



Jewish Believers and Christians working together for Israel's salvation since 1963



Kevin Geoffrey
President, MJMI

Shalom my friend,
Last month, as we continued our look at Romans 9, 10 and 11, we heard Paul in Romans 11:17-21 introduce his famous olive tree metaphor as a way of addressing the severe arrogance of the Roman Gentile believers toward Israel. Having now been grafted into and become fellow-sharers in the rich root of the tree of

Israel's salvation, the Gentile believers had grown boastful—especially over the unbelieving Jews, whom they perceived as having been supplanted. Paul's much-needed rebuke sought to correct this perception by reminding the Gentile believers of the reality of their continuing spiritual reliance upon Israel. Furthermore, he emphasized that Jews do not become “broken off” simply to make room for Gentiles to supersede them and be “grafted in.” Rather, it is by faith that one stands, or unbelief that one is broken off. And given the way God has treated the natural, cultivated branches, how much more should those wild, grafted-in ones fear the way God may someday deal with them.

Continuing this train of thought in Romans 11:22-24, Paul further expounds on the metaphor of the olive tree.

See, then, *the* kindness and severity of God: upon those indeed who fell, severity; and upon you, God's kindness—if you remain in the kindness (otherwise, you will also be cut off). And those also—if they do not remain in unbelief—will be grafted *back* in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you, *Goyim*, were cut out from the olive tree *that is* wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will they who *ARE* according to nature be grafted into their own olive tree?

Kindness and Severity

At work within God's sense of justice is the dichotomy between His severity and kindness. Toward unbelieving Israel—“those indeed who fell”—Paul plainly admits that God has treated them with “severity.” But while such harshness may be shocking to us, it is in keeping with God's covenantal commitment toward and past treatment of Israel, demonstrating His continuing faithfulness to deal with Israel according to the terms set forth in the Torah. What ought to be surprising, however, is that while God is treating unbelieving Israel with “severity,” He unexpectedly treats believing Gentiles with “kindness,” bestowing upon them the promised benefits of the covenant which Israel broke.

But then, returning to his original point, Paul interjects one significant caveat: God's kindness will surely remain upon the Gentile believer—but *only if he remains in the kindness*. In other words, should the Gentile's faithfulness to the Messiah wane and wither in the manner of Israel's unbelief, the Gentile's fate would become the same



Update from Israel

I recently received an update from our ministry friend Baruch, who has been ministering to the needs of the elderly, poor, and new immigrants in

the city of Ashdod. He shared how his own experiences have helped him to connect with them and to share the love of Yeshua. He wrote, “It's always a blessing to be a piece of light and hope for those who are in need by supporting the elderly, praying for the sick, and inspiring new immigrants. One of our recent events involved the distribution of heaters and blankets to new immigrants who are going through their first winter here. Most people know

Continued on back...



Israel as a hot country; however, winter can be a very unpleasant time if you don't have warm clothing. That's why Proverbs 31:21 says, 'She is unafraid of winter's effect on her household, because all of them are warmly clothed.' So we made our contribution in the lives of the newcomers.

"Sometimes, looking on them, I remember the time of my first steps in this country, with all the worries, fears, hopes, etc. I can understand them; I can find a right word to raise them up. I feel especially close with newcomers from Ukraine, where the political, social and security situation are getting worse each day. Just this morning, I read news about a military event between the Russian and Ukrainian militaries. I wish the conflict would be solved peacefully, but it probably will not. This means more and more Ukrainian immigrants with Jewish roots will leave their cities, homes, jobs, and friends, and will move to Israel, including Ashdod. Thanks to your support, we will be able to reach out a hand of practical help, and also preach the Good News of Yeshua to them."



ah Yeshua, and the Jew's relationship with God will be renewed.

In fact, as something of a prod to Gentile hubris, Paul appears to suggest that this divine restoration is available *only* to Jews. As he concludes his olive tree imagery, he refers to the Gentile's "wild" nature, reminding them that their grafting into the cultivated olive tree is "contrary to nature." So, if the "wild" and "contrary to nature" Gentile can be grafted in to the cultivated olive tree of Israel's salvation, "how much more," Paul asks, "will they who ARE according to nature"—that is, Jews—"be grafted into their own olive tree?" The grafting of the broken-off branches will more naturally take than that of the wild and contrary-to-nature ones. No such advantage is available to the Gentile.

And yet, in saying all this, Paul issues a proclamation of hope—even for the Gentiles, whom he is presently berating. If, in spite of Israel's unbelief, God can be so faithful with her as to restore His broken, cut-off, fallen people, then how much more awesome and astonishing—and

humbling—is it that He would include Gentiles in His salvation in the first place? In one stroke, Paul simultaneously tears down both the Gentile's erroneous high image of himself as well as his low view of Jews—only to build up the Gentile's faith again by directing his attention toward God's singular faithfulness to Israel.

Our Reciprocal Reliance

My friend, Paul's olive tree metaphor is just as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago, as most Christians have been taught that the Church has replaced Israel. Paul's message concerning Jews' and Gentiles' reciprocal reliance upon one another needs to be powerfully proclaimed to Gentile believers if the Jewish people are ever to receive from God's kindness once again. This is why we greatly need not only your prayers, but also your financial assistance, as this critical work is no small feat. Your donation of **\$10, \$25, \$100 or more** will help us accomplish our mission and vision to see all Israel come to know their Messiah, Yeshua. Please use the enclosed card and envelope, or visit www.mjmi.org to send your much-needed donation today. And if you aren't already, please consider becoming a ministry partner, so that I will know we can count on your support each month.

As we continue working toward Israel's salvation, I look forward to continuing our look at Romans 9, 10 and 11!

For the sake of Messiah,

Kevin Geoffrey, President, MJMI

as the unbelieving Jew: he "will also be cut off." Not mincing words, Paul assures his Gentile audience that the kindness of God presently being shown to them can easily be replaced with His severity. The Gentiles are not better, or more favored, than the Jews.

Grafted Back In

On the contrary, not only can the kindness of God be exchanged for severity, but for those who have fallen—for those Jews who have been broken off—"God is able to graft them in again." God's severity can be reversed; His kindness restored. Just as unbelief results in being cut off, "those also... will be grafted *back* in... if they do not remain in unbelief."

In raising this point with his Gentile audience, Paul is seeking to further dampen their arrogance: the fate of the unbelieving Jew is not sealed—all it takes is faith in the Mess-