**ROMANS 11a**

**GRAFTED AND GRATEFUL**

When we speak of the earliest days of the Church… We call it the first church, two things happened to make it blossom the way it did.

1. Israel rejected their Messiah. (Not universally, but the majority)
2. Gentiles accepted Jesus Christ as Messiah. This is how Gentiles became “Those who are called.” ROMANS 8:28

Some hateful denominations and groups declare that God is done with Israel. They take scripture, out of context, and preach hatred towards Israel and against Jews.

But you cannot read Romans and support that kind of bitterness towards Israel. Paul has made the point over and over that God has NOT cast Israel away – that God is still concerned with Israel and that someday Israel will finally accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah… Listen…

**THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL**

Romans 11:1 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

* God has NOT cast away His chosen People.
* I say this as one of them, Paul says.
* He has been accused of disrespecting his Jewish heritage and here denies the charges. He continues…

2 God has **not** cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 "LORD, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS AND TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY SEEK MY LIFE"? ***(1 Kings 19:14)***

* After Elijah’s great spiritual victory in 1 Kings 18, he is threatened by Jezebel… He is afraid for his life and takes off thinking that God has left him, and him alone to face down the evil Queen of mean…
* Why me Lord? Why me? Why am I the only faithful prophet and fugitive You have left? What kind of plan is this?
* But… Like most “Pity-Parties” The participants are wrong. Listen

4 But what does ***(God)*** the divine response say to him? "I HAVE RESERVED FOR MYSELF SEVEN THOUSAND MEN ***(Out of a million)*** WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." ***1 Kings 19:18***

* In His grace, God always preserves a remnant… There is still a small number of Messianic Jews who have accepted their Messiah, Jesus Christ… by grace. Listen…

**GRACE VS WORKS**

5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. 7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; ***(Self-righteousness)*** but the elect have obtained it, ***(Salvation by grace)*** and the rest were blinded.

* The old hymn says, “Grace, Grace, God’s Grace… Grace that is greater than all our sin…”
* It is God’s grace that lifts me up when my soul becomes downcast. His grace IS my salvation… His grace is my hope…
* Grace cannot be mixed in with works in God’s plan. It won’t work! Trying to please God with works while rejecting His Son is just NOT going to work!
* IF you insist on trying… God will do this:

**DOING LIFE YOUR WAY**

8 Just as it is written: "GOD HAS GIVEN THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SEE AND EARS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HEAR, TO THIS VERY DAY." **ISAIAH 29:10**

9 And David says: "LET THEIR ***(Bountiful)*** TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RECOMPENSE TO THEM. 10 LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED, SO THAT THEY DO NOT SEE, AND BOW DOWN THEIR BACK ALWAYS." **PSALM 69:22** ***LISTEN…***

* Only twice in all of my years have I heard the song, “I did it my way” played at a funeral. It is without a doubt, the worst last testimony of any person – that they ignored God and just plowed ahead on their own terms. Both of the men were proud of themselves for doing life the way they wanted. BUT…
* **HEBREWS 9:27** - And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

**GENTILES GRAFTED IN**

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles. ***THANK YOU LORD!***

**NLT** - Did God's people stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course not! They were disobedient, so God made salvation available to the Gentiles. But He wanted His own people to become jealous and claim it for themselves.

12 Now if their fall *is* riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

* SOMEDAY, the Apostle imagines… When Israel once again becomes the Evangelists of the world… O my! It will be glorious!
* Their failure to accept Jesus has been a windfall for us Gentiles but will someday be a huge win for the world!

**A WORD FOR US…**

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are* my flesh and save some of them. 15 For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* but life from the dead?

**NLT** - I am saying all this especially for you Gentiles. God has appointed me as the apostle to the Gentiles. I stress this, 14 for I want somehow to make the people of Israel jealous of what you Gentiles have, so I might save some of them. 15 For since their rejection meant that God offered salvation to the rest of the world, their acceptance will be even more wonderful. It will be life for those who were dead!

* The pressure is on for us Believers to have a faith and a life that is worthy of being envied, RIGHT?
* What do I think we have that others should envy? **JOY! PEACE! LOVE.**

16 For if the first fruit ***(Israel’s Patriarchs)*** *is* holy, the lump ***(Israel)*** *is* also *holy;* and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches.

**CEV** - If part of a batch of dough is made holy by being offered to God, then all of the dough is holy. If the roots of a tree are holy, the rest of the tree is holy too.

* It kind of makes ME jealous of Israel…

**REMEMBER TO RESPECT ISRAEL**

17 And if **some** of the branches were broken off, and you, being a **wild** olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness ***(Goodness)*** of the olive tree, 18 do not boast ***(Think you are better than)*** against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well *said.* Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

**BEWARE!**

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.

**COURSON** - "Learn a lesson from the Jew," Paul says to the Gentile. "Realize that, although you were grafted in by God's grace, you can be cut off if you refuse to respond to His grace."

In John 15, Jesus said, "If the branch abides not in Me, it is cut off and cast into the fire and burned." It is a strong warning with which I do not wish to tamper. How we need to understand both the goodness and the severity of God.

In every job site and perhaps side yard of those who work with wood, there are two stacks of wood.

1. The stack with potential – Nice straight, long pieces that are looked upon with purpose and hope – With plans to be used.
2. Then there is the other stack – Damaged, mis-cut, used up pieces of wood that is being saved for a purpose, but NOT for building… It is the firewood pile.

Beloved, let’s not get in the firewood for God pile!

Let’s stay humble and available for building the Kingdom of God!

Need to change stacks? Let’s spend a moment in prayer as we prepare to take communion and do some business with God.

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