

Romans 11-1 July 30, 2012

We have come to a very important question in Paul's letter to the Romans; here he is asking whether the Jews have forever closed the door between themselves and God.

As a nation, the Jews rejected God's message of salvation by faith but we find that, even in the midst of that action, there are always a few who are faithful, the remnant. In Paul's day, for unsaved Jews, it meant living under the Law but they were faithfully trying to obey God's commands.

Paul makes a forceful argument against the idea that God has rejected the Jewish people even though they have rejected Him. Paul used himself as an example, he was a Jew of a very important tribe, and a Pharisee, meaning he was very high up in the ranks of the Jewish religion. God chose Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles, Paul was living proof that God has not rejected His people. God's plan still includes the Jews.

Romans 11:11-12

This is the 10th question in this letter that Paul has asked and then given a strong negative, May it never be! The Jews fall was not fatal; their blindness is not permanent.

Just consider this passage from Micah 7:18

Regarding the Jews he said; Who is a God like You, Who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? God does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in lovingkindness. Verse 20 You (God) will give truth to Jacob and unchanging love to Abraham which you swore to our forefathers from the days of old".

The stumbling of the Jews has led to the salvation of the Gentiles. Although God had planned for whosoever will to come from the foundation of the world. Remember that before Christ the only way for a Gentile to be saved was to change his nationality to Jewish, be circumcised and to be adopted into one of the tribes of Israel. In other words, Gentiles had to become Jews to be saved. They were called "proselytes".

When Jesus came all that changed. God did not nullify His promises to Israel but he removed all the national and ceremonial barriers so that Gentiles might have access to Him. Now Gentiles can come to God through the new and living Way, Jesus is the Way, the truth and the life; no man can come to God except through Him. The curtain in the Temple, which separated everyone from entering into God's Presence was torn from top to bottom, God tore open the way to His Presence through the torn flesh of Jesus, our new and living Way.

As we have just seen, God took all the blessings and riches He has offered Israel and offered them to the Gentiles as well. So God enriched the Gentiles for all eternity.

Provoke them jealousy? Is there anything about the Gentile Christians that would make non-Messianic Jews jealous of them? If you think of all the atrocities committed against Jewish people by those who call themselves Christians from the Crusades to Nazi Germany, there is hardly anything you can find that would indicate the Jews are looking at us and longing to have what we have. Of course, anyone can call himself a Christian; the Crusaders who trapped Jews in their synagogues and set them on fire to Adolph Hitler, who said he was a Christian, to the Klu Klux Klan to the Greek Orthodox Archbishop convicted of gun running for Palestinian terrorists, terrible crimes have been committed against Jewish men, women and children by those who called themselves Christians.

What if provoking Jewish people to faith were a command? What if we lived our lives with the conviction that God wants us to treat Jewish people in such a way as to draw them to their Messiah? We should be doing just this.

Even though our village has few who are Jewish, yet we can make our minds to serve God in this way, and friend, He will make it possible for you to encounter Jews who need their Messiah. Listen to what the Jewish New Testament Commentary has to say; "Non-Messianic Jews should be able to look at saved Gentiles in the Church and see in them such a wonderful change from their former selves, such holy lives, such dignified, godly, peaceful, peace bringing, honorable, ethical, joyful and humble people that they become jealous and want for themselves too whatever it is that makes these Gentiles different and special."

When the Jews accept their Messiah then the riches offered to the Gentiles will not be taken away, no we will enjoy God's blessings together with the Jews who have believed.

Romans 11:13-14

Remember Paul is writing to Gentile Christians and Messianic Jews in Rome. What does Paul mean when he says he magnifies his ministry?

Just think what was required for a Pharisee, a Jew to be sent to evangelize Gentiles. Friends, it was a great act of love on the part of God to send such a man to be an apostle to the Gentiles. This work called for a man who was skilful, zealous, courageous workman. There were those Jews who vilified Paul for his work with the Gentiles, perhaps his own family. He was frequently the recipient of Jewish rage and malice, yet he continued.

Paul is asking them to have a respect for the Jews and desire their conversion. They must not insult Jews but pity them and desire their salvation. And notice Paul is modest in his expectations, hopeful that a few would be saved. Of course we know that Paul did not save anyone that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul gave the gospel without ceasing, God gave the increase.

Romans 11:15

Didn't we just say that God has not rejected the Jews, what does this mean? I like the King James here better because it uses the verb meaning "cast off or cast aside", which is not the same as rejection. So if the Jews being temporarily cast aside brought salvation to the Gentiles just think what it will be for the entire world when they are again accepted. It will be life from the dead. I cannot tell you exactly what that means, but it certainly shows that God has plans for Jews in the future, again showing the error of the idea that the church has replaced the Jews in God's plan for the world.

Here again, Paul seems to be encouraging the Gentiles in Rome to welcome Jewish believers into their congregations. At the same time Paul is encouraging the Jewish believers to be welcoming to the Gentiles. Neither group is to claim superiority.

Romans 11:16

Paul now give illustrations to show us that Israel's refusal to accept Christ as their Messiah is temporary and one day the nation of Israel will be brought back to God

In Numbers 15:20 Moses instructed Israel regarding their offerings to the LORD after they entered the Promised Land. The idea was to show thanks to God for the food He provided by giving a portion back as an offering. If the first part of the dough is offered to God it is made holy therefore the whole batch is holy. Holy meaning set apart for the LORD, the whole batch is blessed.

The second illustration is a tree. The root obviously is the basic part of a tree and will form the "character" of the branches. Abraham's faith was like the root of a productive olive tree, and the Jewish people are the tree's natural branches. As a result of God's choice and Abraham's response, the nation that descended from Abraham was set apart for God.

You can see that these two illustrations show the same truth in two ways; firstfruits represents the whole, but also, the root represents the whole part.

God has made it clear in His word that everything belongs to Him but He requires only a token back from us. If God called the firstfruits, the remnant of the Jews who since Abraham have lived by faith, holy then there is hope for the whole group, proving again that God has not rejected Israel.

Romans 11:17-18

We read that unbelieving Jews but not the whole Jewish people were broken off, removed temporarily from being eligible to receive as a nation what God has promised. Then you Gentiles, that is you and I, we have been grafted in among them, that is the branches that are still part of the olive tree.

Those branches represented by the Messianic Jewish community are the natural branches and we are the wild ones grafted in among them.

The term Messianic Jews refers to those Jewish people who have recognized that they are sinners and that Jesus or Yeshua is their Messiah Who came to redeem them from their sin. They have by faith accepted the offering of Jesus life as their personal sin offering.

We have no reason to act arrogantly toward these Messianic Jews, they were first ones chosen and the scriptures they preserved for us supports us as a root supports a tree. Friends, we have Jewish roots.

Romans 11:19-21

Paul is warning about the prideful boastful Gentile who believes he now takes precedent over the Jew. Not so fast, yes, unbelieving Jews were branches broken off the tree but the only reason we stay grafted into that tree is because of our Messiah.

Beware of anti-Semitism.

Romans 11:22

All through the bible we read of the challenge and the necessity of remaining, enduring, persevering in our faith. When we do this, we receive the kindness of God day after day. We receive His grace, unmerited favor and because of His mercy we don't receive what we deserve.

Romans 11::23-24

Here we read that the non-Messianic Jews can be grafted back in if they are willing to accept the free gift of Salvation by faith in Christ.

The "olive tree" is used throughout the scriptures to represent Israel. We learn from the olive tree that there are three different groups of God's people;

Messianic Jews who are the natural branches and are part of the cultivated olive tree

Gentile Christians, the wild olive branches which have been grafted into the cultivated olive tree

Non Messianic Jews, the natural branches which have fallen off the cultivated olive tree but who can be grafted back in again.

The Jewish NT Commentary says; "Olive tree theology must take into account all three groups, all three kind of branches in defining and describing the past, present and future of God's people".

Again I want to mention the fallacy of Replacement Theology, which has been around in one form or another hundreds of years. This idea that since the Jews did not accept Jesus as their Messiah then God decided to replace them with the church so all the promises to the Jews were then transferred to the church. What does the bible say about this? Paul is emphatic in his insistence that God has not rejected the Jews, and he has said this several times in our study so far.

Look at the analogy, the cultivated olive tree represents the Messianic Jews with the branches of wild olive trees grafted in, that would be believers. If Replacement Theology were true then the cultivated olive tree

representing the Jews would be dead, roots and all, and the flourishing wild olive branches would be grafted to a dead tree. Its obvious that is absurd.

God has not rejected His people, the Jews; He has a plan for them. His promises are everlasting and irrevocable (final, irreversible).

Romans 11:25-29

Paul is writing this with a glad heart, this assurance that God is going to restore Israel. Remember this is the one who told us he would gladly give up his own place in heaven if that is what it would take to restore the Jewish people. But the spotless Lamb of God has already paid the debt for the sin of rejecting God.

Remember in the Romans 9 Paul told us that the Jewish people had been an object of special grace and mercy of God but they stumbled over their Messiah. Then Paul reminded us that there is salvation for any individual Jew who accepts Jesus as their Messiah. Now Paul has reminded us here in chapter 11 that a Jew has made possible Gentile salvation, Jesus was a Jew. Also the stumbling of the Jews brought great blessing to the Gentiles. And now we are to keep in mind that there is a remnant of Jews who will be saved. All Israel will be delivered is a better translation.

The question is when? We can all see that the state of Israel is a state of spiritual blindness. Paul says here that the blindness affecting Israel will continue until the fullness of the Gentiles come in.

God is working out man's spiritual destiny through the redeemed of the LORD. The times of the fullness of the Gentiles" is described in Daniel, chapter 11, which describes the course of Gentile history as it relates to Israel and the Holy Land. The climax of history is that time called the great tribulation, a 7 year period in the future where the hatred of God by the Gentiles will be judged by God and He will deliver Israel. Here's how Paul says its going to happen. The Messiah will come, the Deliverer for whom Israel waits. He will not be meek and lowly Lamb, no, He will be a roaring, raging Lion of the Tribe of Judah. As He judges the Gentiles, He will turn ungodliness from Israel.

The bible clearly states that at that time in history, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD. If you wait until then to bow your knee to Him, it will be too late, you will spend eternity separated from Him. If you will bow your knee today to Him and confess Him as your LORD and Savior, then He will hear you, forgive your sins, remove your guilt and you will walk in newness of life now and eternally with Him, where He is.