

Romans 11:11-24 Answers Jealous Jews For Jesus

Introduction: The Lord felt it was important for us to realize why Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah. This topic is so important that God led Paul to pen three chapters about it. Most Israelis in Paul's day rejected Jesus as Messiah. This naturally led to several questions:

- 1) *Have God's promises failed?* Romans 9a explains that God's Word has not failed because God's promises were only intended for those descendants of Abraham who also had the faith of Abraham. Thus Paul wrote that not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.
- 2) *Why did Israel reject Jesus?* Romans 9b concerns God's sovereignty in Israel's salvation (unconditional election). Romans 10 concerns Israel's human responsibility. There are human reasons why Israel rejected the righteousness of Christ: they pursued righteousness by law rather than by faith and in so doing stumbled over Christ.
- 3) *Has God now rejected Israel?* Romans 11a proves God has not rejected Israel because He has always preserved for Himself a faithful remnant.

Today's Lesson: The focus of today's lesson is on how all this applies to Gentile believers. Paul will offer several very specific applications on how those of us in the church should view unbelieving Israel.

Teacher's Note: This lesson is relatively short to allow extra time for review, disagreement and questions.

****** Israel stumbled, but did not fall. In what sense did they not fall (11:11-12)? See 9:30-33.**

They pursued law based righteousness and in so doing stumbled over Christ and the whole concept of justification by faith. However, they did not totally fall; a full number of them will be saved.

1. In this context, what would it mean if Israel had fallen (11:11)? To fall in this context would mean for the Jewish race to be totally rejected by God and go extinct as a race (as happened to the Canaanites or Hittites or Philistines). In light of wholesale Israeli rejection of Jesus it would be easy to make the mistake of concluding that God had forever divorced Himself from Israel (by Israel I mean the ethnic group, not the geo-political nation).

2. It was never God's plan for Israel to stumble "in order that" they might fall (11:11a). That was not God's purpose. According to 11:11b, how will God bring Israel to salvation?

Israel's stumbling/trespass resulted in salvation coming to the Gentiles (riches for the whole world). God's plan is to use Gentile salvation to provoke Israel to jealousy and cause the elect among them to accept Jesus as Messiah.

3. Historically, how is it that Jewish trespass resulted in Gentile riches (11:11-12)? See Acts 13:45.

ESV **Acts 13:46** . . . Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you [the Jews]. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles."

4. What constitutes full inclusion (11:12)? *See also 11:25.* The Greek simply says "fullness." It means a full number (Hendriksen, p. 378). **1)** Some take this to mean a large scale conversion of Jews to Jesus just prior to the Second Coming and take "full" to refer to the whole nation. **2)** Others take it to refer to the previously mentioned salvation of the remnant, "full" referring to the full number of the remnant as, generation by generation, a larger and larger number of the remnant come to faith (thus the sum of the remnant).

5. How does 11:1-6 fit in with 11:11-12? The points are that God has not rejected His people and Israel did not fatally fall. What it means is that God still has an elect remnant among Israel (like Paul).

ESV **Romans 11:1** I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means!

******According to 11:13-16, why did Paul magnify his ministry to the Gentiles?** He did it in order to somehow make the Jews jealous and see some of them saved (11:13-14). Paul had a great burden for the Jews (9:1-2, 10:1), so he evangelized Gentiles! (It would appear the best way to see Jews saved is to evangelize Gentiles).

6. How many jealous Jews did Paul expect to see saved (11:14)? *See 11:5.* Paul expected that "some" of them would be saved (11:14).

7. How does 11:14 help us understand what Paul meant by full inclusion back in 11:11-12? Both paragraphs mention Gentile conversion leading to Israeli jealousy and subsequent conversion of the elect. The 2nd paragraph adds Paul's goal that "some" of them get saved (far different from all of them getting saved).

Timing: Some interpreters feel Israel's jealousy and conversion will not happen until just before the Second Coming. However, it seems clear from 11:13-14 that it was already happening in Paul's day and presumably has been happening right along for the past two thousand years (Hendriksen, p. 392).

What is the answer to the question of 11:15? *See Ephesians 2:1.* Since the vast majority of Jews are dead spiritually, having rejected Jesus, any remnant Jewish acceptance of Jesus will constitute life from the dead.

ESV **Ephesians 2:1** . . . you were dead in the trespasses and sins.

When the prodigal son returned the Father said:

ESV **Luke 15:24** . . . this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

8. What is the point of these two illustrations as relates to Israel (11:16)? Both make same point. The firstfruits/root may refer to Abraham, to the first Jewish converts to Christianity or to Christ Himself. The rest of the dough/branches refers to the Jewish race as a whole. Israel is in some sense holy because of those few early Jews who were holy (Abraham or the early Christian converts or Jesus). As made clear earlier by Paul, this does not mean every Jew will be saved. Only "some" will be saved, but because of His promises to Abraham, God will always preserve that remnant (again, unlike the Canaanites, Philistines). James Fenimore Cooper wrote a novel called *The Last of the Mohicans*. Despite the worst efforts of the Nazis or ISIS, there we will never witness the last of the Hebrews.

Application: Gentile Christians must not write off the Jewish community nor be arrogant toward them even though they do not believe. Some of them will yet believe.

*****9. What warning did Paul have for Gentile believers now that they are God's people (11:17-24)?** Gentile believers must not be **1)** arrogant or **2)** prideful toward the unbelieving Jewish branches that were broken off (11:18-20). Instead, Gentile believers must **3)** fear. It is only by God's grace that anyone believes, so there is absolutely no room for boasting.

Someone during the Crusades was ignorant of this passage. Somehow the Protestant Reich Church in German failed to read this in the 1930s. The so-called Christians of the Ku Klux Klan failed to read this.

10. How did Paul describe Gentile believers in 11:17? Paul compared Jewish people to cultivated olive branches and Gentile believers to wild olive branches (brought into the vineyard from the outside) grafted into the original root.

Nourishing Root: God's promises to Abraham were the start of the cultivated Jewish root. God promised Abraham land, seed and blessing. The land was Canaan, the seed were the Hebrew race and the blessing was prosperity and protection from their enemies. However, these physical fulfillments were only types and shadows of ultimate, metaphysical fulfillments. The Promised Land represents a heavenly country. The promised Seed was ultimately Jesus, a direct physical descendant of Abraham. Anyone who has the faith of Abraham is his true descendant. The blessing is justification by faith. Thus believing Gentiles (wild branches) are grafted into the blessings made to Abraham, which started out as a thoroughly Jewish affair.

ESV **John 4:22** . . . salvation is from the Jews.

11. What reason was given in 11:18 not to be arrogant? The root supports the branches, not the other way around.

12. According to 11:19-20, why were cultivated Jewish branches broken off? It was due to unbelief.

13. Humanly speaking, what keeps wild Gentile branches in place (11:20)? It is because of their faith.

14. In 11:20, Paul told Gentiles believers not to be proud, but rather to fear. What reason did Paul give for not being proud in 11:21-22? God will break off Gentile branches for unbelief just as surely as He already broke off Jewish branches.

15. What does all this branch-breaking have to do with losing one's salvation (11:17-22)?

See John 10:28-29. It has nothing to do with a person's salvation. The olive tree scenario is merely an analogy; no analogy should be pressed too far. The analogy concerns ethnic groups, not individuals. Israel lacked faith and so was broken off. The Gentiles responded in faith and so were grafted in. Even though certain Gentile countries became largely Christianized, God has no grandchildren. If the people of that country lose their faith, God will remove that Gentile country just as he already removed Israel.

Broken Branch Example: For 1,500 years Gentile Europe was the epicenter for Christianity. However, God never guaranteed Europe would always be Christian. Over the past 300 years it has in large lost its faith. It is now a post-Christian culture. The European branch has for all practical purposes been broken off the olive tree of salvation.

16. What perspective did Paul offer on unbelieving Israel in 11:23-24? Paul reminded the Gentile branches that God can easily graft back in any Jews who believe.

17. Does 11:23-24 express a possibility or a prophecy? Why? They key seems to be the word "if" in 11:23. If any Jews believe they will be grafted back in. It is a statement of theological fact. It falls short of an all out prophecy that Israel as a whole will be grafted back in again. It is possible, but not predicted.

ESV Romans 9:27 . . . Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved . . .

So What?

18. What truths does Romans 11:11-24 hold for us?

- 1) Israel stumbled but did not fall.
- 2) Israeli trespass resulted in Gentile salvation.
- 3) Gentile salvation will make elect Israel jealous.
- 4) Gentile believers must not be arrogant or proud toward unbelieving Israel.
- 5) Gentile believers must not imagine unbelieving Jews are beyond the reach of God's mercy.

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the text of the ESV.
- You can hear this lesson being taught at www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF.

Stephen E. Atkerson
www.NTRF.org
11/23/14