

Romans (11:25-27)

The Deliverer from Zion

Part 55 – November 27, 2005

RECAPPING & READING

Paul gave us the illustration of an olive tree that represents salvation. Its roots extend back to God's covenant with Abraham.

- If you're a Gentile, you can be grafted in *through* Jesus.
- And if you are a Jew, you will be pruned off *without* Him.

This is the first half of a great mystery that God is revealing through Paul in the eleventh chapter of Romans. The second half of the mystery has to do with the fact that:

- The "hardening" of the Jews *sent* the message to the Gentiles.
- The "fruitfulness" of the Gentiles will woo the Jews back in.

This sequence for bringing salvation to both Jews and Gentiles hadn't been revealed to the church, until God disclosed the details to Paul, and used him to deliver the message to us.

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." - *Romans 11:25-27 NIV*

Paul could sum up the mystery with this:

- The Christian church is now the true Israel

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit ... - *Romans 2:28-29 NIV*

Q: So, does this mean that the church has replaced Israel?

Q: Or, does it mean that God has a separate plan for them?

TWO EXTREME VIEWS

Actually, these are both common, but extreme views. And we should discuss the dangers involved in buying into them.

1st extreme view: God has given up on Israel

Known as “Replacement Theology” this teaching claims that because Israel didn’t keep her part of the covenant bargain, God no longer intends on keeping His.

- The danger here is: Ignorance that leads to arrogance

We can see it in Paul’s warning: “So that you may not be conceited”

Remember I said that historically, many in the church ended up persecuting the very Jews Paul calls us to make envious?

This idea (that the church has replaced Israel) has fueled much bigotry, prejudice, and intolerance against the Jews.

Q: Have you ever heard the slur about a Jew poisoning the well?

This extends back to the plagues, when Jews were widely accused of poisoning wells. This was because they weren’t getting sick like everyone else ... thanks to dietary (kosher) laws and segregated communities.

On January 9, 1348, in Basel, Switzerland, in reaction to the Black Plague, 600 Jews and the town Rabbis were burned at the stake. 140 children were forcibly baptized. The synagogue was turned into a church.

From 1348-1349, across Europe, Jews were tortured to confess they’d poisoned the wells to kill Christians. Over 60 large and 150 small Jewish communities were destroyed as a direct result of these accusations.

The Lord himself speaks through the prophet Jeremiah about Israel breaking her covenant with God.

They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife. –
Jeremiah 31:31-32 NLT Para.

And here’s His final opinion on the subject:

I am as likely to reject my people Israel as I am to do away with the laws of nature! Just as the heavens cannot be measured and the foundation of the earth cannot be explored, so I will not consider casting them away forever for their sins. I, the Lord, have spoken! – *Jeremiah 31:35-37 NLT*

And this has led many believers to an even more dangerous view.

2nd extreme view: God has a separate plan for Israel

Known as “Two Covenant Theology,” this teaching says there are two separate ways for Jews and Christians to be saved.

I remember years ago, this archaeologist guest speaker (at His Place) who announced during his slide show, that Jews are not required to believe in Jesus, because God’s everlasting covenant with Abraham is still in force.

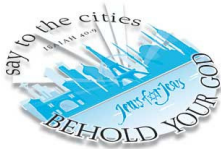
There are Christian leaders who not only advocate a position of non-evangelization of Jews, but claim that it is anti-Semitic to proselytize or try and convert them to Christ.

- The danger here is: Apathy that leads to indifference.

Paul stands in clear opposition to this claim, with his insistence on there being only one olive tree, which has stood since God’s original covenant with Abraham. God’s chosen people, true Jews, have never stopped existing.

That’s why Paul says: “Israel has experienced a hardening” “*in part*”

There are many believing Jews in the world today, and there have been since the time of Christ. The New Testament book of James was written to “The twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad”.



Did you know that Jews for Jesus is in the midst of a 65 city, \$10,000,000 Jewish evangelism campaign called: Behold Your God

Here’s a full-page ad they placed in the New York Times:



Ok, you’re downtown when suddenly, it’s Judgment Day. Let’s face it, this would be a really bad time to finally realize Jesus is the Messiah.

[Then they offer a free book and say:]

Of course, if you don’t read the book, it won’t necessarily be the end of the world ... then again, it might be. Jews for Jesus. Lord knows we’ve got proof.

Q: Israel has experienced a hardening “in part” ... until when?

A: “Until the full number of the Gentiles has come in”

By God’s grace, Gentiles have been invited to “come in” to the Kingdom of God, and join the true remnant of His chosen people.

So, let's go back to where we began:

- The Christian church is now the true Israel.

And, this "one true church of God" is made up of true Jews who have embraced the Messiah established through Abraham, and the Gentiles who've accepted the gracious invitation to join them.

When Paul references the "full number of the Gentiles", he isn't talking about a specific quantity; he's referring to when the hardening of Israel will have accomplished its purpose.

And after that, Gentiles won't stop coming in, but Israel's partial hardening will disappear. And the Jews will again be in the role of God's Ambassadors to the Gentiles.

That's why Paul says: "And so all Israel will be saved"

And when Paul says: "All Israel" will be saved, he's not talking about every single Jew, as though they'll have no choice.

It's like in Joshua when Achan is stoned as capital punishment:

Then all Israel stoned him ... - *Joshua 7:25 NIV*

It's not like every single Jew picked up a rock and threw it! It's a representative number large enough to have national significance.

- Paul doesn't say: "All Israel *might or could* be saved"
- Paul says: "All Israel will be saved"

His point is that there are still OT promises to be fulfilled for those "broken branches" of ethnic Israel. And when this future large-scale conversion of ethnic Jews happens, it will result in these new Jewish believers becoming grafted back into their own olive tree. (*Rom. 11:24*)

The deliverer will come from Zion (Israel); he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins. (11:26-27)

Paul would've seen a "Two Covenant Theology" as:

- A radical denial of the work of Christ.
- A profound failure of love toward Jews.

As Gentile believers, grafted into the one true tree of life, we must avoid arrogance and apathy toward God's broken branches.