

GOD'S PLAN FOR ISRAEL

INTRODUCTION: Romans 11 is all about God's plan for Israel, a plan so often ignored or misunderstood by Christians today. In the next section of Romans 11, beginning in verse 11, we come to God's description of the olive tree, which He uses to help us picture what has happened and what is going to happen in His relationship with the nation and people of Israel. Before we look at the intricate details by exegeting one verse at a time, we need to review the big picture, what the totality of Scripture reveals about God's plan for Israel. Therefore, for a few minutes, we take a short break in the format we have adopted for the verse by verse exposition of Romans. When we complete this overview, we will return to that format in Romans 11:11.

In order to set our context, let us review...

I. GOD'S COVENANTS WITH ISRAEL

A. The **Abrahamic** Covenant

1. The Covenant made **Genesis 12:1-3** 1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
 - a. This covenant is **unconditional**.
 - b. This covenant is fulfilled in Christ.
2. The Covenant expanded **Genesis 22:16-17** 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies."
 - a. This covenant is **unconditional**.
 - b. This covenant is not yet fulfilled.

B. The **Mosaic** (Sinai) Covenant

1. The Covenant made **Exodus 19:5-8** 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." 7 So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 Then

all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD."

2. This covenant is conditional.

3. God's declaration of what will happen when the covenant is broken is told in Deut. 4:25-40.

a. If you do evil...

Deuteronomy 4:25-26 "When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed.

b. The Lord will scatter you...

Deuteronomy 4:27-28 "And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.

c. God will restore you in the latter days...

Deuteronomy 4:29-31 "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice, (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

d. You will dwell in the land eternally.

Deuteronomy 4:40 "You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

4. Israel did break the Mosaic Covenant.

Jeremiah 11:10 They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers."

C. The Mosaic Covenant to be replaced by the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

1. Jeremiah 31:31-34 31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 32

not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

2. This covenant is **unconditional**.

3. Made available in **Christ**.

D. The **Davidic** Covenant

1. Established in 2 Samuel 7:12-16.

2. The throne of David would be established **forever**.

3. This covenant is **unconditional**.

4. **Christ must reign from David's throne.** Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

This has not happened yet. It will during the millennium!

II. ISRAEL'S CONDITION DURING THE AGE OF THE GENTILES (Rom. 11)

A. God has **not** cast Israel away. Romans 11:2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. ...

B. During this age, there is a believing **remnant** saved by grace, just as the Gentiles are saved. Romans 11:5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

C. For the most part, Israel is blinded to the truth of the **gospel**. Romans 11:7-10 7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. 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.*" 9 And David says: "*Let their 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.*"

D. This stumbling does not mean their ultimate **fall**. Romans 11:11 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.

E. The picture of the **olive tree.** Romans 11:16-24 16 For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. 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 of the olive tree, 18 do not boast 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. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

1. The root and trunk of the tree is God's **Family** Tree.
2. Israelites were among the first branches to grow on the tree.
3. They were **broken** off due to unbelief.
4. Believing Gentiles have been **grafted** into the family tree by God's grace as they believed in Christ.
5. When Israelites believe in **Christ**, they will be grafted back into God's Family Tree.

F. Israel's spiritual blindness is not **permanent but will continue until all the Gentiles who will be saved have been saved.** Romans 11:25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

G. And then **all Israel will be saved.** Romans 11:26-27 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

III. THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PROMISES

A. During the tribulation, and especially in the final siege of Jerusalem, God will purge from Israel those who will not believe (_____ of the population). Ezek. 20:33-38, Zech. 13:8-9 8 And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off *and* die, But *one-third* shall be left in it: 9 I will bring the *one-third* through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This *is* My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD *is* my God.'"

- B. After Armageddon Christ returns to Jerusalem and in the first act of the millennium, _____ of the Israelites who have not already trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior do so at that time.**

Zechariah 12:10-12 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family by itself..."

Zechariah 13:1 "In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

- C. Then the words of the Holy Spirit through Paul shall be fulfilled: [Romans 11:26](#) "And so all Israel will be saved..."**
- D. The Promised Land will be divided into twelve sections, one each for the twelve tribes of Israel and they will live in the land as long as the earth lasts. (Ezek. 47:13-48) Here they will prosper and multiply; their numbers becoming as the sand of the sea and the stars of the sky.**
- E. Christ shall reign from Jerusalem on David's throne, ruling as King over all the _____.**

Luke 1:32-33 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Zechariah 14:9 "And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be -- "The LORD is one," And His name one."

All of God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled. God is the Promise Keeper!

Romans 11:1–24 NKJV 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. 12 Now if their fall *is* riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! 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? 16 For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. 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 of the olive tree, 18 do not boast 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. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

**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.**

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

Paul has just quoted David in the Psalms about the **stumbling** of Israel in _____ . So he raises the question, “Is the ultimate purpose of Israel’s stumbling that they should perish eternally?” His answer is unequivocal: “Absolutely _____!”

In fact, God has used the time of unbelief among the Jews as the time of _____ for the **Gentiles**. This will not only be an obvious blessing to the Gentiles, but God will use it to create a desire on the part of Israel to return to Him in faith.

Paul says, “If Israel’s fall due to unbelief can result in _____ (**riches**) **for the world** and everybody in it (every non-Jew is a _____), the blessing that results from the ultimate faith of the Jews will bring a blessing in even greater **fullness**.”

**¹³ For I speak to you Gentiles;
inasmuch as I am an apostle
to the Gentiles,
I magnify my ministry,**

Paul is addressing the Gentiles here as he discusses the Jews. He reminds them that God chose him to be an _____ **to the Gentiles**. He does not try to hide or obscure his ministry. In fact, he **magnifies** it, makes it where all can see.

This is a very interesting place to note the _____ usage of the word “apostle” in the New Testament. The word literally means “on who is _____ out” and hence “a messenger.” However, it is used as the title of an _____ occupied by the twelve disciples of Jesus, and ultimately of the twelve excluding Judas but including his replacement Matthias. These official apostles had to meet certain qualifications:

- They had been with Jesus from the _____ of His ministry. Acts 1:21-22
- They had a personal _____ from Christ. Mark 3:14
- They were eye witnesses of the _____. Acts 1:22
- They laid the _____ foundation of the church. To apostles Jesus said in John 14:26. He will guide you into all truth. One of the criteria for the New Testament Canon was authorship by an apostle or someone with a close association with an apostle (Mark, Luke). John 14:26, 16:13
- They laid the _____ foundation for the church. Eph. 2:20
- They had the power to work _____. Acts 2:43, 5:12

Once Matthias replaced Judas, there never was another _____ of the twelve apostles. As they died, replacements were not chosen.

Paul claimed in many of his letters to be an apostle, but he never laid claim to being one of the

twelve. After all, he did not pass the very first test of being with Jesus from the _____ of His ministry. Paul was an apostle in the same way that Barnabus, Silus, and Timothy are also called apostles and with the same meaning of the word as is captured in the apostolic gift. Paul and the others were “ones _____ out.”

If we translate the Greek apostolos into Latin and then into English, we get the word “_____.” Paul, Barnabus, Silus, Timothy were all missionaries. The apostolic gift is the missionary gift, the capacity to take the gospel across _____ barriers. Paul was the missionary to the Gentiles!

But Paul’s calling to take the gospel to cultures drastically different than his own did not diminish his love for his own people and his desire to rescue as many of the remnant from the flames of hell as he could. So he hoped that even his magnifying of his role as missionary to the Gentiles would **provoke** a _____ among his fellow Jews that would move some of them to trust the Lord Jesus and be **saved**.

He repeats the same basic thought as in verse 12. If the temporary casting away of Israel results in reconciling much of the world (Gentiles from every tribe, people, tongue and nation), what is going to be the glorious result when Israel returns to God and puts their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? It will be spiritual _____, not only for the individuals who are saved, but for the _____ of Israel. They will at last become the prince of nations they were destined and promised to be.

This is what is prophesied in Ezekiel 37 in the prophecy of the _____ . We are seeing the beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy in our lifetime!

**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?**

**16 For if the firstfruit is holy,
the lump is also holy;
and if the root is holy,
so are the branches.**

**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
of the olive tree,**

The **firstfruit** refers to the _____ portion of any produce, whether it be agricultural or animal. The **firstfruit** was **holy** (_____) to the Lord as an offering indicating that God gave it all to His steward. The firstfruit referenced here is obviously a portion of a loaf of _____ (**the lump**). Paul is making a simple, visual analogy. If you break off the end of a loaf of bread, and then determine that the portion you broke off is holy, then the whole loaf must be holy. Likewise, if the **root** of a plant is **holy** then the **branches** it produces are holy also.

These analogies picture _____. The firstfruit of Israel, the _____ of Israel, were the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Scripture makes it clear that these men were made _____ to the Lord. Therefore, the nation of Israel that came from them must also remain holy. God cannot have cast the whole loaf away. He will not destroy the entire plant. God's promises to, and purpose for Israel must one day be fulfilled.

Now Paul identifies the plant he is thinking about in his mind: an _____ **tree** cultivated in a man's orchard. We can think of this tree as the Family Tree of God. The roots were indeed the _____, but even further back than Abraham, all the way to Noah and Adam. The descendants of Abraham, the people of Israel, are the **branches**. Because of unbelief, they were **broken off**.

John 3:18 NKJV "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The Gentiles are like an **olive tree** growing in the _____. Any gardener knows that if you break off a **branch** from a young tree, that in its place you can _____ a branch from another tree, even one of a different kind. When a branch is **grafted** onto the

**18 do not boast
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.**

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

**22 Therefore
consider the
goodness
and
severity
of God:
on those who fell, severity;
but toward you, goodness,
if you continue in His goodness.
Otherwise you also will be cut off.**

trunk of the tree, it becomes connected to the water channels in the xylem of the tree. This in turn connects it to the _____ and so the **grafted branch** becomes a **partaker** of **the fatness**, the nourishment, of the tree.

So, Paul says to _____ believers, **do not boast** that you are better than the _____ (that the grafted branches are better than the natural branches that have been cut off). **Remember that you do not support the root; the root supports you!**

You are correct to note that because unbelieving Jews were **broken off** of God's Family Tree, you have now been **grafted in**; but **do not be haughty** about it. The natural branches of the Jews were **broken off** because they did not believe in Jesus as Messiah and Lord. You have been grafted in because you have so believed in Him – **you stand**, you _____, grafted into God's Family Tree **by** _____.

But do not let that move you to arrogance.

Proverbs 16:18 NKJV **Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**

Rather stand in _____ (**fear**) of what God is doing, and be warned. If Jews who did not trust in Christ were broken off of God's Family Tree, Gentiles also will be broken off, if they do not believe in Jesus.

Therefore (in light of all the above) give serious thought to God's **goodness and** _____ . This is good counsel for us today. Everybody loves to think long and deep about the **goodness** of God: His love, mercy, forgiveness, and kindness. We do not spend much time at all contemplating His **severity** resulting from His holiness, righteousness, justice, and wrath. But to think of only one without the other produces a distorted and

erroneous understanding of God. It actually creates a _____ god, who would never send anyone to hell, one to whom all _____ of religion lead, one who loves and tolerates every sordid and perverted thing man does. Such a false god is the commonly accepted god of many Americans and _____ and is worshipped in a multitude of _____. But he (or she) is not the God of the _____. That false god did not create the universe and is not its _____. The One True and Living God is a God of _____ holiness and justice which makes His forgiveness and mercy all the more awe inspiring.

Genuine justice requires an _____ for an eye, a _____ for a tooth, and a _____ for a life. Real mercy does not try to _____ the righteous demands of justice. Mercy plucks out its own eye, yanks its own tooth, gives its own life. That is why there had to be a Calvary and a cross. There the only One who had no sin debt of His own to pay, paid for ours. On Jesus, _____ was rightly poured out; justice was fully done; _____ was never greater, forgiveness never fuller.

And because of the _____, any Jew who does **not continue in unbelief will be grafted** back in to the Family Tree of God. For if God is great enough to graft in those Gentiles who come to Christ in faith, even out of a heritage of _____ and rebellion, surely He can reattach a wandering Israelite who has seen the light and discovered the identity of His Messiah.

Right now, God is grafting these believing Jews in _____ by _____, all together still no more than a _____. But not for long. The day is coming, and soon will be, when a great multitude of the children of Israel will look on Him whom they _____, believe, and be saved.

**23 And they also,
if they do not continue in unbelief,
will be grafted in,
for God is able to graft them in
again.**

**24 For if you were
cut out of the olive tree
which is wild by nature,
and were grafted
contrary to nature
into a cultivated olive tree,
how much more will these,
who are natural branches,
be grafted
into their own olive tree?**