

“Pride and Prejudice”

...and a little jealousy
Romans 11 –pt2

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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Romans 11

I I ask, then, has God rejected his own people, the nation of Israel? Of course not! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of

Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 No, God has not rejected his own people, whom he chose from the very beginning. Do you realize what the Scriptures say about this? Elijah the prophet complained to God about the people of Israel and said, 3 “LORD, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.” 4 And do you remember God’s reply? He said, “No, I have 7,000 others who have never bowed down to Baal!” 5 It is the same today, for a few of the people of Israel have remained faithful because of God’s grace — his undeserved kindness in choosing them. 6 And since it is through God’s kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God’s grace would not be what it really is — free and undeserved. 7 So this is the situation: Most of the people of Israel have not found the favor of God they are looking for so earnestly. A few have — the ones God has chosen — but the hearts of the rest were hardened. 8 As the Scriptures say, “God has put them into a deep sleep. To this day he has shut their eyes so they do not see, and closed their ears so they do not hear.” 9 Likewise, David said, “Let their bountiful table become a snare, a trap that makes them think all is well. Let their blessings cause them to stumble, and let them get what they deserve. 10 Let their eyes go blind so they cannot see, and let their backs be bent forever.” 11 Did God’s people stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course not! They were disobedient, so God made salvation available to the Gentiles. But he wanted his own people to become jealous and claim it for themselves. 12 Now if the Gentiles were enriched because the people of Israel turned down God’s offer of salvation, think how much greater a blessing the world will share when they finally accept it. 13 I am saying all this especially for you Gentiles. God has appointed me as the apostle to the Gentiles. I stress this, 14 for I want somehow to make the people of Israel jealous of what you Gentiles have, so I might save some of them. 15 For since their rejection meant that God offered salvation to the rest of the world, their acceptance will be even more wonderful. It will be life for those who were dead! 16 And since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy, their descendants will also be holy — just as the entire batch of dough is holy because the portion given as an offering is holy. For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too. 17 But some of these branches from Abraham’s tree — some of the people of Israel — have been broken off. And you Gentiles, who were branches from a wild olive tree, have been grafted in. So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in the rich nourishment from the root of God’s special olive tree. 18 But you must not brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. You are just a branch, not the root. 19 “Well,” you may say, “those branches were broken off to make room for me.” 20 Yes, but remember — those branches were broken off because they didn’t believe in Christ, and you are there because you do believe. So don’t think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. 21 For if God did not spare the original branches, he won’t spare you either. 22 Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you if you continue to trust in his kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off. 23 And if the people of Israel turn from their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them back into the tree. 24 You, by nature, were a branch cut from a wild olive tree. So if God was willing to do something contrary to nature by grafting you into his cultivated tree, he will be far more eager to graft the original branches back into the tree where they belong. 25 I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ. 26 And so all Israel will be saved. As the Scriptures say, “The one who rescues will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel away from ungodliness. 27 And this is my covenant with them, that I will take away their sins.” 28 Many of the people of Israel are now enemies of the Good News, and this benefits you Gentiles. Yet they are still the people he loves because he chose their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 29 For God’s gifts and his call can never be withdrawn. 30 Once, you Gentiles were rebels against God, but when the people of Israel rebelled against him, God was merciful to you instead. 31 Now they are the rebels, and God’s mercy has come to you so that they, too, will share in God’s mercy. 32 For God has imprisoned everyone in disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone. 33 Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways! 34 For who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice? 35 And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back? 36 For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.



11:17-21 *But some of these branches from Abraham's tree — some of the people of Israel — have been broken off. And you Gentiles, who were branches from a wild olive tree, have been grafted in. So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in the rich nourishment from the root of God's special olive tree. But you must not brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. You are just a branch, not the root. "Well," you may say, "those branches were broken off to make room for me." Yes, but remember — those branches were broken off because they didn't believe in Christ, and you are there because you do believe. So don't think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. For if God did not spare the original branches, he won't spare you either.*

Some of the "branches"...those of Abraham's blood line, were "broken off" because of their disbelief. We Gentiles, have been "grafted in" to the tree in their place and have become a part of the promises of Abraham by the grace of God. While such a truth and blessing stands even today, we must always remember that the tree is still Jewish and the "root" is still the Nation of Israel. We are the "wild branch" that has been grafted into the tree.

With that being said, Paul warns us not to "repeat history": to not take for granted the blessings of being connected to God, and begin to stand on a perceived *position* rather than true *relationship*. This was the mistake of the Jewish nation, and a mistake that many of us...even many within the sound of my voice, is making today. For many of us have taken the high road of position and self earning and failed to have that *relationship* with our Redeemer! Such a warning may, on the surface, seem unnecessary until one looks around at the state of the church today: The politics, the clout, the economic strength of the greater church, etc. The practices of church attendance, communion, baptism, tithing, serving...these are the many "external" gifts which have been given us because of our placement on that "tree." Ironically a bunch of those elements have now been taken away from us, forcing us, *if you will*, to really step back and see what remains! These things can all so easily become a false foundation...a replacement for knowing and communing with the real thing. We are further warned that "we (Gentiles) do not support the root" but rather the "root supports us." So there can be no elitist arrogance on our part and certainly no anti-Semitism!

11:22 **Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you if you continue to trust in his kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off.**

Wow. That's kinda heavy isn't it? Notice the word "if." Obviously this is a "conditional promise." "...*consider the goodness and severity of God...*" How we avoid such a thing! We want to ignore, reject, or marginalize this aspect of God's severity. But we forget what's at stake here! What's "on the table" in this matter is everything! Such is eternal in its ramifications thus God loves us enough to "pull out all the stops." Both sides of our Creator presented herein are a very real part of the same living God. Both aspects are critical for our complete and whole understanding of our Creator.

According to Paul in this letter, we *need* to consider this truth! For he tells us that God has shown us, that He has *given us*, His "goodness." But please notice that to remain in such a blessed place comes with a pre-requisite: "***if you continue***" in that goodness." If you do not, *you will be "cut off."* Cut off? What does that mean?

The word "continue" means *to remain, be steadfast, abide, persevere, to endure*. This is not concerning the security of your eternal salvation...your "place in heaven." The idea here is one of both *position* and *relationship*. The Jews were not "dumped" but the *relationship* they had with God had been severed by their

own actions. They were being put outside in the cold, *because* God loves them! Their *position* of blessedness and their *relationship* of communication, understanding and direction had ceased. And so will ours if we pridefully follow in those same steps! God, through the apostle Paul, was warning that this same “breaking of standing” with God can occur to us also; corporately as Gentiles, or individually as rebellious believers. Note the Revelation church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:5!

11:23-24 And if the people of Israel turn from their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them back into the tree. You, by nature, were a branch cut from a wild olive tree. So if God was willing to do something contrary to nature by grafting you into his cultivated tree, he will be far more eager to graft the original branches back into the tree where they belong.

God will take them back again...*if they “turn”*...if they are *willing to repent!* Again, that singular principle plays out in the *Jewish* realm, the *Gentile* realm and the *individual* realm, too! God’s plan has not ceased! He is not done with the Jewish nation! He is not done with you and me! And as long as there is breath in our bodies, we too are still in the game. We can still come home, and we can still make things right with God. But please note that the text doesn’t say if we “feel sorry” especially if it is a “feeling sorry for ourselves!” The Bible is clear that even the *world* is *sorry!* And that doesn’t ultimately make any difference at all does it? It says we must “turn”...we must “repent.”

Now there is something in this matter that needs to be addressed before we move on. Seldom do we deal with this caveat, but it is an important aspect. In our true repentance, we may need to go back and at least attempt to clean up our mess. Genuine repentance leads to a desire to redress wrongs. When someone is a Christian, he or she will have a desire born of deep conviction to do good, and that includes making restoration whenever possible. A faithful repentant Christian should desire to enact some form of restitution that demonstrates that repentance. However please note that restitution is to be a *result* of our salvation—it is not a requirement *for salvation*. If you have received forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ, all of your sins are forgiven. But out of our love of God and other people, we would naturally desire to make things right. Our horizontal interactions and relationships reflect what is truthfully going on vertically.

The church today could, *and often do*, brag that we’re “the man” now. *We’re* God’s chosen. *We’re* God’s blessed. Well, how have we done over the last 2000 years of our “blessed state?” We started free of the law, blessed with the gifts of baptism and confession. Now we have evolved church attendance, baptism and communion as a means of regeneration, and a “new law” of denominational rules have been declared as the “righteous standing.”

Church services were once simple studies of the Word of God and worship in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Now we build multi-million dollar elaborate churches with rigid man-planned ritual services and concert entertaining worship. It seems God is today taking a moment to currently remind us of what is really important and what is not!

Christ came to die in order to guarantee our salvation and our standing before God. And now we teach new doctrine to the contrary of man’s salvation security, and lead folks to live in a life of daily fear of their place with God. We put crosses up on the wall instead of *preaching* the cross. We put doves up on the wall, instead of walking in the Spirit of what it means! We have created divisions within the body of Christ that we call “denominations.” And if you are not part of our church club then you aren’t part of the true church at all. But that is *our* church, not *God’s* church!

We started with the understanding that all Scripture is God-breathed and would last forever. But now we pick and choose what parts of Scripture we think are real and applicable, and what we want to receive and what doesn't ruffle our fragile sensibilities. We reject those parts that are not politically or culturally sensitive. And we ignore directives that effect those around us and many of us have deeply and profoundly hurt people we once said we loved, and yet we have chosen to simply dismiss these actions instead of making them right.

Indeed we began with a church "called to be separate." Now we, the church of God in America, often live like the pagans, chasing money and power, using the methods of the world to build our churches income and attendance and to solve our counseling needs. We are now as susceptible to fears, mental and emotional breakdowns, depression issues and marital disintegration as those outside.

11:25 *I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ.*

Paul reminds us of our place as "the church"...as Gentiles, those "grafted in," the wild branch, adopted into the blessed family that is Jewish. There will be a day when the Jewish nation will be brought back out into the limelight, *center stage* before God and all the nations of the world as God's chosen. Paul does not want us to be "ignorant." We are without excuse...we have it clearly before us on the pages of the Word of God in scripture.

So the warning goes forth. The admonishing concerning the cancer of pride...the most subtle and dangerous practice for anyone who believes themselves to be of Christ! Pride is destructive on any level. *When will we learn?* We cannot utilize such a destructive element without experiencing the effects of such. It will destroy us...every time. Corporately, or individually, the result is the same.

11:26-27 *And so all Israel will be saved. As the Scriptures say, "The one who rescues will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel away from ungodliness. And this is my covenant with them, that I will take away their sins."*

NKJ also says "all Israel will be saved." However such does not mean saved as in redemptive salvation, and not "all" as in every individual of Jewish heritage. That would contradict all that Paul has been teaching, all Jesus taught, and the whole of the scriptural account. "All" speaks of the sense of the whole nation of Israel that will be brought back into God's "most favored nation" status. Paul quotes from the book of Isaiah to remind the Jewish nation, *and us too*, that the Redeemer will come out of the nation of Israel. And he includes the promise that this Savior will "turn away (the) ungodliness from Jacob," otherwise known of as *Israel*." When is this going to happen? It actually happened on a cross outside of Jerusalem 2000 years ago. Israel may not yet grasp such a truth, but the reality stands just the same. Jesus didn't just die for us Gentiles, but for the Jewish nation too.

11:28 *Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.*

Paul admits that the nation of Israel, both then and sadly even now, was not a friend of Jesus nor a believer of the gospel message. But Israel's standing before God was not a position that was earned any more than ours is! Both are given and guaranteed through God's grace, God's choice, and God's will! God made a promise to the Jewish fathers, and He will never go back on His Word.

11:29 *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

Paul now makes a profound statement with very far-reaching ramifications. As Scripture often is, this passage is clear and emphatic. What God has given you is still there for you. What God has called you to do, is still your marching orders. Nothing changes in your account. As the Bible so often says “it is written.” If such gifts and callings are irrevocable, then the only way they fail to come to pass is because we have, in one way or another, refused them. Sadly, many of us are working hard to run from such “gifts and calling.” We have rejected the leading of the Holy Spirit and we need to understand that our gifts are in fact “gifts of the Holy Spirit.” No *Spirit*, no *gifts*. If we have lost our way and our gifts are now lost somewhere on the path of life, we can begin to find them again by allowing the Holy Spirit back onto the throne of our lives!

11:30 *For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,*

Yes, Jehovah is a God of justice and judgment, but God is not unmerciful. History shows us clearly that God has just been *looking* for someone to pour out His mercy upon! The Jews refused that mercy, so Jehovah simply went on down the road and found someone else to pour out His mercy upon. Praise God, the recipients are us! But if rejected, he will, like in the Parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 22, just go on down the road and find someone else. Christian, I pray you hear this crucial truth!

11:31-32 *...even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.*

Paul’s point here is that we are all in “the same basket.” We’re not special. We’re not better than others, nor are they better than us! We are mankind: *wicked hearts, faithless minds, and self-centered motives*. That’s us! But we are so slow to come to this realization! Those who have long ministry lives are those who come to this epiphany early in their lives. We are *all* guilty, none without sin!

Ga 3:22 *“But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God’s promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.”*

Ec 7:20 *“Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins.”*

11:33 *Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!*

God did what no man could do. He designed and presented a plan in which sin could be judged and punished, and yet the perpetrator of such could continue to not only *live* but *thrive*. *NOBODY* offers that! Nobody but Jehovah God, of course. OH, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! His judgments are unsearchable! His ways beyond us finding out!

As Paul often did in his writings, he seems to momentarily get swept away in the glory and praise to the Father. It is obvious he feels the height of God’s love and presence, and breaks into spontaneous worship.

11:34 *For who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice?*

Man has been trying to refute this verse since Adam in the garden. We want to say that He didn’t mean what He said, that He meant something else, and *we* are now the communicator of truth! We most often pray in terms of

request for *our* will and *our* desires to be made a reality and we attempt to direct God in His handling of sovereign affairs. Thus, *who* has become His counselor? ME! YOU! Or at least we've tried...

11:35 *And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back?*

Do we honestly think that God **needs** us in any capacity? Do we think the Kingdom of God is a finer land now that we are part of it? Failing to understand that we are part of such a Kingdom *by the mercy and grace of God-undeserved, and unworthy*-is the mark of spiritual death!

How many of us come before God ...or even walk today, with the attitude that He somehow *owes* us? Because of our perceived value to the Kingdom, ...because we think we serve so diligently,or we are so holy and righteous in our acts of contrition and religion, we somehow believe that God is at our beckoned call and He is our groovy "inside-man." But the Kingdom is not run on a "good ol' boy" system. Jesus is *far* wiser than that. For He sees not just *actions*, but *motives*.

11:36 *For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.*

The NKJ speaks "...of Him...through Him....to Him...are ALL THINGS." Can there be a finer truth in all of Scripture? Herein lies the awesome truth of the Kingdom with the keyword being "Him."

Without Him, Jew, Gentile, or church-going-believer, we are left with nothing and we *are* nothing. "...of Him...through Him....to Him...are ALL THINGS." I wonder if we looked at our lives, the actions, and the activities of all we are involved with in our lives... can we say that such is true of what is coming out of us?