

I. Review of Part 1

A. We have begun to look at the mystery concerning God's leadership and dealings with ethnic Israel concerning their role and calling in His plan of redemption. We affirmed that God has unique calling on Israel. Namely, that they were carriers and the vehicle to bring His two primary promises (Anointed One, Dwelling Place) of redemption to the earth. We looked at the scenario of the book of Acts where we see Gentile nations receiving Jesus as their Savior and walking in the realities of the gospel of the Kingdom. This leads us to the book of Romans where Paul writes a Q/A on this mystery. (Rom. 9-11)

1. Has the unique purpose of God for Israel failed? No, Israel's disobedience cannot nullify God's sovereign purpose for the nation. The failure has fallen upon those who were of the ethnic line of Israel but not of the spiritual line. (Rom. 9:6-13)
2. Is it unjust of God to give a unique calling to one nation or people group over another? No, there is not one person or nation that receives unique callings or purposes in God because they deserve it or have earned it. All callings or uniqueness in relationship is given through mercy alone. (Rom. 9:14-18)
3. If God chooses what Israel's calling will be is it fair or right that He would hold them accountable to fulfill that calling? Yes, God is the creator and we are the creature. If He declares we are accountable to complete an assignment then it is so. (Rom. 9:19-29)

II. Continuing the Q/A

4. If the calling of God upon Israel is based upon mercy and irrevocable then why are they not responding to the gospel and the Gentiles are? (Rom. 9:30-10:13)
 - a) Israel seemed to work for the righteousness of God with everything they had, but did not find it. Why did the unlikely Gentiles find righteousness, when the likely Jews did not? Because the Gentiles pursued the righteousness of faith, and the Jews pursued the law of righteousness. The Gentiles who were saved came to God through faith, receiving His righteousness. The Jews tried to justify themselves before God by performing works according to the law of righteousness.

5. How is God going to restore Israel to their proper calling if they have rejected the gospel of Salvation through faith? (Rom. 10:14-21)
 - a) Both Jews and Gentiles are only saved by grace through faith. There is no distinction. The same God is rich in mercy to all who call upon His name. Israel must call upon Jesus to be made right with God and come back into their rightful unique calling.
 - b) Paul makes it clear that God's plan is to fill the Gentile believers with His heart for Israel. Then to send them as intercessors and preachers filled with the love of Jesus for His unique people. He will stretch out His hands continually in hopes of re-establishing them and awaiting their response to His mercy.

III. Israel's current situation and Gods plan of restoration (Rom. 11)

- A. God has clearly not cast away the uniqueness of Israel and upholds their calling. He has reserved for Himself a remnant through the years even leading up to today. This remnant has chosen to respond through faith and God has helped them understand and partner with grace and mercy. There is a fullness yet to come when the ethnic nation of Israel as a whole is restored to the Lord.
 1. Partial Blindness – Israel's blindness or stumbling block was their inability to receive righteous standing (relationship) with God through grace alone. The Lord in his judgment and wisdom breathed upon their desire to reject the gospel of grace. (Rom. 11:5-10)
 2. Unique calling of Gentile believers – Gentile believers are called to provoke Israel to jealousy through their partnership with God. The Lord will highlight Gentiles as the recipients of God's promises and blessings. This will cause a jealousy in the hearts of ethnic causing them to respond to grace. (Rom. 11:11)
 3. Israel's Restoration – There is a very clear biblical anticipation that ethnic Israel as a whole will respond to righteousness through grace found in Jesus their Messiah. When Israel returns to God the results for all humankind are comparable to life from the dead. God's blessings on humanity now will pale by comparison with what the world will experience then. (Rom. 11:12-15)

IV. Olive Tree Word Picture

A. Inductive outline of (Rom. 11:16-24)

1. (Rom. 11:16) Frist Fruit principle applied and Olive Tree introduced
 - a) The first piece of dough (firstfruits) describes the believing remnant in Israel now, Christian Jews. The "lump" or "batch" refers to the whole nation, Israel. God has consecrated both groups to Himself through the principal of firstfruits.
 - b) I believe the "root" and "tree" refers to the Abrahamic Covenant (faith). The "branches" believing and unbelieving Gentiles and Jews. I think this is clear in view of how Paul proceeded to develop this illustration in verses 17-24.

2. (Rom. 11:17) The grafting in of wild branches to the cultivated tree
 - a) The cultivated olive tree was a symbol of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament (Jer. 11:16-17; Hos. 14:4-6). The wild olive tree represents the Gentile nations. The rich root of the cultivated tree, faith of Israel, corresponds to the Abrahamic Covenant from which all God's blessings and the very life of the nation flowed. The roots derive their nourishment from God Himself.
 - b) God grafted Gentiles in among the Jews. They became partakers with the Jews of the blessings that come through the roots. The wild olive branches retain their own identity as wild branches (Gentiles) even though they benefit from blessings that come through Israel. Therefore, they are ethnically Gentiles but spiritually one with Israel.

3. (Rom. 11:18) Gentile believers are not superior to broken branches or the tree
 - a) Gentile believers should not feel superior to Jewish unbelievers. The branches that God has broken off the tree. Gentile believers might conclude that their salvation is what is responsible for the continuing existence of the faith of Israel. Really it is God's faithfulness in honoring the Abrahamic Covenant that is responsible for that.

4. (Rom. 11:19-22) Gentiles must be sober minded about preserving the faith
 - a) The Gentile is part of the tree by grace through faith, not because he has done a meritorious work. If unbelieving Jews were broken off because of their rejection of grace so too could Gentiles if they revert back to works (boasting). The positions are reversible. Gentiles can become objects of God's sternness and Jews the object of His kindness depending on their response. Believing upon grace through faith resulting in righteousness is what resulted in God grafting in Gentiles. It will be through that same faith (Abraham) that God will graft in Abraham's ethnic descendants.

5. (Rom. 11:23-24) God's desire to graft the fallen branches back into the tree
 - a) If God did the difficult thing, namely, grafting in wild branches (believing Gentiles) into the tree (faith of Israel). It should not be hard to believe that He will do the easier thing. The easier thing is restoring the pruned branches of the cultivated tree (unbelieving Jews who will come to faith in Christ) to their former position (faith of Israel).

V. The plan of God and its culmination

- A. All our theology and understanding of the Bible flows from God's plan of redemption and the place of Israel in it. God has called upon all believers to stand with the destiny and uniqueness of Israel not replace it with their own. If we do not have a theology that embraces Israel, and its important place in the plan of God, then we will not be motivated to intercede (stand in the gap) for them. (Is. 62:6-7, Rom. 10:21)
- B. We must be convinced through the word that Israel's destiny is tied to ours, and matters greatly to God. Though Paul states that Israel's relational destiny with Gentile believers is a mystery, we are not to be ignorant of it. We are to press into it and gain the Lord's heart for it, through the help of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 11:25)
 1. The Lord will use the Gentile believers as a powerful witness through love infused evangelism and intercession. We will truly lay down our lives for our neighbors and ultimately love our enemies in such a way that the entire ethnic nation of Israel will come to the saving knowledge of Jesus their Messiah. (Is. 45:17, 54:6-8, Jer. 3:17-23, Ezk 34:22-31, 37:21-28, 40-48, Mic. 7:15-20, Zeph. 3:12-20, Zec. 10:6-12, Rom. 11:25, 11:31)

"The believing Church is the explicit agent, chosen of God, to obtain the restoration of Israel to their God and to their Land in the Last Days. When you see the magnitude of this, knowing Israel's historical opposition to the gospel and their Messiah, you begin to realize that it will require a Church of an ultimate kind." Art Katz

- C. Jesus tied His return to the earth into His plan of the Gentiles believers provoking Israel to jealousy thus resulting in national salvation. Though we may not be able to make sense of all this God desires to fascinate our hearts for all eternity as it unfolds. (Matt. 23:37-39, Eph. 2:11-15, Rom. 11:26-36)