

**Israel, the Gentiles, and an Olive Tree—Part 2**  
**Romans 11:16-24**  
November 3, 2021

**Review**

Verses 11-15 taught:

1. The temporary nature of God's rejection of Israel
  - **11a** "So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means!"
    - cf. **9:32b** "They have stumbled over the stumbling stone,"
  - **12** "Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will **their full inclusion** mean!"
    - **NET** "their full restoration"
    - Means their reception of the fullness of the blessings God promised them
  - **15** "For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will **their acceptance** mean..."
    - They have been temporarily rejected by God, but in the future will be accepted by God
2. God's purpose in His temporary rejection of Israel
  - **11** "...through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, **so as to make Israel jealous.**"
    - A jealousy that leads to salvation (**13–14** "Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow **to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.**")
  - God has purposed to bring blessing to the world through restored Israel
    - **12** "Now if their trespass means **riches for the world**, and if their failure means **riches for the Gentiles, how much more** will their full inclusion mean!"
    - **15** "For if their rejection means **the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?**"

Verses 16-24 build a metaphor of an olive tree

1. This is a cultivated olive tree, as opposed to a wild olive tree (24a)
2. Some of the natural branches were broken off by God (17a, 19, 20, 21)
3. A wild olive shoot was grafted into the tree among the other branches (17b, 19, 24)
4. The natural branches and the grafted wild olive shoot share in the nourishing root of the olive tree (17)

5. The natural branches that were cut off will be grafted back into their own olive tree by God (23-24)

The wild olive shoot that was grafted into the tree represents the Gentile believer during the church age

1. Wild olive trees were notoriously unfruitful
2. **13a** “Now I am speaking to you Gentiles.”
3. **17** “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,”

The natural branches that were broken off by God represent unbelieving Israel during the church age

- **20** “...They were broken off because of their unbelief...”

The natural branches that were not broken off represent the believing remnant within Israel

- **5** “So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.”
- **7** “...Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. **The elect obtained it**, but the rest were hardened,”

The nourishing root represents the covenant God made with the patriarchs

1. **18** “...it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.”
2. **28** “As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of **their forefathers**.”
3. **9:4-5** “They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong **the patriarchs**, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.”
4. A covenant that promised blessing for both the nation that would come forth from Abraham, and the Gentiles
  - **Gen. 12:2-3** “And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

The main points in verses 17-20 were:

1. Gentile believers are instructed not to be arrogant toward Jews, for Gentile believers are supported by a Jewish root (18)
2. Gentile believers are instructed to fear (20b)

**Some branches (unbelieving Israelites) were broken off, and wild branches (believing Gentiles) were grafted in (16-22) – CONTINUED**

**vv 20-21**

1. God did not spare unbelieving Israelites, but hardened them in their unbelief (7-10)
2. If God did not spare these who were naturally related to the root, He most certainly will not spare professing Gentile believers who are unbelieving and not naturally related. They too will be hardened in unbelief.
3. *Question:* What attitude was mentioned in this section that is associated with unbelief?
4. *Question:* How are this attitude and unbelief related?
5. The instruction is not to become proud, but to have a godly fear of falling away and being hardened in unbelief.
6. The warning of verse 21 is comparable to the warnings in Hebrews, such as,
  - **Heb. 10:29** “How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?”

**verse 22**

1. “severity towards those who fallen”
  - Toward unbelieving Israelites (9:32; 10:3; 11:11, 12)
  - God hardened them (11:7-10) and broke them off
  - Though they had the great privileges listed in 9:4-5, they came under God’s judgment
2. “God’s kindness to you”
  - Salvation
3. “provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.”
  - An implicit call to persevere in the faith
  - This call is comparable to other such calls in the NT:
    - **Matt. 10:22b** “But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” (also Matt 24:13)
    - **John 15:5-6** “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.”

- **Col. 1:21–23** “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard...”
- **Heb. 3:14** “For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.”
- **John 8:31–32** “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

*Question:* Verse 22 speaks of the severity and kindness of God. Give some examples of times in biblical narratives when God showed His severity and kindness side-by-side.

### **Branches that were broken off will be grafted in again (23-24)**

#### **verse 23**

- Based on OT promises such as those in **Leviticus 26:33, 38-45**

#### **verse 24**

- If Gentiles, who have no natural connection but are strangers to the covenants of promise (Eph 2:12), have been grafted in, how much more will converted Israelites be grafted back into “their own olive tree”!

### **Conclusion**

This is the conclusion of the apostle’s fourth argument supporting the thesis that the word of God has not failed (9:6a), an argument that has centered on God’s temporary rejection of Israel.

This argument has prepared for the apostle’s climactic argument which will center on Israel’s future salvation (11:25-32).

#### **Application**

1. God has planned the application of redemption in such a way to humble the pride of man
2. Romans 11 says that we Gentiles have been included in God’s people contrary to nature. Further, we have been included in salvation not because of any inherent worthiness, but because of Israel’s failure.  
And still further, Israel is not out of the picture but will be grafted back in.
3. We are included by the sheer grace of God, and for the glory of God alone!
4. We should be the humblest of people, giving our gracious God the highest of praise!