

Isaiah 59:20-21

²⁰ “The Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,”
declares the LORD.

²¹ “As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD. “My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever,” says the LORD.

Romans 11:11-32**Ingrafted Branches**

¹¹ Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. ¹² But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!

¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

¹⁷ If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you

stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

²² Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. ²³ And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

All Israel Will Be Saved

²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

²⁷ And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”

²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹ for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. ³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Sermon: God still has a plan for Israel

Please turn your Bible to **Romans chapter 11** – we’re looking at **verses 11 to 32**.

There is an outline if you would like to take down some notes!

Let me **pray** first...

Recap/Intro

[Slide-Recap]

In the last few weeks as we’ve been looking at **chapters 9, 10 and 11** of the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans, **we’ve seen how Paul had great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart for his fellow Israelites** – because – they have mostly not believed in Jesus and have rejected Jesus.

This unbelief of the Israelites – Paul said – is because – on the one hand – **God chooses whom He will save through faith in Jesus** – and yet on the other hand – Paul said – **the Israelites are responsible for their refusal to believe in Jesus**.

There’s a tension – we have to accept!

[Slide-Recap]

Last week – Paul even posed the question in 11:1 – ***Did God reject His people (Israel)?***

And Paul concluded – ***not at all*** – there will always be a remnant of Israelites who believe in Jesus and yet the majority have been hardened against following Jesus.

[Slide-Intro]

So now – this week Paul poses the **next obvious question** in verse 11

Did they [the Israelites] stumble so as to fall beyond recovery?

Paul asks this question because the **Jews are God's people** and yet the **majority** have **rejected Jesus and their hearts have been hardened**. So, Paul is now wondering if this majority are lost forever and **is there not a way to recover** from this hardening?

Paul's **short answer** to the question "*Did they [the Israelites] stumble so as to fall beyond recovery?*" is – "*Not at all!*"

And he then gives a **more detailed answer** in verses 11b to 32.

And he makes a number of points:

1. Israel's rejection of Jesus means salvation came to Gentiles - v11

[Slide-Gentile Mission]

1st then – in v11 - *Israel's transgression (sin) in rejecting Jesus meant the opportunity for - non-Jews – Gentiles - to be saved!*

In fact, that was the **Apostle Paul's main mission** - to go through Asia minor and Europe – **telling Gentile people all about Jesus** - in **Gentile cities** – like Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Phillipi, Colossae, and Thessalonica.

This same **Gentile mission** - is **still happening today** where **missionaries** are going throughout the world to Gentile countries to tell people about Jesus.

And as Gentiles - **that's how we became Christians today, too!**

2. Salvation to the Gentiles was to make Israel jealous and arouse Israel to belief - vv11-15

[Slide-Jealous]

2nd – ***Salvation to the Gentiles was to make Israel jealous and arouse Israel to belief in Jesus*** – that's in vv11-15

Paul's logic here in vv11-15 - is – if Israel mostly reject Jesus – it **brings the riches of the message of Jesus to the Gentiles** – which is **fantastic** – but it also **makes Israel jealous** – so when they turn around later and believe in Jesus – it will be **even more fantastic!**

By the Gentiles believing in Jesus – Paul's hope is - **the Jews will have – what social media today calls - FOMO – the fear of missing out!**

Paul says the benefit of bringing the message of Jesus to the Gentiles – is – vv14-15 - so that it will **arouse the Jews and wake them up – literally from the dead!**

At a meeting of the Hebrew Alliance in America, over 90 percent of the Jewish people attending said they were aroused to consider the claims of Jesus because some Gentile Christian had shown them the love of Jesus!

I came across a great example of this in my preparation this week.

A Jewish guy called Max Reich [1867-1945] became a Christian and later the principal of a Bible college – by the influence of a Christian woman working in his family home as a Sabbath helper. The woman's witness of Jesus and the love of Jesus she showed the family had a great impact on Max – and he became a believer.

Any time – we show the love of Jesus to a non-Christian – it **can arouse them to follow Jesus too!**

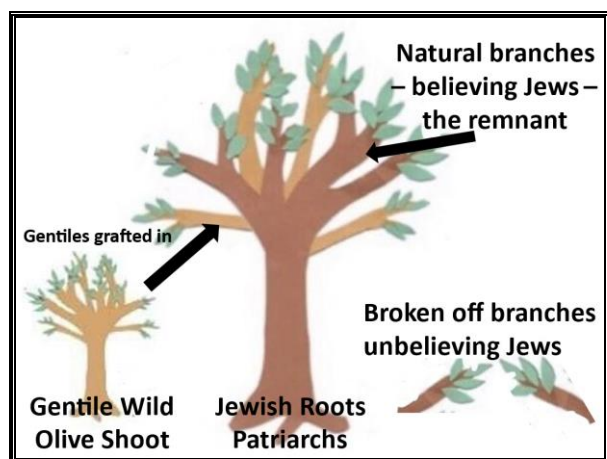
3. God has a plan for both the Gentiles and the Jews - vv16-24

3rd – **God has a plan for both the Gentiles and the Jews** – and it works like the horticulture of an **olive tree** – that's in vv16-24

[Slide-Main Tree]

Paul's saying in v16 – **God's plan** is like there's an **olive tree** – which has a **holy, God-planted root**. And Paul's logic is if the **primary root** of the tree is **holy and Jewish**, then there's bound to be holy branches.

Paul's illustration is an **Olive Tree**



V17 – The **main root** is the **Patriarchs** – and the **promises God made to faithful people like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**

Still v17 – the **majority of the natural branches** have been **cut off** – they are **unbelieving Jews**

But there are **still natural branches** – those are the **Jews who believe in Jesus** – who are the **remnant** [dark brown branches]

Then there's a **wild olive shoot** – which are the **Gentiles** – are those **Gentiles who believe in Jesus** [**light brown branches**] - have been **grafted into the main olive tree** with the believing Jews.

(pause)

Paul **warns** the **Gentiles** – in vv18-21 – which includes us – that we **shouldn't get all superior and puffed in** – because we've been grafted in to the olive tree – and most of the Jews have been broken off!

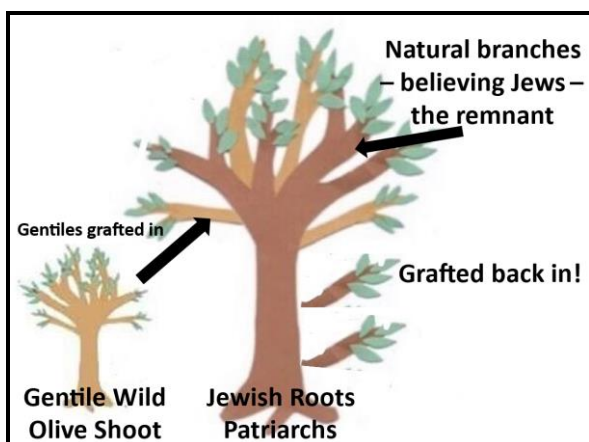
Paul's point is **God broke off the natural branches** because they didn't believe – God's **not going to spare us as grafted in branches** – if we abandon our faith!

Paul says v22 – that **God is both kind and stern**.

He's been **stern** to the **unbelieving Jews and broke them off** – and yet he's been **kind** to us – **Gentiles** – because we believe in Jesus – but we **must continue to do so!**

Then in **v23** – Paul gives **great hope to the broken branches** of the **unbelieving Jews** and says '***if they do not persist in their unbelief, they will be grafted back in, God is able to do that!***'

[Slide-New Tree – 2 clicks]



*CS Lewis in discussing Jews becoming Christians said this “The **Christian Jew is the only normal human being in the world**. Everyone else is, from one point of view, a **special case dealt with under emergency conditions!** The truth about us Gentiles becoming a Christian is that: **God opened “a back door” and let us in as emergency cases**. There are lot of us but we remain only “grafted in” branches!*

4. God works in mysterious ways - vv25-32

Now - we don't know WHEN the **unbelieving Jews will be grafted back in**.

Which is the next point.

4th – **God works in mysterious ways** – that's in vv25-32.

[Slide-Mysterious]

Look at v25 Paul says it's a **mystery** – the **Greek** means a **hidden thing or a secret**.

But Paul says – the **purpose of the majority of Jews experiencing a hardening against Jesus is temporary until the full number of Gentiles have come into this olive tree!**

Once that has happened – at a date/time that only God knows – Paul says in v26 – that **ALL Israel will be saved!**

When Paul says “**All**” Israel will be saved – he's using “All” in a **corporate sense**.

What he means is not every single Israelite in the last generation but, in contrast to the present meagre number of Jewish believers, a number large enough to represent the Jewish race as a whole – so that we could then refer to Israel as a Christian nation!

That is how the word “Israel” is used throughout this chapter. Paul often uses “Israel” to refer to the majority of Israel over and against the minority of believing Jews.

To substantiate his claim that Israel will be saved – in vv26-27 - Paul quotes from our Old Testament reading from Isaiah 59:20-21 – where the prophet Isaiah foretells a future event when a deliverer – Jesus – will come from Zion (Jerusalem) and turn away godlessness from Jacob (aka Israel) – and Jesus will take away their sins!

We don’t know when this future event will happen – and as we look at Israel today – and the war going on – it’s difficult for us to see any time soon when the majority of Israel would become Christian.

But that’s why Paul says - it’s a mystery – it’s God’s business! That’s all we need to know!

In the meantime, Paul tells us – in vv28-29 - how we should view unbelieving Jews right now!

As Gentiles who have heard and embraced the good news of Jesus, it looks like the Jews are God’s enemies. But looked at from the long-range perspective of God’s overall plan and purpose, God loves the Jews because of His promises to their ancestors “the patriarchs” and God’s gifts (His promises) and His call [to make Israel His people] are irrevocable!

God still has a plan for Israel!

Paul goes on to say in vv30-31 – we need to remember what we were like before we became a Christian.

Tim Keller puts it this way: The Christian is to say to themselves: I disobeyed God and refused to believe the Gospel and look at me now – here I am, a Christian, in part because the Gospel reached beyond disbelieving Israel (v30). So, if God can reach me with His mercy through the Jews disobedience, he can certainly reach them with His mercy through faith (v31). So, what part might I play in God's wonderful sovereign plans and purposes for His ancient people?

Paul concludes his explanation of God's mysterious plan – in v32 – by saying that – we all experience disobedience – and are left outside in the cold – so that we can then all experience his mercy – and be let back inside again!

God has mercy on all – whether Jew or Gentile.

But let's be careful with the “all” here - in v32– it's “all” people without distinction (whether Jew or Gentile) and not “all” people without exception.

The reason we can say - it's NOT – “all” people without exception is - because back in chapter 2:5-8 – Paul has said there will be unrepentant people who will receive God's wrath and punishment.

(pause)

What action can we take – today - based on God's plan for Jews and Gentiles?

Action for us

[Slide-Action 1]

1. **Share the good news:** Knowing that God desires both [Jews and Gentiles] **to be saved** should **motivate us as Christians to share the message of salvation with others, regardless of their background.** **We shouldn't be writing anyone off –** based on race, colour, rich, poor, healthy, sick, educated or uneducated! Seeing that God's mercy extended to all without distinction - should encourage us to reach out those who are marginalized or overlooked in society!

[Slide-Action 2]

2. **Pray and evangelise the Gentiles:** so that the full number comes in (v25) – in our Australian context – pray for a revival.

[Slide-Action 3]

3. **Pray and evangelise to Israel** so that they are grafted back in and all as a whole or corporately Israel believe

I came across this story when preparing this week – which shows God's plan for the Israelites (Jews).

*A minister [Rev Aaron Bernstein] came from a Church of England prayer meeting in East London, which was **specifically praying for Israel to come to faith in Jesus.** He bumped into another minister [John] who'd just been to special service at St. Paul's cathedral held for the anniversary of the conversion of the Apostle Paul.*

*Rev John seemed rather surprised that his friend, Aaron, had just been to a prayer meeting and that he **believed in the possibility of Jews coming to faith in Jesus!***

Rev Aaron asked John about the service he'd just attended for the Apostle Paul. Rev Aaron asked "who exactly was the Apostle Paul?"

*Rev John replied: "I suppose you would call him **a believing Jew!**"*

Rev Aaron asked: "what music did they have at the service?"

Rev John replied: "Felix Mendelssohn's St. Paul's oratorio, of course"

Rev Aaron asked: "and who was Felix Mendelssohn?"

Rev John said "Why he was a German"

*Rev Aaron said "Yes but he was also **a believing Jew**"*

*The bottom line is: Rev John who did not believe in the possibility of Jews coming to faith in Jesus had just been to a church service dedicated to the memory of the Apostle Paul – becoming **a Jewish Christian** – and was listening to music composed by **a Jewish Christian**, Felix Mendelssohn – and was talking to Rev Aaron Bernstein, himself a Jewish Christian!*

God DOES have a plan for Israel!

(pause)

Let me finish with **2 Peter 3:9**

[Slide-2 Peter 3:9]

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.

Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Let's pray...

Thank you for your salvation plan to include both Jews and Gentiles!

Thank you that you have a plan for a full number of Gentiles to be included in your salvation plan.

Thank you that you have a plan for Israel to be saved too.

Help us to be your instruments to bring the Good News of Jesus to all humanity – regardless of race or background or circumstances.

Please bring about a revival in our nation!

In Jesus name, Amen!