

Salt Church

Romans 11:13-24

“Holy Bread & Holy Trees”

March 15, 2026

The Greatest Book Ever Written

David and Cindy (June 6-14)

Recap:

¹¹ 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 the Gentiles were enriched because the people of Israel turned down God’s offer of salvation, think how much greater a blessing the world will share when they finally accept it.

Here is what we learned last week:

- **The time of the Gentiles had come**, and God had decided to open His window of grace to the non-Jews.
- **The temporary closing of window of grace** to the Jewish people had come.
 - We also learned that **this window would not be completely closed** as God would always keep a remnant of Jews for Himself until the end of time.

The reason God has kept a remnant for Himself is summed in verse 12 ¹² *Now if the Gentiles were enriched because the people of Israel turned down God's offer of salvation, think how much greater a blessing the world will share when they finally accept it.*

- So, we see that God has a plan to once again open the window of grace for the Jewish people.

Now Paul under the power of the Holy Spirit is going to concentrate on the Gentile believer.

- But before we get there, I need to remind you of two very important things:

Revelation 13:8

⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him (Satan), **whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb** slain from the foundation of the world.

- There is a book called the Lambs book of life.
 - The names that are written in this book are the names of the redeemed.
 - Those names were written prior to the creation of the world.
 - No names have been added nor subtracted since it was written.
 - Therefore, we can conclude that **God is sovereign over salvation.**

Next, God doesn't do things like we would.

- Praise the Lord!

Isaiah 55:8-9

⁸“For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,

Nor *are* your ways **My ways,**” says the Lord.

⁹“For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,

So are My ways higher than your ways,

And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Here is what we learn from these two verses:

- God’s thought processes are on another level and even the smartest man could never figure Him out.
- ***Grace, mercy, and salvation are God’s to give to whomever He desires.***
 - He does this without any outside influence at all.

Keep that in mind as we work through today’s text:

Romans 11:13-24

¹³I am saying all this especially for you Gentiles.

- What has Paul said so far?
 - God’s plan for His people was this :
 - **They would believe and He would bless them for their belief.**
 - **The rest of the world would see and hear of the God of the Jews and desire what they had.**
 - The Jews did believe but things went wrong.
 - **They loved the blessing without loving the one that gave the blessing.**

- **The result of that mistake** is the window of grace was closed temporary for the Jewish people.
 - Not completely closed but definitely not as open as it once was.
 - *I should also mention that gentiles did come to faith during the period of time that the window of grace was opened to the Jews.*
- **In Gods “higher way” of thinking and planning**, He opens the window of grace for the rest of the world.
 - There is a **global proclamation of the gospel** that will be received by everyone whose names are written in the Lambs book of Life and rejected by those whose names are not written in the Lambs Book of Life.

Romans 11:13-24

¹³I am saying all this especially for you Gentiles.

God has appointed me as the apostle to the Gentiles.

- This is an important statement because there are some denominations that teach that Peter is the apostle to the gentiles.

I stress this, ¹⁴for I want somehow to make the people of Israel jealous of what you Gentiles have, so I might save some of them.

- Why would Paul stress this?
 - Keep in mind the Jewish reader might be offended by that statement.

- How can Paul being the Apostle to the Gentiles make the Jews jealous for the grace of God?

Perhaps it is a translation issue.

NKJ says it this way:

I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.

Again, we find ourselves at the same question,

- How could the Apostle Paul provoke to jealousy the Israelites?
- Perhaps it is due to **his education and training.**
- Perhaps it is due to **his incredible understanding of the Old Testament.**
 - Listen to what Paul says about his education and testimony.

Acts 22:3-10

³ Then Paul said, “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia (The Greek center for learning), and I was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel (The Nick Saban of Pharisees). As his student, I was carefully trained in our Jewish laws and customs. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did, just like all of you today. ⁴ And I persecuted the followers of the Way (The early church), hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison. ⁵ The high priest and the whole council of elders can testify that this is so. For I received letters from them to our Jewish brothers in Damascus, authorizing me to bring the

followers of the Way from there to Jerusalem, in chains, to be punished.

⁶“As I was on the road, approaching Damascus about noon, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shone down around me. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’

⁸“Who are you, lord?’ I asked.

“And the voice replied, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, the one you are persecuting.’ ⁹The people with me saw the light but didn’t understand the voice speaking to me.

¹⁰“I asked, ‘What should I do, Lord?’

“And the Lord told me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything you are to do.’

So, we see that Paul’s ability to provoke his people to jealousy would be very easy for him due to his background.

- Once the up-and-coming Pharisee
 - Filled with Old School passion
 - If Gamaliel took an interest in you, you were special
 - Paul was the Pharisee among Pharisee’s
 - Brilliant in the Old Testament knowledge.
 - This is a guy the Jews would want to follow.

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¹⁵For since their rejection (The Jews) 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!

- Paul expresses God's plan in the rejection of God's grace by the Jewish nation.
- Meaning that this would be the catalyst for the proclamation of the gospel of grace for the rest of the world.
 - Paul also reminds us that these people (me and you, the Gentiles) were dead in our transgression.
 - The selection of those whose names had been written in the Lamb's Book of Life would then be brought to life through the power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ.

16 And since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy, their descendants will also be holy—just as the entire batch of dough is holy because the portion given as an offering is holy. For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too.

What in the world Paul?

- How did we go from God offering salvation to the Gentiles to Abraham and holy bread and holy trees?

Peter has something to say about Paul's teaching style:

2 Peter 3:15-16

15 And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him— 16 speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction.

Let's break it down line by line.

16 And since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy,

- “Since Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, are holy (separated from sin)”
 - **Why are they holy?**
 - They were not sinless.
 - Let me connect something for you, **to be holy is to be righteous. (right-living)**
 - Abraham was credited with righteousness because he believed God.
- So, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were credited with righteousness because of God's grace that had been poured out upon them.
- They believed because they had been given the gift of faith.
- This faith produced righteousness or as this text says holiness.
 - Righteousness = holiness
 - Holiness = righteousness
 - Keep this in mind as we process the next line:

their descendants will also be holy

- **This is not an indication** that all their offspring will be credited with righteousness.
- Rather, it is an indication that **all who are holy (righteous) will be their descendants.**
 - So, it could be reworded this way “Their true descendants will also be holy like them.”

Paul shifts in his analogy

—just as the entire batch of dough is holy because the portion given as an offering is holy.

- **In a bread offering**, a portion of the bread is offered.
 - When this happens, **the whole loaf becomes holy** even though the rest of it may not be used for worship.
 - The connection here is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were holy because they were credited with righteousness and **all that follow them in belief will also be considered holy**, even if they are not used in the same way that the patriarchs were.

Now, if that is clear as mud to you, read the next line.

For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too.

- Nothing confusing so far.
- That makes sense because the roots, tree, and branches are one.
 - At least they should be

¹⁷ But some of these branches from Abraham's tree—(some of the people of Israel)—have been broken off.

- Do you remember how Peter said that Paul was hard to understand and how some take what he said and twist it to mean something it doesn't?
- **This is one of those verses.**
 - ***This does not mean that you can lose your salvation.***
 - What it means is that **some of the physical offspring of Abraham have been broken off.**
 - Why?

There are at least two reasons given:

And you Gentiles, who were branches from a wild olive tree, have been grafted in.

- It is by no accident that the olive tree was chosen by Paul.
- The Mount of Olives and the garden is where we find Jesus teaching and praying, were a big part of the culture.
 - They understood this analogy better than us.

I know nothing about growing, pruning, or caring for olive trees.

- In my study this week I read why this made sense to the Roman readers.

I learned that **olive branches do not produce fruit forever.**

- There is a point when the branch is too old to produce fruit.
- When this occurs, the whole branch is pruned.
 - Now, that means that if branch is removed that it will takes years for a new branch to grow back and produce fruit.
- **Here's the part that is fascinating**
 - The gardeners discovered that the tree truck of the mature tree contains all the goodness to produce fruit, but it needs a branch that is not too young nor too old.
 - So, what they would do is take a branch that was from a younger tree (perhaps a wild olive tree) cut it off and graft it into the more mature tree and it would yield fruit much faster, almost instantly.

So, when we read “*And you Gentiles, who were **branches from a wild olive tree, have been grafted in.***” We can embrace what Paul is trying to say through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- The old branches (Israel) were no longer producing the fruit of righteousness.
 - Why?
 - Unbelief
 - Therefore, they were cut off and cast aside for the new “wild” branches (Gentiles) to be grafted in.

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So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in the rich nourishment from the root of God’s special olive tree.

Praise the Lord this finally makes sense!

18 But you must not brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. You are just a branch, not the root.

Why would Paul say that?

- Because it is **by God’s grace, through faith** that we have been grafted into the tree of Jesus Christ.
 - Thus, we can never look down on the nation of Israel.
 - **They are the way they are because of their unbelief** and because **God has set them aside for a season**
 - **Why**, so that the gentiles may be grafted into His goodness.
 - The fact that we produce any good fruit is not because of our good works.

- It is because we are connected to the one who produces good fruit in us.

19 “Well,” you may say, “those branches were broken off to make room for me.” 20 Yes but remember—those branches were broken off because they didn’t believe in Christ, and you are there because you do believe.

- Therefore, we cannot boast; for salvation is the result of the free gift of God by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

So don’t think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. 21 For if God did not spare the original branches, he won’t spare you either.

- This verse is a warning to all Christians that choose the path of rebellion and sin.
 - **God is patient and kind**
 - But go long enough without producing righteous fruit and He will take you out.
 - ***Not as it relates to salvation*** but as Paul says about those who take communion improperly, ***“they have become sick and even have died.”***

(Side note)

- ***Raising children to be godly adults is difficult enough even for the most devoted Christians.***
 - To “backside” or go through a season of laziness or rebellion could cost your children.

- Be very diligent in your walk so that you do not lead your children to become fruitless branches that are cut off from the greatest being know to creation.

22 Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you if you continue to trust in his kindness.

- This is a very important verse as it relates to obedience.
- So many people only focus on Gods love without remembering that **God will not compromise one of His attributes for another.**
 - In other words, **God will not sacrifice His justice for His love.**
 - **Perfect love demands perfect justice.**
 - No good judge would allow murders, rapist, and thieves to go unpunished.

Paul's point is well received for our God has the ability to be both kind and severe.

- This leads me to this very important truth:
 - **The God you will face will be the one that you either obeyed or disobeyed.**

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But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off.

- The Apostle John wrote that those who leave the faith never had the faith.
- I am convinced that a child of God cannot walk away from His love.

- There may be periods of rebellion and disobedience but in the end a true child of God will repent and return.

²³ And if the people of Israel turn from their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them back into the tree.

Look at God go!!!

- Only God could take an old fruitless branch, graft it back in and make it fruitful.
- If you haven't figured it out yet, this is God's grand plan for the Jewish people.

Paul continues with hope for the nation of Israel.

²⁴ You, by nature, were a branch cut from a wild olive tree.

- That's us, a bunch of wild olive branches grafted in to His love.

So, if God was willing to do something contrary to nature by grafting you into his cultivated tree, he will be far more eager to graft the original branches back into the tree where they belong.

We close today with a prophecy from Zechariah

- ***Written over 2500 years ago***

Zechariah 12:1-10

12 This message concerning the fate of Israel came from the Lord: "This message is from the Lord, who stretched out the

heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the human spirit. ² **I will make Jerusalem** like an intoxicating drink that makes the nearby nations stagger when they send their armies to besiege Jerusalem and Judah.³ On that day I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock. **All the nations will gather against it to try to move it**, but they will only hurt themselves.

⁴ “On that day,” says the Lord, “I will cause every horse to panic and every rider to lose his nerve. I will watch over the people of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of their enemies. ⁵ And the clans of Judah will say to themselves, ‘The people of Jerusalem have found strength in the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, their God.’

⁶ “On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a flame that sets a woodpile ablaze or like a burning torch among sheaves of grain. They will burn up all the neighboring nations right and left, while the people living in Jerusalem remain secure.

⁷ “The Lord will give victory to the rest of Judah first, before Jerusalem, so that the people of Jerusalem and the royal line of David will not have greater honor than the rest of Judah. ⁸ On that day the Lord will defend the people of Jerusalem; the weakest among them will be as mighty as King David! And the royal descendants will be like God, like the angel of the Lord who goes before them! ⁹ **For on that day I will begin to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.**

¹⁰ “Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and on the people of Jerusalem. They will look on me whom they have pierced and mourn for him as for an

only son. *They will grieve bitterly for him as for a firstborn son who has died.*

Close in prayer