

**Tuesday Evening Bible Study at Tokyo Baptist Church**  
**Paul's Letter to the Romans – Chapter 11, Verses 11-24**  
**Notes from Tuesday March 1, 2011**  
**Last Revised on March 7, 2011**

**Songs**

**Opening Prayer**

**Introduction**

This evening we continue our study of the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

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Last week we began reading Chapter 11,

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covering the first 10 verses.

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Tonight we will continue reading at Verse 11,

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and I expect to get as far as Verse 24.

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But first let's review a little.

**Review**

As we have repeatedly reminded ourselves,

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the **overall** theme of Paul's letter to the Romans is ... the **gospel**.

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In the **first eight (8) chapters** of this letter,

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Paul sets forth the gospel and the happy situation of those who **are** being saved by it,

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ending in the **final verse of Chapter 8**,

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with the remarkable statement that absolutely nothing, ...

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*"will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

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In the next section of this letter, comprised of Chapters 9 through 11,

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Paul examines the sad situation of those **Jews** who are **cut off from Christ**.

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 This is the **section** of Paul’s letter which we have been examining recently,

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 and which we continue to examine this evening, and next week as well.

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 Please turn with me now to the very beginning of Chapter 9,

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 and follow along as I briefly **review** what we have covered so far in this section.

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 In **Chapter 9, Verses 1-5**, Paul begins by expressing his deep **sadness** for his fellow Jews,

---  
 almost all of whom have continued to **reject** Jesus as their Lord and Savior,

---  
**despite** all of the rich blessing which they have received from God.

---  
 This is truly a **tragic** thing: make no mistake about it.

---  
 Paul himself **feels** the tragedy.

---  
 But this does not signal the **failure** of God’s word,

---  
 as Paul reminds us in **Verses 6-13 of Chapter 9**.

---  
 God has **always** preserved his relationship with the children of Abraham,

---  
 through a small **remnant**.

---  
 This is **not** because the chosen **remnant** is good,

---  
 or because those who are **not** chosen are especially bad.

---  
 It is because **God** is good!

---  
 Because God is **gracious!**

---  
 And because God has a **plan!**

---  
 In preparing tonight’s lesson, I was reminded of Stephen’s speech before the Sanhedrin, of which we read in Acts, Chapter 7. In verse 52 Stephen asks them “*Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the*

*coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered,”*

---

Which the Sanhedrin ratified by dragging Stephen out and **stoning** him to death,

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while the young Pharisee, Saul, looked on approvingly.

---

Were God merely **just**, history would look quite different.

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There would be no Church, no Paul, no Israel, no Humanity, and no History!

---

It is only because God is also **compassionate**, that any of these things exist!

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---

Nevertheless some foolishly accuse God of **injustice**,

---

because not all men receive the **same** favors from God,

---

but in **Verses 14-18 of Chapter 9**,

---

Paul challenges his readers to comprehend,

---

how this is a faulty way of **thinking** about God,

---

whose every action, always and everywhere, has been surprisingly **gracious**,

---

**even** when for the benefit of some men, he has **hardened** the hearts of others

---

be it the **Pharaoh** of Egypt or the vast majority of **Jews** who now reject Christ,

---

God knows **precisely** what he is doing! (Even if **we** are unable to follow the plot.)

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God is working out his eternal **plan** for Mankind,

---

which begins and ends in **Christ Jesus**

---

and is therefore **utterly** and **unimpeachably** gracious.

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But if all things whatsoever have been forordained by **God** in Christ,

---

including **even** the hardening of certain men,

---

then why does God find **fault** with us?

---  
 And how can we **possibly** resist his will?

---  
 These are the questions to which Paul turns in **Verses 19-29 of Chapter 9.**

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 But in posing these questions, Paul is **posing** as the “Devil’s Advocate.”

---  
 Because these are **diabolical** questions, which **no** person of faith would ever raise!

---  
 With the eyes of faith, we look within ourselves, and we know full well that it is **not** God who causes us to sin, but our own character, which **apart** from God is utterly wicked.

---  
 And we know that obedience is something of which we **ourselves** are totally incapable, without God’s **help**.

---  
 We wonder why God allows creatures as evil as we are even to **exist**,

---  
 We know that he **alone** can save us from the destruction which we so manifestly deserve and conform us to his likeness so that we may live with him eternally.

---  
 And that is what he **will** do for all who put their trust in Him.

---  
**Faith** knows all of this,

---  
 and **finds** it in Christ.

---  
 Yet most Jews have **not** been given such faith, as Paul summarizes in the **last four verses of Chapter 9 and first four verses of Chapter 10.**

---  
 Whether by **inheritance** or **merit** or **achievement** or **knowledge** or **religious practice** or by some other means,

---  
 most Jews **zealously** pursue a righteousness before God which they can call their **own**,

---  
 and reject **Christ** and the righteousness that comes from Him alone through **faith**,

---  
 to **everyone** who believes in Him and calls on his name!

---  
 even to we thoroughly unrighteous and ungodly **Gentiles**!

---  
 This point is further developed in **Verses 5-13 of Chapter 10.**

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**Everyone** who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,

---

provided only that the mouth is confessing what the heart **believes**.

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Such **belief** comes from **hearing** the **word** of **Christ**,

---

as Paul explains in **Verses 14-17 of Chapter 10**.

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All the world has heard it, Paul says in **Verse 18 of Chapter 10**, quoting Psalm 19.

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And in all the world, the word of Christ has been spoken most clearly to Israel.

---

But they have **refused** this word, because they have not yet **understood** it.

---

God has not **given** them such understanding.

---

There is always a **remnant** which God preserves

---

and this remnant is **larger** than what may appear,

---

as we are reminded in the **first six verses of Chapter 11**.

---

But the rest have been **hardened** to the word of Christ.

---

They have been given a **spirit of stupor**.

---

Their **eyes** have been **darkened**.

---

Their ears, hearing, will not **hear**.

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as we read last week in **Verses 7 - 10 of Chapter 11**.

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This completes our review.

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Are there any comments or questions before we read on?

**Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 11, Verses 11-12**

Will someone please read Romans, Chapter 11, Verses 11 and 12, in Japanese.

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Thank you. Now will someone please read those same verses in English.

**11 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.**

**12 Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!**

Thank you.

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Through **Verse 10**, Paul has developed the idea that God has **darkened** the eyes of the Jews and given them ears that would not **hear** and a spirit of **stupor**, down to this very day, so that they could not truly hear and understand and believe the word of Christ which had been spoken so long and so clearly among them.

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Now in Verse 11, Paul asks a **question**:

**(Verse 11a)**

**So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall?**

Q. How do **you** understand this question? What does Paul mean to say?

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A. Have they merely stumbled or will they actually fall (i.e. disappear permanently)

---

A. Was it God's primary purpose or motive to bring them down? (i.e. as a punishment)

---

A. Others?

---

Well, maybe we can understand the question better by looking at the answer, which reads:

**(Verse 11b)**

**By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.**

Paul is rather definite in **rejecting** the idea that Israel stumbled in order that they might **fall**.

---

And he also offers the logical basis for his rejection.

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He says “*rather*” --- i.e. rather than causing them to stumble so that they might fall,

---

the **transgression** of the Jews has been an instrument of **salvation** for **Gentiles**,

---

which proves that God’s end was definitely also **gracious** and not merely just punishment of the Jews’ transgressions

---

but it was not gracious **only** or even primarily to the **Gentiles**.

---

The salvation of the **Gentiles** was intended to make **Israel** jealous.

---

Why would God wish to make Israel **jealous**?

---

That is in part just **punishment** and fulfillment of **prophecy**,

---

but we understand that the **end** in view is .... what?

---

**salvation for Israel**.

---

So however we understand the question, the answer is an emphatic “**no!**”

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**No!** Israel will **not** disappear permanently.

---

**No!** Gods purpose in blinding them is not principally or ultimately punitive.

---

It is rather **salvific**, first for the gentiles, but then **also** for the Jews.

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Notice here, in contradistinction with Rom 1:16 where the gospel is **preached** first to the Jews and then to the gentiles,

---

the gospel predominately is accepted first by the **Gentiles** and then by the Jews.

---

This is in keeping with the kingdom principle, that the first shall be last.

---

The whole purpose of **choosing** Israel in the first place was to save the whole world!

---

Only after that mission is accomplished, will Israel **itself** be saved.

---

Q. Before moving on, let me ask you, what is the “**trespass**” of the **Jews** through which **salvation** comes to the **gentiles**?

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A. They have continually **rejected God**. God said he would **punish** them by making them **jealous** of the gentiles. The **gentile blessing** is a kind of side-benefit of their punishment.

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A. They handed **Christ** over to the Gentiles to be crucified, rather than embracing him as their Messiah and ushering in the kingdom before the Gentiles came in.

---

A. Throughout the gospel ministry of Paul, in particular, it was the rejection of the **gospel** by Jews in the synagogues which often sent Paul away and out to the gentiles.

---

A. Others?

**(Verse 12 reads)**

**Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!**

This supports what we have already said in connection with the preceding verse.

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Clearly Paul is looking beyond the salvation of the remnants of Israel from each generation

---

and beyond the salvation of the Gentiles,

---

to the time when Israel will be finally and fully included.

---

God might have skipped the last step, and let Israel fall,

---

and that would still have meant riches for the world and for the Gentiles

---

But God is more gracious still.

---

He will restore even those who most flagrantly rejected him,

---

even to the point of rejecting and handing over for death his only begotten son.

---

Then all the glory of Israel will be restored and redeemed.

---

And will follow the new heaven and the new earth long prepared.

---

Before we move on, let me ask you:

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Q. What does Paul mean by "**full inclusion**"

---

A. All Jews who have ever lived? --- anything is possible for God but this is not necessarily or even probably Paul's meaning.

---



A. All of the “elect” within Israel, including the many who have been hidden from human view and know only to God. --- this seems to me true by definition, but may not be the concept that Paul is working with here.

---

A. The whole nation of Israel, collectively, whatever that means in the mind of God, and certainly including all whom God foreknew --- all whom God intended to include in His eternal kingdom from before the beginning of the World. (i.e. all in Israel who have ever been truly Israel.)

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A. Others?

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Any comments or questions before we move on?

### **Paul’s Letter to the Romans, Chapter 11, Verses 13-16**

Will someone please read Romans, Chapter 11, Verses 13-16, in Japanese.

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Thank you. Will someone please read those same verses in English.

**13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry**

**14 in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.**

**15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?**

**16 If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.**

Thank you.

---

It seems clear to me that, just here, Paul is not so much doing theology,

---

as he is admonishing those among his Christian readers who are gentiles.

---

He says so in Verse 13 which begins:

**(Verse 13a)**

**Now I am speaking to you Gentiles.**

He then reminds them of the fact that he, Paul, is an apostle to the Gentiles

**(Verse 13b)**

**Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry**

We know that Paul was **not** an apostle **only** to the Gentiles.

---

We remember in **Acts 9:15** where the Lord said to Ananias about Paul, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.”

---

We know of what we read **throughout** the Book of Acts, that Paul went always first to the Jews and, in particular the Jews of the synagogue, and only then to the gentiles, which is the overarching pattern of gospel ministry.

---

It was when the Jews pushed Paul and the gospel **away**, that he went out to the Gentiles!

---

Yet we **also** know that Paul was in some ways specially directed toward the gentiles, by Christ himself.

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We remember in **Acts 22:18** Jesus appearing to Paul and saying to him “...Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.”

---

And Jesus saying to Paul again (Acts 22:21) “Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.”

---

So Paul, like Jesus, comes from and goes first to the Jews,

---

they reject Jesus and his gospel and his apostles,

---

so Jesus’ apostles, in this case Paul, take the gospel to the gentiles,

---

many of whom accept it and are saved,

---

But even so, the salvation of the gentiles is intended for the salvation of the Jews.

---

Paul says in Verse 14, that he magnifies his ministry to the gentiles...

**(Verse 14)**

in order **somehow** to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save **some** of them.

He is not **ignoring** Jews to minister to Gentiles,

---

neither is he ministering to Gentiles merely to **punish** or antagonize the Jews,

---

on the contrary he is always hoping **somehow** to save **some** of them.

---

I notice that Paul is not overly ambitious or optimistic regarding how **many** will be saved,

---

neither is he very definite regarding the **process**,

---

which is understandable considering that salvation is not the work of Man but of **God**,

---

yet Paul does what **he** can to move his fellow Jews to constructive jealousy.

---

And he acknowledges what a great **miracle** their acceptance of the gospel will be when it happens.

---

It will be figuratively, if not literally, **resurrection**.

---

**Life** from *death*.

---

Verse 15 reads:

**(Verse 15)**

**For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?**

The Jews presently **are** dead while they remain cut off from Christ.

---

But **God** can make them alive again.

---

By giving them **faith**.

---

Verse 16 reads:

**(Verse 16)**

**If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.**

Q. What does Paul mean here?

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A. It could mean, only, that the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and so on) were chosen and set apart by God and that this holiness transmits itself to subsequent generations, and I think this is certainly true in some measure; there is in some measure a spiritual nobility that belongs to the Jews, "even to this day."

---

A. I think the reference here may be to Christ Himself. He has risen from the dead, the firstborn of many brothers, and the first fruit from among his brothers who are Israel, the whole lump.

---

He is also the root from which all creation springs, and the branch which springs froth, and for which all of Israel was intended.

---

Christ **belongs** to the Jews and the Jews to Christ in a way that is not possible for gentiles.

---

except by the surprising and superabundant grace of God,

---

whereby the gentiles have been saved in order to save Israel.

---

This reading flows nicely into what follows.

### **Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 11, Verses 17-24**

Will someone please read Romans, Chapter 11, Verses 17-24 in Japanese.

---

Thank you. Now will someone please read those verses in English.

**17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,**

**18 do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.**

**19 Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."**

**20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.**

**21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.**

**22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his**

**kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.**

**23 And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.**

**24 For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.**

Thank you.

---

Paul devotes many words to this analogy, this agricultural metaphor.

---

It has been very often remarked over the centuries that Paul, a city boy, unlike the country boy Jesus, didn't understand much about trees and branches, because it almost never happens that a farmer will graft a wild branch onto a cultivated tree.

---

But it has also often been remarked, that this, the sheer implausibility of such grafting is precisely the point that Paul was making.

---

Neither a real-life farmer nor an imaginary God might graft something wild onto a tree he has spend years cultivating, but that is precisely what our God, the real God, can and does do.

---

And it is very surprising. Witness the surprise of Peter in Acts 10 as the Holy Spirit fell on the household of Cornelius,

---

and witness the great difficulty with which the young Christian church in Jerusalem came to terms with the growth of the increasingly gentile churches in Antioch, Galatia, and elsewhere.

---

We wild gentile branches had better be very mindful of the strange and spectacular grace of the Holy Gardener who has grafted us into the metaphorical olive tree.

---

Paul almost certainly picked the olive tree for this metaphor, because it is so often used in the Old Testament as a figure for the Nation of Israel.

---

Verses 17 and 18 read:

**(Verses 17 and 18)**

**But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.**

We are, to mix metaphors, guests who have been invited to this party against all hope, and not the hosts of this party.

---

If we start thinking that we are the hosts of this party, as if our churches are the places which contain God and the Jews are standing outside someplace, where we used to be, we are making a big mistake in our thinking.

---

We must never say:

**(Verse 19)**

[Then you will say,] **"Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."**

As if we are in any sense better than the broken branches. We are not!

---

They were indeed broken off...

---

Paul continues in Verse 20

**(Verse 20)**

**That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.**

The only reason why a Jew might possibly be cut off,

---

is that he lacks the faith which we were given as a free gift from God!

---

In every other way, the Jew is superior to us, he is indeed of the same lump as Christ.

---

So we should be not become proud in any way.

---

On the contrary, the proper emotion is fear.

---

Q. Why fear?!

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A. The answer is given in Verse 21

**(Verse 21)**

**For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.**

Not **even** God's chosen people,

---

blood kin of Christ,

---

are preserved without **faith**.

---

And this faith has been **denied** to some of them,

---

they have been given dark eyes, deaf ears, and a spirit of stupor,

---

because they were **proud, disobedient, and stubborn**.

---

In other words: "don't push your luck"

---

Verse 22 continues

### (Verse 22)

**Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.**

Israel has been used by God as the instrument of salvation for gentiles and the world.

---

And he has erected them as a caution and an example of what we must not emulate.

---

If we do emulate them, their pride, and disobedience, and stubbornness, we will fare no better than they have,

---

that much is certain!

---

But the gentiles have also been used as an instrument of salvation for Israel,

---

by provoking envy and giving Israel reason to hope against hope for salvation,

---

because if even **gentiles** can be saved, then what may not be possible for holy Israel.

---

We read in verses 23 and 24

### (Verses 23 and 24)

**And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild**

**olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.**

If only Israel can recognize that gentiles have been saved,

---

they will know the possibility of their own salvation.

---

They will know that death from life is possible,

---

through faith in Christ.

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Questions? Comments?

**Closing Prayer**