

Living Connections Bible Study

The Gospel of God

Justified by Faith

Grafted In or Broken Off

Text: Romans 11:16-24

Prayer:

Icebreaker: List some benefits of grafting one or more trees or plants into another?

1. Define the terms *firstfruit*, *lump*, *root*, and *branches* as Paul uses them in verse 16?

Paul uses a cultivated olive tree to represent the people of God down through the centuries, whose roots are anchored in Abraham and the promises of God fulfilled in Christ.

2. What would be the cause for the natural branches (Jews) descended from Abraham being broken off from their root in Abraham? Verses 17, 20^a; Galatians 3:7-9; Romans 9:6-8;

3. What makes it possible for Gentiles to be cut out of Adam's wild olive tree and grafted into Abraham and his seed—Christ? Verses 17, 20; Galatians 3:7-9

It is important to note here that we were not grafted to partake of the trunk or the Jewish branches of this tree, but into the root of the tree. Gentiles are grafted into Abraham through Christ, not into Israel. We do not become proselytes to Judaism. The Church is an entirely new entity to Judaism. Jesus said He didn't come to put new wine into the old wineskin of Judaism or to sew the new fabric of the Church onto the old garment of Judaism. This cultivated olive tree represents *the people of God* down through the centuries who have become partakers of Divine life and blessing through Abraham in Christ. We become the people of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

4. What reasons does Paul give us not to boast or gloat against Israel because we were grafted into Abraham while they were cut off? Verses 18-19

5. What warning should unconverted Gentiles with a Christian heritage take from unbelieving Jews being cut off from *the people of God*, represented by this tree? Verses 20-21

6. What goodness had Israel experienced from God in the past according to Romans 9:4-5? Verse 22 Deuteronomy 7:6

7. Give some examples of God's severity in disciplining and judging Israel. Verse 22
Deuteronomy 28:45; Matthew 23:37-39

8. What goodness has God poured out on Gentiles who come to Him in faith? Verse 22
1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 2:4-7, 11-13

Unless we study Romans 11 in context, Paul's warning here make it sound like we could lose our salvation if we fail to continue in the goodness of God. That would make our salvation probationary and dependent on our holding on to God and persevering in faith, rather than God holding on to us and keeping His promise to us of eternal life.

9. What do the following verses teach us about God's part in keeping us so that He won't lose even one of His children?

Luke 22:31-32

Philippians 1:6

1 Peter 1:5

10. What great assurance can we take from the following verses that our salvation is already secure and not probationary the moment we place our faith in the Savior?

John 5:24

1 John 3:2

John 6:37-40

Think about it this week:

Pastor Bill Knepper comments on Paul's warning about being cut off from Romans 11:17-22

Paul is talking about those broken off because of unbelief. But their ancestors were of great belief. David was a godly king but he was followed by those who failed to believe and were cut off. In other words, the warning is cross-generational just as it was to Israel. Each generation must take up the banner of faith or they will find themselves in a state of being cut off from God.

There is a great blessing that comes from growing up in a Christian home. It is the same spirit as found in 1 Corinthians 7:14 where those in the immediate family of a believer have an example of faith right before their eyes. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified [set apart for God's blessing] by the [believing] wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified [or set apart for God's blessing] by the [believing] husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy [set apart for God's blessing]." Each generation must make that faith personal or they will be cut off. Consider the number of times we see faithlessness in the third generation. Abraham had great faith, Issac-believing faith, but not with the same fire, and Jacob had no faith at all until later in life. Then there was David, whose faith was on fire, He son Solomon was faithful but compromising, and his son Rehoboam was godless and impetuous.

Paul is taking the "big picture" view of Israel here, stepping back and inviting us to consider Israel over 2000 years. And if being cut off due to a lack of faith happened to them it can happen to us. In fact the history of America shows the transition from fervor to fetid [putrid] in the space of [only] 250 years..

Clearly Israel and the Gentiles are different entities and not everything is equal in what Paul is saying. But the need for faith at the level of the individual drives the argument, and I see Paul saying to churches "Stay the course, keep the faith, teach the children, pass on the vital truths, continue in His goodness." For the failure to do so leads to unbelief and your children will no more be assured of being a part of God's program than the children of Israel were.