CALVARY CHAPEL
MARTIN COUNTY

Why the Hold?
Good / Bad?
And a pointed lesson in the Care and Feeding of Olive Trees
Romans 11:11-21

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We get the following from C.S. Lewis. “In a sense the converted Jew is the only normal human being in the world. To him, in the first instance, the promises were made, and he has availed himself of them. He calls Abraham his father by hereditary right as well as by divine courtesy. He has taken the whole syllabus in order, as it was set; eaten the dinner according to the menu. Everyone else is, from one point of view, a special case, dealt with under emergency regulations. To us Christians the unconverted Jew (I mean no offence) must appear as a Christian manqué; someone very carefully prepared for a certain destiny and then missing it. And we ourselves, we christened gentiles, are after all the graft, the wild vine, possessing

‘joys not promised to our birth’; though perhaps we do not think of this so often as we might. And when the Jew does come in, he brings with him into the fold dispositions different from, and complementary of, ours; as St. Paul envisages in Ephesians ii. 14-19.” (Lewis 1953-1954, 7-8)

A manqué is someone who having failed, missed, or fallen short, especially because of circumstances or a defect of character; unsuccessful; unfulfilled or frustrated.

Not a bad summary of our text.

We have learned that those who propose that God is done with the Jews, and that the church has now taken over all the promises of Gof for them, have seriously flawed theology. God is not done with the Jewish people. All of the promises for them are still applicable. And that includes the following.

Genesis 12:3
“And **I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed**.”” (NASB 2020)

And we are seeing graphic real time fulfillment of this promise, at least the curses side of it, right now in Europe.

What about the future for Israel? Today, we see them back in the land, in unbelief, but back just as the scriptures said they would be.

It is obvious that God is not done with them yet. So, the question, what about the future?
We know that at present, the Jewish people, whether they are in the land or not, fall into two categories. They are either, part of the remnant, in other words, Messianic Jews who are waiting for the pre-tribulation rapture just as we are; or they are the rest of the nation who is currently judicially blinded and hardened to their Messiah.

As he begins to look at their future, Paul asks if this is permanent.

The rejection of Israel is not complete. It is not permanent either. There is a remnant but for those of us who are not Jewish, it is also good news. Because the righteousness of God has been extended to us through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross due to the rejection of the Jews. And we, the church, will stir the Jews to jealousy which ultimately will see them come to the Lord, at the end of the age.

With that said, let’s look at our text.

Romans 11:11–16
“**I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? Far from it! But by their wrongdoing salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous**. Now if their wrongdoing proves to be riches for the world, and their failure, riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Therefore insofar as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry if somehow I may move my own people to jealousy and save some of them. **For if their rejection proves to be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are as well**.” (NASB 2020)

Looking at what we see in verse 11, Paul is asking a question. Rephrasing it, he is asking the rhetorical question, ”did the Jewish people stumble so badly that they are done and will never rise again?” No, would be the appropriate answer here, but this is simply a rephrasing of the question he asked earlier in verse 1. But their disobedience, their “fall” to use Paul’s words, has enabled God to open up access to His

righteousness. But because they did indeed stumble and rejected their Messiah, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

Paul is looking at history and giving, essentially, a theological interpretation to their rejection of their own Messiah. Paul and Barnabas made that quite clear in Pisidian Antioch.

Acts 13:44–52
"The next Sabbath nearly all the city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. **But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming.** Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "**It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first. Since you repudiate it and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE APPOINTED YOU AS A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.' " When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed.** And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." (NASB 2020)

Paul has 3 other instances that he could add to that from Acts alone, but the essence of what he is saying is reflected in what took place there in Pisidian Antioch. Rejection of the gospel as well as an intentional persecution of those communicating it.

When we studied the book of Acts, we learned the modus operandi of Paul in the mission field. If there was a Jewish synagogue, he would always start there first. In every case, when his message was rejected by the Jews in the area, he would then turn towards this being a Gentile mission which also meant usually making use of any available building, usually nearby the synagogue.

John Stott points out that in "each of these…decisions the same double event had taken place. The Jews had rejected the gospel and the Gentiles had accepted it. The second naturally followed the first, as Jesus himself had predicted. But now Paul turns history into theology, by implying that the first event took place with a view to the second. God thus overruled the sin of Israel for the salvation of the Gentiles." (Stott 2001, 295)

The jealousy is referenced by Dr. Luke in Acts more than once. My favorite is very early in the history of the church, in events taking place shortly after Pentecost there in the Temple and surrounding area in Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin were to be the religious authorities and no one else was supposed to be. And healing the riff raff, which was taking place at the hands of the apostles, that must end.

Acts 5:16–21
"The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. **But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.**" And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought." (ESV)

The actions of the religious leadership of that day was driven by jealousy. I have seen that even in the present day. When God begins to move, and He always tends to do so using people, methods and

locations that do not meet the expectations of the religious establishment; the first thing they do is belittle the revival or outpouring of the Spirit. Why? The same reason why the Jewish leadership did this, jealousy.

What's the real problem? The flesh.

For those who are doing the work and seeing the fruit. But for those who are fearful of having their "ministry" impacted and losing people, jealousy. Satan has relied on that one for centuries now.

The problem mainstream or marketplace religion has with a move of the Holy Spirit is very simple, they do not control it, the Holy Spirit does. Revival is messy and that may damage the current monetization and marketing of the church we see, actually Laodicea, which allows non-believers to define what constitutes ministry success in the marketplace.

I do not agree with much Russell Moore says these days but this he nailed. "When success is measured by public opinion, the stakes are high. When the sign of God's favor is seen in popular response, we inevitably start to see the market—however that market is defined—as the revelation of God. And when the market shifts what it wants, the entrepreneurs must change with it. In some eras that means sexual "liberation," and in others it means the humiliation of opponents." Moore continues.

"God can send revival. But that will mean, as it usually does, that the kind of religion the age wants—the kind that can be livestreamed and monetized—will first have to fall. Real revival is disturbing and disrupting, which is why so many of us, if left to ourselves, prefer the counterfeit kind.
Revival? We can't handle revival. That's the point. Revival—the real kind, the kind that can't be controlled—handles us. And the first thing it blows away is the stick by which we measure our success." (Moore 2025)The measure I am working for is this.

Matthew 25:21
"**His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord**.'" (NKJV)

Paul is telling us here that jealousy, lack of control, not happening in their arena, and on and on, was the problem of the mainstream religion of the day. It still is today as well. Paul though is dealing with, Institutionalized Judaism that had forgotten where it came from.

And yes, even our little fellowship has run into this arrogance by those of marketplace religion. We had an opportunity presented sometime ago to consider and make use of a church building that is not being used on Sunday mornings currently, as the fellowship is meeting in a larger facility so they can all meet at the same time while they build a larger facility. But when we approached them about using the unused building, we were told no. Why? Jealousy? Perhaps, but it really did not meet their marketing and assimilation processes.

We ran into the same thing trying to make use of an unused auditorium connected with a Christian school. Jealousy?

I am not saying we have a corner on the Holy Spirit here at Calvary, but there are those in our area who are busy with their own view of how to do church, and they look at it like a business rather than our being brother and sisters in Christ trying to reach a lost world.

They are looking to build their brand. And if that also means adjusting what they believe to be more in tune with the culture, then they do so. One church locally has recently announced they will encourage but

no longer talk about sin. So much for the teaching of God's word. I have two words for that church which made a "deal" of this on Instagram recently.

1 John 2:15–17
"**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him**. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (NKJV)

1 Timothy 6:3–5
"**If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.**" (NKJV)

What we do here at Calvary Chapel is simple, and it is indeed a reason why we too are subjected to marketplace driven churches and organizations refusing to talk or even negotiate with us. We do this. Paul gave clear instructions to Timothy and those instructions, if followed, are the number one preventative from seeing a ministry secularize or apostatize.

2 Timothy 4:1–4
"I solemnly exhort you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: **preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and exhort, with great patience and instruction**. For the time will come when **they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, and they will turn their ears away from the truth and will turn aside to myths**." (NASB 2020)

In other words, they will encourage and affirm sinners in their sin without warning them of the need to repent, turn from that sin and come to Jesus Christ making Him Lord.

The disciples initially were also carriers of this same "guarding of the approaches to God" attitude as well. Jesus had to set them straight. A few of them had come across someone who was doing deliverance ministry and doing well at it but they were not part of the same group as the disciples.

Up flares the jealousy. Someone is on your turf here Jesus. And of course, this all came up because they were redirecting from a previous failure.

Luke 9:46–50
"**Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest.** (Strike one) And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great." (Strike Two) **Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us." But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side**."" (Strike three) (NKJV)

Jealousy in action, I am more important to the ministry than you are. It is all about me and my ministry and my church and my way of doing things after all. But Jesus responds showing that no one is more important than anyone else as we should all be simply serving and loving as a child would. But jealousy in

action then ignores that truth and begins looking at those who do not meet our religious standards in the community since they are not part of our group.

The ultimate expression of that attitude is what Paul is talking about here in Romans. The Jews thought they had a corner on the God market and how to operate in that market. Jesus did not meet their expectations, so He was dealt with. But that did not end it.

You would think that would make someone who reasons things out to take a look and see the evidence of truth in Jesus and the church. The amount of actual physical evidence that those in Jerusalem had to ignore to be jealous and deny, was amazing. And for a time, Paul was one of those until Damascus. God was already calling out Gentiles to follow Him since the Jews were rejecting and who better to reach the Gentiles but the Jew of Jews, the Pharisee hunter/killer of Christians, Saul of Tarsus.

But for many, the cognitive dissonance was too much.

For centuries they thought they knew how to obtain God's righteousness. The prophets showed the reality was otherwise and Asaph made int crystal clear in Psalm 78 that other than the remnant, no one was faithfully following YAHWEH, teaching their kids or even learning from history.

Now, those in Jewish leadership were dealing with cognitive dissonance and they dealt with it by rejecting Jesus Christ as Messiah. Why didn't they get it? Some of us would even ask, what was wrong with them to not see what others clearly saw?

This is really, no different than what we encounter each time we finally get and absorb a truth of the scriptures. For example, I have anger toward someone else who has wronged me and I just cannot get by it, even though I know it is sin to hold onto it. Muriel and Duane Elmer discuss this.

"Notice the sequence toward dissonance: anger is a sin, but it can be rationalized as "righteous anger" (no dissonance). Or, one can forgive; but it would mean I can no longer hold anger against the offender (potential dissonance). I want to be forgiven by my heavenly Father, so now I am in a bind (dissonance). My seething anger can continue but then I would be disobedient (more dissonance). That would also make me a hypocrite (serious dissonance). Or, I can forgive the other person, set myself free from the anger, and enjoy fellowship with my Father (resolution, elimination of dissonance, and restoration of harmony)." (Elmer and Elmer 2020, 92)

But many who were Jewish at the time of Paul, never got over this and it is reflected in the jealousy of the Jews over the Gentiles. And Arno Gaebelien pulls it together for us.

"God in His infinite wisdom and all-wise purpose brought by their fall salvation to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy. In this statement we see again that God has not cast away His people Israel. If He had cast them away, why should He wish to provoke them to jealousy? And this provoking to jealousy is with the intent that some of them might be saved (verse 14)." (Gaebelein 2009, 67)

Romans 11:12
"Now if their wrongdoing proves to be riches for the world, and their failure, riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!" (NASB 2020)

Hard truth but true truth, the world has benefited from the failure of Israel to remain faithful and to recognize their own Messiah. But consider what the additional benefit would be to the world, if Israel were to be fully restored to a relationship with their Lord. When that does indeed happen, the worldwide impact will be huge. We have already been provided a prophetic picture of this.

Micah 4:1–4
“It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, and **many nations shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.**” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.” (ESV)

One more picture drawn for us of the impact of the nation seeing and realizing who their Messiah is and being restored to relationship at the end of the age.

Zechariah 8:20–23
“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.’ **Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’** ” (ESV)

But for the last 2,000 years that has not been the case. Yet God has been blessing the world through the body of Christ, the Church. The Gospel has covered the planet. This Gospel has not only had spiritual ramifications with the vast numbers who have enjoyed salvation through Jesus Christ, but also the impact that followers of Jesus have had on social justice, laws, and on and on.

The overall rejection of their Messiah by the majority of the Jews globally has resulted in loss opportunity for them, lost blessing, or severe setbacks. But a reversal of that changes everything. We have the moment of reversal already recorded for us in Zechariah.

Zechariah 12:10
“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, **when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn**.” (ESV)

The remnant will ask for their Messiah to come and save them, He does, and when they see Him, it will hit and hit hard. All the useless centuries of pain and suffering due to unbelief.

Romans 11:13–14
“But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Therefore insofar as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry if somehow I may move my own people to jealousy and save some of them.” (NASB 2020)

Here Paul makes specific mention in the letter that at this particular moment, he is talking to those who are Gentiles. Is this being done to counteract the view, that may have already started even then, that Israel was done?

Here is a thought for us, that may have indeed been floating around the Roman world and then on top of that, they may have also alleged Paul, an apostle to the Gentiles, was exhibit one as a proof of that. In other words, the beginnings of Replacement Theology which we have already stated is based on false assumptions.

Paul here says that by his ministry to the Gentiles, he is indeed optimizing his mission. The rejection of the Jews have, as we saw in his modius operandi while on mission trips, was an accepted fact by Paul. But he has already made several statements and is no clarifying for them don't go there. Zane Hodges explains as well.

"The Gentiles should not be under the illusion that he has focused on his Gentile service (diakonian) simply because he has washed his hands of the rebellious Jewish nation. On the contrary, his very ministry to Gentiles has the same intent as that of God Himself. Paul has already insisted on God's deliberate intention to stir [Israel] to jealousy by granting "deliverance for the Gentiles" (v 11). Paul's Gentile labors are accordingly directed to exactly the same end." (Hodges 2013)

When Paul says that he magnifies his ministry to the Gentiles, he is stating a fact that this is used by him as a very visual display to indeed make the Jews jealous. That will become very obvious based on events that are about to enter Paul's life as he travels to Jerusalem for the final time prior to his being arrested by the religious establishment over the issue of Gentiles in the Temple. Paul's goal was for the Jews to say, we want that salvation too.

His kinsmen coming to a saving knowledge of Jesus was as important to Paul as seeing Gentiles come to faith. He took his job of generating jealousy seriously. If that was what it would take to save some, so be it.

Romans 11:15–16
"For if their rejection proves to be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are as well." (NASB 2020)

When Israel is indeed converted at the end of the age, it is truly life from death. In Psalm 79 Asaph describes the event when the remnant turns to the Lord.

Psalm 79:11
"Let the groaning of the prisoner come before You; According to the greatness of Your power, let those who are doomed to die remain." (NASB 2020)

Before their Messiah returns for them, they are considering themselves as literally, earmarked for death, doomed to die. It will look so dark that will be idea of light. But instead, they will not be doomed to die, they will live.

Now they are in not only the old covenant, but the new as well. Their Messiah has saved them, and they is also a realization that there are not all alone but are part of a large group that has been assembled since the day of Pentecost.

To understand verse 16, we need to understand the feast of first fruits. Let's look at Leviticus 23.

Leviticus 23:10–11
"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and you gather its harvest, then you shall **bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted**; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." (NASB 2020)

The first fruit of the harvest, that first sheave was also a statement that there is much more to come. By presenting the first sheave, the entire harvest was also made holy. Notice this as well, the one who

brought the first fruits is standing there in front of the altar as the offering is waved. What this means is that not only is the rest of the crop holy, but the one presenting it is dedicated to completing the work.

Rushdoony continues explaining this. “The offering, when “waved” before the Lord, signified that all our lives must go before the altar for dedication and the affirmation that we are not our own; having been bought with a price, we belong totally to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:19–20). This is not all. The firstfruit represents the whole, and, therefore, the firstborn represents the whole. Paul tells us that Jesus Christ is both “the image of the invisible God” and “the firstborn of every creature” (Col. 1:15). When we are members of Christ’s new humanity, we are holy before God because Jesus Christ is holy, “for if the firstfruit be holy, the lump also is holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.”” (Rushdoony 1997, 215)

Taking this down a few steps, this would also include the dough made from the first sheeve of grain. Ray Stedman adds “for the offering of the first fruits, a pile of dough was made up, and someone would take a handful of it and present it to God. Paul's argument is that if that first handful was acceptable and holy before God, the rest of the dough would be too.” (Stedman 1976)

Now we have to sit back and look at what this all means. We are talking about Israel, aren’t we. So, who was that first piece of dough, or the root of the tree?

Think like a Jew, the patriarchs. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The first of the first fruit, Abrham, was set apart by God when God provided the call we see in Genesis 12:1-3. The roots, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the source of God’s special favor on the Jewish people. The rest of the harvest would also belong to God; God is not done with Israel yet. But what happened.

“Paul is here appealing to the fact that the patriarchs (perhaps he means only Abraham) were holy people and this has consequences for their descendants. It means that God will not discard them wholly, and thus in due course the fact that the root of Israel is holy will have its effect in the latest branches.” (Morris 1988, 411)

The Lord is the one who cares for the tree and the root stock is solid. But some of the branches are not producing fruit.

If you want to grow a Haas avocado, to get better fruit, you want one that has been grafted onto root stock that is better at supporting the plant. Then you graft the Haas producing fruit branch in place of that what would have come naturally.

My grandpa grew olives and he was very careful about the type of tree and what the root stock of the tree was. A very common plant that many grow, just not in South Florida, is the rose. And most roses, as I learned from my uncle who was a rose producer, are grafted on a sturdier root stock.

The picture that Paul gives us is the root stock is superior, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob should be producing branches with serious fruit, but that is not the case. The branches are not producing as they should, so the option is to graft in another type of olive that will produce fruit. So, now we go back out to the olive grove and see the Lord at work.

Romans 11:17–21
“**But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.** You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.” (NASB 2020)

Paul, in his analogy, has told us of a miracle that happens when we come to Christ.

Normally, in agronomy, when you graft a branch of a tree on to root stock, all the root stock does is support the branch to continue doing what it has always done, produce the type of fruit it produces. I had a grapefruit tree which was taken out by a hurricane years ago, but that tree grew two types of grapefruit because two different varieties were grafted onto the root stock. Every so often, I had to prune away a sucker growing from the root stock since we did not want that to produce, just the branches which were grafted on.

But here, we see a miracle or is it a message. The wild olive branch has been grafted onto cultivated olive root stock with a known production heritage.

The wild olive tree does indeed produce fruit, but it is small and inedible. Basically, the fruit is good for olive oil and not much more. The wild olive tree uses most of its energy to produce leaves, whereas the cultivated olive tree uses its energy to produce fruit and a lot of fruit. Ray Stedman adds that “following Paul's analogy here, if we, a wild olive branch, were grafted into a rich cultivated olive tree, the fruit that would continue to grow would be the wild olives, bitter and shriveled, that which we already were producing. But God does a miracle with us. He changes us so that the fruit that comes forth is the fruit of the Spirit, and we begin to produce the rich, wonderful, fat fruit of the good olive tree in our lives. Again, Paul argues, if God can do that with bitter fruit such as we Gentile believers are, how much more will he produce richness with the true branches?” (Stedman 1976)

What happens with those who take a Replacement Theology view is that they are expressing arrogance toward the root stock, the same root stock specifically selected by God. Personally, I have never seen an argument take place in a fruit tree between grafted branches and root stock.

But is there something else going on here too. Paul knew and still referenced this.

Turning back to agronomy, there is a secret that has been used in the Mediterranean world for centuries to reinvigorate really old well producing olive trees. By grafting in wild olives, you now have cross pollination taking place and that improves overall fruitfulness of the tree.

By realizing that we have been grafted in and that we love and serve a savior who was born into a Jewish family of the tribe of Judah. When we fully understand that Jesus Christ is Jewish and when He returns to this planet to rule and reign, He will do so from Jerusalem. We begin to understand some of the cross-pollination benefits. To fully understand the New Testament, we must understand the Old.

Leon Morris tells us “there is evidence that the grafting of a wild olive into a good olive tree is not as daft as many commentators have assumed. When an old olive tree had lost its vigor, it seems that one remedy in antiquity was to cut away the failing branches and graft in some wild olive shoots. The result was said to be the invigoration of the failing tree.” (Morris 1988, 412)

William Ramsay researched the topic and learned the following which adds more to our picture in the scripture.

A frequently quoted passage of Palladius, who, though he wrote in verse about grafting, was also a recognised authority on agriculture and horticulture, confirms Columella and St. Paul that the Wild-Olive graft invigorated the tree on which it was set, though he adds, apparently, that the wild graft did not itself bear the olives which the rest of the tree bore: this last statement is probably a rhetorical flourish, and he means only that the Wild-Olive had never borne olives such as it caused the reinvigorated tree to bear. The fruit of the Wild-Olive was poor and contained little oil; but the oil which it produces is not bad in quality though poor in quantity.

The comparison which St. Paul makes is sustained through a series of details. The chosen people of God, the Jews, are compared to the Olive-tree, which was for a long time fertilised and productive. The cause of their growth and productiveness, the sap which came up from the root and gave life to the tree, was their faith. But this chosen people ceased to be good and fertile; the people lacked faith; the tree became dry, sapless and unproductive. Surgical treatment was then necessary for the tree; the more vigorous stock of the Wild-Olive must be grafted on it, while the sapless and barren branches are cut off. In the same way many of the chosen people have been cut off because of their lack of faith; and in the vacant place has been introduced a scion of the Gentiles, not cultivated by ages of education, but possessing some of the vigour of faith. The new stock makes the tree and the congregation once more fertile. (Ramsay 1906, 224-225)

Being grafted in as we find ourselves now, why would we decide to ignore the root stock and begin to think we did this. We did not, we rely on all the scriptures and that does indeed include the Old Testament. The root supports us. But the reality is not all of those who are of the root stock, believe.

Romans 11:20–21
“Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.” (NASB 2020)

And here is the dark truth being discovered. Those who are conceited tend towards Replacement Theology, and yes, there are now surveys showing what that leads to. Katie Posey conducted a recent survey and the findings show the attitude Paul tried to stop, has not stopped.

“In my survey of more than 1,000 young Christian men, church attendance did not predict antisemitic attitudes. What they believed about God’s promises to the Jewish people did.

That finding should get the Church’s attention. Young Christian men are being shaped in more than one place. What they hear in church matters. So does what they watch online.

The strongest predictor of antisemitic attitudes was beliefs that God’s promises to the Jewish people have ended. When I compared the factors together, these beliefs were about four times as strong a predictor as political conservatism. Church attendance, by contrast, did not predict antisemitic attitudes in the study. There was also a hopeful finding. Men who believed that God’s covenant with the Jewish people continues had lower antisemitic-attitude scores.

That means what churches teach matters. Christians need to ask a basic question: What does Scripture say about God’s faithfulness to the Jewish people?” (Posey 2026)

Again, this is why it is imperative to teach the Bible and the truth of God’s word. When pastors stray, so does the flock.

We are not done with this topic. But what we see here is serious. J. Vernon McGee points that out.

Since God did not spare the nation Israel when they apostatized, the argument is that He will not spare an apostate church. I am more and more convinced that the church which is based on a philosophy or ritual or some sort of gyroflection—the type of church which was designated in the third chapter of the Book of Revelation as the church of Laodicea—will go into the Great Tribulation. As Dr. George Gill used to say, “Some churches will meet on the Sunday morning after the Rapture, and they won’t miss a member.” (McGee 1997, 724) That’s Laodicea.

We will stop here as the next even Paul will cover is the restoration of the nation of Israel.

If you are not currently grafted in, you can be.

Romans 3:21–24
“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13
“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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