

Series: Romans
Title: If the Root Be Holy
Text: Romans 11: 8-21
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God blinded the non-elect part of the children of Israel—**Romans 11: 7:...and the rest were blinded. 8: (According as it is written, [Is 29] God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. 9: And David [Christ] saith, [Ps 69] Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: 10: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.**

Notice who blinded them—*God hath*—Why? It was just because they heard the gospel but disobeyed

Isaiah 29: 13: Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: 14: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

Brethren, God saves and damns justly. If a man is saved it is because he is holy in Christ so that it is just for God to call him to faith in Christ. But if a man is turned to reprobation it is because he would not obey the gospel so it is just for God to damn him. We are not saved by our deeds, our birth, our works, or even our choice. But if we are cast off it is because, like Israel of old, we refused to obey the gospel. This is in perfect harmony with God's eternal purpose. God saves and damns justly because God is holy!

Romans 11: 11: I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? [Have God's elect Israel among them stumbled that they should fall away forever?] **God forbid:** [God never casts off his people *which he foreknew or foreordained to eternal life.*] **but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.**

Back in Isaiah 29, after declaring how he would reprobate the rebel, God also declared how his elect would "*hear the words of the book, and their eyes would see...increase their joy in the LORD, ...rejoice in the Holy One of Israel [Christ Jesus the Lord]*" (Is 29: 18-19). Simply because God cast off the nation of Israel it does not mean that he cast off his elect remnant among them. God's grace has nothing to do with race. This is the main point Paul was making.

But here is the question: how is God just to call his elect from among Israel when they, too, had not believed on Christ? Here is the answer:

Romans 11: 16: For if the firstfruit [Christ] be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root [Christ] be holy, so are the branches.

Christ being holy, all God's elect is holy in him. Therefore, God is righteous to call his elect—they are holy in Christ

Title: If the Root be Holy

Proposition: God's eternal purpose is in Christ the Root. Therefore, because Christ is Holy, his elect is holy. Therefore, God works all things in providence to call his elect to faith in Christ because he is righteous to do so.

Divisions: 1) The purpose of God 2) The righteousness of God 3) The warning of God

THE PURPOSE OF GOD

Romans 11: 11: I say then, Have they [God's elect among the Jews] stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall [the fall of the non-elect Jews] salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them [the elect among the Jews] to jealousy.

God's purpose here is threefold:

One, God purposed from eternity to use the unbelief of the Jews to send the gospel to his elect Gentiles. Remember, how the unbelieving Jews persecuted Paul so that he turned to the Gentiles.

Acts 13: [the Jews persecuted Paul blaspheming the word he preached] 46: Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47: For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. 48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49: And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. [God overruled the unbelief the Jews to send his gospel into all the region to call out his elect Gentiles]

Two, God purposed from eternity not only to use the Jews' rebellion to send the gospel to his elect Gentiles, but also to use the believing Gentiles to provoke his elect in Israel to jealousy that God might save his elect remnant among them—**Romans 11: 11:...through their fall** [through the fall of the non-elect Jews] **salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them** [the elect among the Jews] **to jealousy.** [to call them to faith in Christ]

Three, God purposed that by calling his elect remnant from among Jews in Paul's day, he would cause a greater increase of believers among the Gentiles—**Romans 11: 12: Now if the fall of them** [Israel] **be the riches of the** [Gentile] **world, and the diminishing of** [Israel] **the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?**

If the *decrease* of the Jews resulted in so many Gentiles believing on Christ, imagine how many more Gentiles God will bring to faith, when God called his elect remnant from among the Jews in Paul's day. He is declaring that God shall call all his elect both Jew and Gentile and shall not lose one.

With God, there is nothing new under the sun. Man's rebellion does not frustrate God's purpose, but rather, man's rebellion is a part of God's purpose.

Isaiah 44: 24: Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; 25: that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; 26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

Psalms 76: 10: Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

So brethren when we see men and women reject the gospel—rather than thinking they are reprobate—pray that if they be God's elect he will yet call them out as he did the elect in Israel who first refused the gospel.

Notice here—I like how Paul calls our gospel “the riches” of the world. When I am travelling, I do not like to tell people I am a preacher because they stop being themselves. But when they ask what I do for a living, I say I deal in “precious jewels.” We preach the “pearl of great price”, “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” We bring “riches” to God's people.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Romans 11: 13: For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, [that] I [might] magnify [or bring glory to] mine office: 14: If by any means I may provoke to emulation [provoke to jealousy] them which are my flesh, [in Israel] and might save some of them. 15: For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the [Gentile] world, what shall the receiving [of his elect among the Jews be], but [the same] life from the dead? 16: For if the firstfruit [Christ] be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root [Christ] be holy, so are the branches

Those who say election and predestination will kill missions are flat wrong. To the contrary, knowing God had elect predestinated to believe on Christ, knowing they were holy in Christ, knowing God in righteousness must call them out, Paul was zealous to preach the gospel to both Gentile and Jew that he might magnify his office and thus save God's elect, including some of his kinsmen after the flesh

Every preacher must magnify his office—and the way to magnify his office is not by the means the worldly preacher uses: not by dressing in some costume, not by using titles, not by treating the people as if he is above them and not using man-made means.

God's preacher magnifies his office by preaching the righteousness of God revealed in Christ crucified and by living his life in all good fidelity toward God and men. *By his gospel and his character* he magnifies his office

1 Corinthians 4:1: Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2: Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

2 Corinthians 4:1: Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Paul magnified his office by preaching Christ crucified alone—that by this means—*“he might provoke to emulation them which [were his countrymen] and might save some of them.”*

But why was Paul so sure God would call his elect in Israel—because of the righteousness of God—because all his elect are holy in Christ and must be raised from death to life—**Romans 11: 15: For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the [Gentile] world, [life from the dead] what shall the receiving [of the elect in Israel be] but life from the dead? 16: For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches**

All God's elect is born spiritually dead—so all who God calls are received as “*life from the dead*” all are “*reconciled to God*” by the blood of Christ—both Jew and Gentiles. God is righteous to call them—because the lump or rest of the fruit that comes after *the firstfruits* is the same as *the first fruit*. The firstfruit is Christ.

1 Corinthians 15: 20: But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the **firstfruits** of them that slept.

Christ arose from the dead as the firstfruit. In Christ, the rest of the fruit (called here the lump) are risen and are holy in Christ. Race—Jew or Gentile—has nothing to do with God's election of grace. Christ is holy therefore all the fruit (the elect) are holy. Therefore, God is righteous to call them

The branches are one and the same as *the root or vine* from which they grow. Christ is the Root and his elect are the branches. He said to his disciples,

John 15:5: I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Christ, the Root, is holy. As he is so are we in this world. Therefore, all God's elect branches are holy in him. So, though, God may allow his elect to go many days in unbelief, they are still holy or sanctified—set apart—by God, the Father choosing us in Christ and by Christ's blood who “*perfected forever them that are sanctified.*” Therefore, all God's elect must be sanctified—set apart—in regeneration, called to faith in Christ, because God's righteousness demands it!

It is knowing God has an elect people predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ that makes us zealous to send the gospel into all the world. Knowing Christ is the Holiness of all his elect, we know God must raise each one from death to life in regeneration. We would have no zeal if faith was left to the will of the sinner because dead sinners can do nothing. Election and predestination are our zeal to preach the gospel.

THE WARNING OF GOD

Romans 11: 17: 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; 18: Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

We, Gentiles, are called a wild olive tree—we are “wild branches” in that we were not of the nation Israel. God's elect in Israel are called the “natural branches.” Some of the natural branches were broken off and we were grafted in. But we have no room to boast against the branches. If we want to boast, boast in Christ—*thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.*

We ought never become highminded—boasting in ourselves—by thinking the Jews were broken off that we might be grafted in—**Romans 11: 19: Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20: Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by [God-given] faith.**

The natural branches were broken off because of their own willful unbelief—no one to blame but them. But we were grafted in through God-given faith—no one to boast in but God! So we have no cause to boast in ourselves.

So here is God's application and warning to us—**Romans 11: 20:...Be not highminded, but fear: [reverence God] 21: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.**

When he says, “*If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee*”, he does not mean God will break off any of his elect whom he foreordained to eternal life. He means if we be found boasting in ourselves then we prove that we never were God's elect. Rather than making a true believer highminded, God's grace humbles us and makes us fear and reverence God.

So we see God's eternal purpose even takes in the rebel who rejects Christ—nothing frustrates God's purpose. All God's elect must and shall be called due to Christ making us holy in him—this is what makes us zealous to preach the gospel far and wide. All God's blessings are given to those he chose by grace, redeemed by Christ's blood by grace and called by grace—race has nothing to do with grace! We believe on Christ and continue in faith the same way—by God's grace alone. Therefore, if any boast let him boast in Christ—*Christ. the Root, bears us, not we him!*

Amen!