origins and the migration of the Jews into the Celtic areas and why there are certain names, that's all true, but it doesn't matter to me. I could care less about that. It's just maybe a point of interest but you start having people chase that, they're going to become like the Pharisees and the Pharisees were broken off because they trusted in the flesh instead of the Lord. And the point is, he'll break us off just as fast if we do the same thing. And in verse 18, and I can see we're not getting through the whole chapter, and maybe chapter 11 deserves two sermons because so far is this chapter from repudiating our teaching. That's why I'm saying to you, not the general tenor, every single syllable in Romans 11 is crying out to us that we in Christ, Jew and Gentile together, are specifically the nation of God, the sons of Abraham, the continuation of that cultivated olive tree. And why does that cultivated olive tree continue? Because God has not cast away his people, which he foreknew.

So "boast not against the branches," in verse 18, "but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, the root thee. Then, thou wilt say then," verse 19, "Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in." See, the arrogance begins to well up with the Gentiles. They begin to repeat the same sins that the Jews involved themselves with. Just give them a little time. They're human beings too. So as soon as they start thinking, "We're the chosen ones and God's done with the Jews, now it's us Gentiles," as if they deserved it, Lord's going to call their number on that one. And he says, "Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in," as if somehow they deserved it.

"Well," Paul says, "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." And you know, there's a lot of Christians who think once saved, always saved, and they think, "I've been faithful to the Lord for many years," and then they think they can turn from him and they'll say, "Well, I'm a Calvinist, so I believe I'll be saved." Look what happened to Israel. When they turned in unbelief, they were cut off. The scriptures speak about names being blotted out of the Book of Life. I believe once a man is genuinely converted, he doesn't lose his salvation but genuine conversion is proven in the perseverance of the saints. They may have their frailties and their faults and downfalls and shortcomings, we can see that in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, you name them, but they persevered, didn't they? That's the people of God. They persevere. Most who profess and do many wonderful works in his name, eventually they don't persevere but the elect of God do.

And there were those that were broken off because of unbelief, and as we talked about a couple Sundays ago on the television, the names that are, in my opinion, the names that are written on the Book of Life from before the foundation of the world, those names will never be blotted out. They're etched in stone by God's sovereign decree. We are called from before the foundation of the world but it appears, it appears, in my opinion, based on putting the facts together, and I preached a sermon on this once a few years ago, maybe you don't remember it though, it's a while ago, but it seems as though there are names that are penciled in in the course of life. They weren't entered before the

foundation of the world but they made a profession. They turned from some sin. They acknowledged Christ. They joined the church. And they actually may believe in Jesus. They actually may believe that he died and rose again from the dead but they were never born again. And when they turn in unbelief, they're broken off and their names are blotted out of the Book of Life. And I'll say this, because the scriptures teach it: if at one time we acknowledged him, and then down the road we turn from him, in Hebrews we're told, he can't be renewed unto repentance. Can't crucify Christ afresh. Won't do it. Now, the unconverted can reject the Lord for their whole lives, and in the last moment receive them as Savior, like in the thief from the cross, but if you're going to make a very strong and aggressive profession for Christ, then you walk away from it, I can't guarantee there's any hope of coming back. The Lord can shut the door.

So we stand by faith. That's the way it's always been. It's the way that it is. It's the way that it always will be. And as we continue next time on the balance of this chapter, we will see specifically that by receiving Christ as our Savior, we have been brought into that covenantal promise with Abraham and these are beautiful gospel truths that I don't know how the Lord's people could deny once it comes to their attention and their knowledge.

Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless this truth to thy people, open their eyes and may they see the Lord Jesus Christ and learn to love him and understand that all the promises and the covenants are fulfilled in him, they receive their yea and amen in Jesus Christ alone. And for this we thank thee for without him we would not be a people, we would be cast off and without hope. But in him we are the children of the living God, the very sons of Abraham by faith and we praise thee for this and pray this all in the name of Christ our Savior. Amen.