

ROMANS 11:17-32 MERCY

We have been studying about why the Jews missed salvation through the Messiah. They were trying to obtain eternal life by works and when the Messiah offered Himself to make eternal life a free gift of grace, they stumbled over it, and failed to call on Messiah to save them. The Messiah, that is, Christ, died to make eternal life free to all who will accept the gift through faith. It is the same for both Jews and Gentiles. However, because of Israel's unbelief, God has blinded the hearts of the majority of Israel, but God always keeps a remnant of the Jews for Himself.

ROMANS 1:1-5. *I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Know ye not what the scripture sayeth of Elijah? "How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and thrown down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life". But what sayeth the answer of God unto him? "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." Even so, then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

Paul says that God has not given up on Israel. Paul is a Jew and God is using him to preach the good news of salvation through grace. God was not surprised that Israel would turn to idols. From the beginning of time, God knew everything about the future. He knew every word that you or I would ever speak. Elijah had a great spiritual victory on Mount Carmel but fled from the threats of Jezebel and considered himself to be the only prophet of God left in Israel. But God still had 7,000 Israelite men that had not worshiped Idols. Israel is still God's preferred nation and He always reserves a remnant of Israel that He has elected to partake of His grace. This is a mystery that I don't understand, but accept: We, when convicted of our sins, choose God, but the truth is that He chose us first.

ROMANS 11:6. *And if by grace, then it is no more works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.*

Grace is a free gift that is undeserved. There is no work you can do to earn grace. There cannot be a mixture of grace and works; grace contains no works, and works contains no grace. In verse 7, it is explained that Israel, by works did not obtain grace, but part of Israel was elected, and the rest were blinded (until the times of the Gentiles is ended). In verses 11-15, it is

explained that Israel stumbled over the Messiah, and God gave salvation to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous.

ROMANS 11:17-18. *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.*

The nurtured olive tree represents a “favored” position with God, including the blessings promised to Abraham, the wild olive tree is the Gentiles.

Gentiles are grafted into the nurtured olive tree. Gentiles must remember that they do not nurture the root, but that the root nurtures them. They have nothing to boast about, it is all a free gift of God’s grace.

ROMANS 11:19-24. *Thou wilt say, then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. But be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them who fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree that is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more shall these, who are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*

This is hard to understand, and some people take this to mean that you can lose your salvation. The good olive tree represents having a favored status with God and not living in rebellion against God. The Jews started out as God’s favored nation, they rebelled, some of the branches were broken off. The Gentiles, of the time of Jesus had an open mind to hear the gospel and they were grafted in as being favored of God. Some of the Jews that were cut off will believe, and they will be grafted back in. Gentiles who rebel will be cut off.

ROMANS 11:25. *For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And all Israel shall be saved; as it is written: There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away the ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

In Matthew 12, the leaders of the Jewish religion accused Jesus of doing miracles by the power of Satan. From that time on, blindness has fallen on the majority of the Jews. It will remain that way until the end of the Tribulation when the earth is harvested, and the nations are judged. Those judged as sheep will go into the kingdom age in which Jesus will sit on the throne of Israel for a thousand years.

ROMANS 11:33. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

In this life, we will never comprehend all the greatness of God. Bless Him with all your being. Give Him praise, honor, glory, and obedience.

This lesson teaches that God is merciful in offering salvation to all people, Jews and Gentiles. All who call upon Jesus will be saved.