

# The Future of Israel (Part 2)

by Richard Ganz

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*The future of Israel is crucial for the world, and understanding it is essential for Christians, as it holds the key to greater gospel blessings.*

**Duration:** 53:38

**Scripture:** Leviticus 23:17, Numbers 15:17-21, Ezekiel 44:23, Romans 11:11

**Topics:** "Future Of Israel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a conversation he had with an elderly man who was passionate about karate. Despite his age, the man was still actively involved in full-contact martial arts. The preacher uses this encounter to illustrate that things are not always as they seem, just like God's plan for Israel. He explains that although it may appear that Israel has been cast off, they will be grafted in again according to God's plan. The preacher then delves into a study of Romans 11, emphasizing the importance of not being ignorant of the mystery of God's plan and not being arrogant in our own understanding.

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## Transcript

Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans 11. We've covered the first 11 verses. This is 25 and 26.

The climax of the argument, perhaps the most controversial, the most difficult part of this culmination of three chapters that we've been looking at, actually briefly 9 and 10, but in depth verses 1 through 11 last week of chapter 11. Let's give our attention then to God's word, Romans 11, verse 11. Again, I ask, did Israel stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? May Genoit, may God forbid, not at all.

Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater will their fullness bring? I am talking to you Gentiles. And as much as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.

For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy. If the root is holy, so are the branches. 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, do not boast over those branches.

If you do, consider this, you do not support the root, but the root supports you. You'll say then, branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in. Granted, but they were broken off because of unbelief.

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

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.

And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in. For God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature and contrary to nature were grafted in to a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted in to their own tree? Tonight we're gonna look at these next two verses.

I do not want you to be ignorant of this musterion, this mystery, brethren, so that you may not be conceited. Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved just as it is written.

God, I just pray for your blessing on our study. I pray that our hearts and our minds are equipped with the clarity and openness to take this in, to consider this, to study this, and to see and really attempt to understand what this means in our lives. Father, I pray that each one here is blessed by what we're gonna look at this morning.

And I thank you for putting these things on my heart, teaching me, opening my heart to understand your scriptures and the musterion of the Bible so that I can be one who can equip the saints for the work of ministry through these things. May God, may you be blessed and praised and glorified in our midst. In Jesus' name, amen.

And Father, forgive me for anything that I may say that is wrong, that is displeasing to you, or takes away in any way from your glory. But once again, through your precious and holy name, amen. What is the future of Israel? That's my question for you this morning.

And perhaps the question that you might be asking, especially after last week, is this, who cares? What does Israel's future have to do with me anyway? Or does it really matter? Do we have to take up this amount of time? Well, it has everything to do with you, because at the very least, whatever happens to Israel will, in one way or another, impact practically every nation on earth, and that means including Canada. It's really quite amazing. A nation smaller than the state of New Jersey, which I believe is the smallest state in the United States, and just a little bit bigger, not that much bigger than Prince Edward Island, our smallest province, is impacting every nation in the world.

It is hard to imagine the world even knowing what PEI is. If you said, I'm from PEI, they'd say, they'd probably go, Pi? No, no, you've got the letters mixed up. No, they wouldn't even know what you meant, let alone care about it.

But not so with Israel. Whatever happens to Israel, the most hated nation in the world will impact every nation in the world. Emams, and I've just watched a couple this week, I have them if you think I'm kidding about this, on YouTube videos, are publicly and unashamedly stating very clearly and with complete simplicity, it does not matter what you do, and they're talking there about the geopolitical situation and the mediatorial stuff that's being done, doesn't matter what you do, we will destroy Israel.

On the other hand, who do you think said this? Listen to this. If any nation abandons Israel, God will never forgive them. It is God's will that Israel, the biblical home of the people of Israel, continue forever and ever.

Well, I'll tell you this. It sounds like it could have been, but it was not Billy Graham. Because that is something he would say.

Instead, it was another and even more well-known, no, not more well-known than Billy Graham, but just about as well-known. That came from Bill Clinton, former president of the United States. Bill Clinton is not a man, he had any talents, one of them was not being ignorant of the geopolitics of international situations.

Nor was he at the same time a devoted, Bible-believing Christian. And yet, that's what he said concerning Israel. Now, what struck me about that is he did not simply say, the United States is with you, Israel, forever and ever.

That would have been one thing. But that if any nation veers from that kind of path, they will never, ever be forgiven. He said that publicly.

That wasn't just something he said that someone caught on a private bedroom tape that was circulating through the White House and then got sent out to the rest of the world. John MacArthur, probably the most well-known evangelical preacher and commentator, I believe, maybe because I listen to him a lot and I read his messages. In the United States today, weighing into the whole issue, and no, it's not because of me, I mean, really, millions of people get his tapes and cassettes and CDs have sold millions of copies.

Had this to say when he weighed into the issue of Israel and speaking about the future of Israel. He said, God has made promises to Israel and he must keep those promises. His character depends upon it.

His integrity depends upon it. His trustworthiness and faithfulness depends upon it. What has God promised Israel, which he must fulfill? To give them peace from all their enemies and fullness of blessing, and that will come in the future.

That is God's promise, end quote. Now, in the light of these kinds of comments and commentaries and remarks, all of these diverse views, the question of the future of Israel is thus, as I hope you will see as I do, an absolutely imperative question. And it demands serious, serious consideration, especially since the entire Old Testament deals with this question.

That is the question of the Old Testament, salvation as it goes through the Jews, what happens to them, over and over and over again. And Paul, in three full chapters, and I don't know anyone who takes any issue in the New Testament for three chapters like this, Romans 9 through 11 addresses that very question. When we hear things like what the Imams are saying or things like Bill Clinton has said, or things like John MacArthur is saying, we should have one solid and united response.

What, though, does the Bible say? This morning, in the second part of our study on this issue, I want us to continue looking to see just what the Bible says. Last week, we began to trace Paul's argument concerning the salvation of Jews and Gentiles, which starts in Romans 9, culminates in Romans 11. Paul reminds us that God's word has not failed, that all who are meant to be saved shall undoubtedly receive God's great salvation.

And he reminds us, as well, that zeal without knowledge is fanaticism, but also that knowledge without zeal is nothing but dead orthodoxy, and that we must possess both zeal, and knowledge, and balance. We

would have zeal, but our zeal must be for God, accompanied by, that is, informed by the knowledge of God, in other words, by biblical truth. We have learned in our continuing study in the book of Isaiah that Israel, as a nation, and he says this repeatedly, is cast off because of their rebellion, their hypocrisy, and their idolatry, and ultimately, ultimately because of their rejection of Christ.

However, Paul, in corroboration with the Old Testament scriptures, tells us that this is not the end of the story. Israel is not irreversibly cut off. There is, he says, still a remnant of true believing Israelites.

However, there is more. As serious and as deserving of punishment that Israel's sins were, God has another, even more important reason that Israel, as a nation, has been hardened and cast away. Paul tells us, in verse 11 of Romans 11, that because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles, we expect it to stop.

That's a good reason, very good reason, but it doesn't stop. Salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. To me, that's an extremely astonishing answer.

Israel's sin, Israel's repudiation, Israel's rejection of Jesus, is so that salvation can come to the Gentiles, which is then going to stimulate Israel to jealousy. The salvation that has come to the Gentiles because of Israel's sin is to be for an even greater end. It is for the purpose of bringing Israel, as a nation, to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

In verse 12, Paul continues. He says, but if Israel's sin means riches for the world and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater will their fullness, their pleroma, will their fullness bring? And Paul uses a very specific word for sin. It's the word *peraptima*, not the normal word that's used.

Sin, such as this, is a deviation, it's a falling away from truth, a falling away from righteousness. And thus, the sin that Paul is talking about here is Israel's rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And there is a specific consequence to this sin, and Paul's already told us this consequence in verse 11.

It's this, because of this rejection, salvation has come to the Gentiles. It seems horrible, horrible to think, that it requires, humanly speaking, Israel's renunciation, Israel's denunciation of the gospel to serve the purpose of bringing the gospel to the nations, to the Gentiles. But this is a reality that is also substantiated in Acts, for example, chapter 13, later on, verses 44 through 48.

When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. And then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly. We had to speak the word of God to you first.

Since you reject it, and you do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, wow, what a thing to say. I mean, imagine you're standing here in this message, you don't even consider yourself worthy of everlasting life, huh? What are you talking about? He's stirring them up. We now turn to the Gentiles, for this is what the Lord has commanded us.

I have made you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Israel to the Gentiles, the light to the ends of the earth. When the Gentiles, we read, heard this, they were glad.

They honored the word of the Lord, and all who were ordained to eternal life believed. In other words, through Israel's rejection, the Gentiles were brought in. In Acts, chapter 28, verses 26 through 28, we see the same idea of the gospel going to the Gentiles, because of Israel's rejection of it.

Go to the Jewish people and say, you will be ever hearing, but never understanding. You will be ever seeing, but never perceiving, for your heart has become calloused. You hardly hear with your ears, and you've closed your eyes.

Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them. Therefore, I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen. What Paul is saying is that Israel's failure is riches for the Gentiles, but Paul isn't finished.

He now says, since this is so, how much greater will Israel's pleroma, their fullness, bring? What does the fullness of Israel mean? As we're going to see in a few moments, the idea of Israel's fullness is expanded upon in verse 15, when Paul speaks of Israel's acceptance. Their acceptance, their pleroma, their fullness is brought together, saying, for if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? Their fullness, which is spoken of in verse 12, and their acceptance, receiving, spoken of in verse 15 is not, as some say, a reference to all of the elect, of all the ages, both Jew and Gentile. These verses, you see, make absolutely no sense if you look at them from that framework.

To the contrary, verses 11 and 12 provide a very clear distinction in the discussion between the nation of Israel and the nations, the Gentiles. Clearly, you see, Paul's statement is not intended to suggest that the fullness of Israel, in verse 12, is a combination of Jews and Gentiles together, but a fullness of Israel as a nation. The Jews, they were God's chosen people, and despite themselves, they fulfilled their purpose as God's chosen people.

How did they do that with all their rebellion? By bringing forth the Messiah into the world. There is now no redemptive status for Israel as God's chosen people in the new covenant. There can't be.

They're no longer the chosen people. We have the church, the redemptive people of God, Jew and Gentile, at the same time, God tells us in Ezekiel, chapter 11, verses 13 through 20, that he will not bring the remnant of Israel to a complete end, but will instead gather Israel together and will take out of their heart of stone and give them instead a heart of flesh so that they will walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and do them. Then they will be my people and I shall be their God.

Using the covenant refrain from Exodus, found all the way through Revelation 21, you will be my people, I will be your God, using it right here as he describes, as Ezekiel's talking about, what is going to happen with Israel. So thus, in the new covenant, Israel is not God's chosen people redemptively, that's finished, Christ has come, but will at some point, once again, as a nation, be gathered in. You see, in the new covenant, Jews and Gentiles together in Christ are God's chosen people.

What are the Gentiles if they're not chosen? If they're not elect, what does it mean then? Not just Jews, Professor John Murray, well-known professor from Westminster Seminary, reflected on this question in his commentary. I strongly recommend his commentary on Romans to you. He concludes this, yet it does not follow that Israel no longer fulfills any particular design in the realization of God's worldwide saving purpose.

Now, just as God has a purpose for the ingathering of the Gentiles to provoke Israel nationally to jealousy, so too, God has a plan for the ingathering of Israel to bring further wonderful riches to the world. Now notice, just as this fullness of Israel being spoken of in verse 12 is not referring to the mass of believing Jews and Gentiles together, it also is not referring to just the remnants of Israel. Two very well-known writers on this subject, Palmer Robertson and William Hendrickson, see this fullness and this acceptance

of the Jews to be strictly, and I'm gonna quote from Hendrickson about this, and he says this, and they have wonderful commentaries on this, these men not arguing with that, but here's what they say on this issue.

They see this as a sum of all of Israel's remnants. So this fullness to both of them is simply all the remnants that come together, that's the fullness. Or as Palmer Robertson, a professor of mine at Westminster said, Paul's hope is that a remnant would remain throughout the ages.

He's saying that's what Paul's hope in this chapter is about. These views, I am convinced, completely miss the point of this passage. Israel's unrighteous defiance of the gospel produced a path of salvation for the Gentiles, but Paul says that there is an even greater result, an even greater blessing to come upon the nations when the pleroma of Israel is complete, that fullness.

Now think about this. Paul is speaking of, and he's focusing on what has happened to the mass of Israel. Even while saying that there is still a faithful remnant being gathered into Christ, nothing in seeing such a gathered remnant has moved either Paul or the world with incredulity, like wow, there's seven Jews in Ottawa that are believers.

We can't believe this. This is really incredible. That's not a good argument, and it's not a biblical one.

But Paul says here in verse 12 that Israel's fullness will bring greater riches for the world. Thus, the argument that the fullness of Israel means just the collection of Israel's remnants across the ages makes no sense. It makes sense logically if you want to think that way, but it makes no sense biblically.

It does not coincide with the biblical logic that's here. The destruction of Israel has not been that of the destruction of a remnant. Their destruction has been to the mass of Israel, the bulk of the nation.

Israel's fullness corresponds to this destruction. Paul says how much more their fullness, speaking of the mass that was judged, now the mass that is being redeemed. Thus, you see, Israel's fullness must also correspond to the bulk of the nation.

Speaking of Paul's statement, John Murray says, there should be no question, but this is the fullness of Israel as a people. Fullness can have no other reference. In this context, fullness means a totality.

It is a totality that is an antithesis to the totality of the destruction of Israel under God's judgment for their unbelief. The bulk of Israel rejected Jesus, but not all. There was a remnant that did not reject him.

So, too, the bulk of Israel will turn to Jesus, but again, not all. There is a remnant that will not turn to him. Nevertheless, the bulk of Israel will turn to Jesus, and this will bring great riches.

Paul's point, Paul's point is that Israel's restoration as a nation to Christ will mean even greater gospel blessings than have yet been seen or even imagined. You see, it makes no sense at all if the fullness of Israel in verse 12 is to be understood as a summation of all the remnants of Israel throughout history. How can such remnants as these in any way be seen by the nations in a vivid enough fashion to produce incredulity and greater riches for the nations? In verses 13 and 14, Paul says, I am talking to you Gentiles.

Paul's attention at this point is directly fixed upon the Gentiles. Paul wants them and us to understand that something that has historically been absent from Gentile thought, he wants them to get it. It is simply that the salvation of the Gentiles is for the purpose of making Israel jealous and provoking, it's as incredulous

in a sense as Israel's fall is to make them come to see the Savior.

But that's the plan here. And provoking Israel as a body to turn to Jesus. And that the greatest blessing to them, the Gentiles, comes not from Israel's former rejection of God, but from Israel as a body turning to God, coming in saving faith to our Messiah.

For Paul, it is imperative that the Gentiles must clearly know that this is the motif. In fact, it's so important that Paul says in verse 13, literally he says this, it glorifies my ministry. The restoration of Israel through the Gentiles is the glory of Paul's ministry.

You see, to call Paul anti-Semite, which many do, I hear it not frequently, but regularly, it's ludicrous. The glory of his entire life and ministry is to see the people he loves, of which he is one, coming to faith in Jesus Christ. I have articles from the Ottawa Citizen, somewhere at home, stored away, calling me anti-Semitic based upon a debate that I had at Ottawa University and arguing the same argument as Paul.

And the Jewish Student Union, 300 of them were there, and they wrote articles in saying this guy is not Jewish, he's anti-Semitic, it's ridiculous. My heart's desire is for those 300 who were standing there and had trouble with what I said. To do this, to glorify his ministry through Jewish salvation, Paul will redouble his ministry to the Gentiles.

Paul says in verse 14, this is my hope, that I may arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. That's what he's saying. Not only does Paul desire that the nations, the goyim, may engage in arousing Israel's envy nationally, but he wants to lead the way.

He's contributing to that future fullness, and he's doing it by bringing as many as he can to faith in Christ through his own evangelistic efforts. In verse 15, Paul uses an extremely, I don't know the best way to say it, a severe word to describe the plight of Israel. He speaks of their being cast away.

Earlier, Paul spoke of what Israel did as a nation. They sinned, they rejected the gospel, they fell. But now the focus shifts to what God has done in response to what they have done.

God has cast them away. This is the national status of Israel today. Nation or not that they have, their national status is in terms of God's covenant and blessing, they are castaways.

Even though some Jewish people, such as myself, or even now, in faith in Christ and coming to faith in Christ, as a nation, they are castoffs. As Jesus says to them in Matthew 21, verse 43, the kingdom of God is taken away from you to give to a people who will produce its fruit. If the falling and the rejection of the gospel refers to Israel nationally, so too must their casting away, so too must their reconciliation, must the reconciliation of the world.

As a body, Israel brought in the Messiah. As a body, Israel sinned and rejected Jesus and his gospel. And as a body, Israel is at this time cast away.

And the gospel is going to the Gentiles as a body. This is the only way that the reconciliation of the world makes sense. This reconciliation of the world, in verse 15, is nothing other than the riches of the world.

That's what it is. It's the riches of the world mentioned in verse 12, which is nothing other than the gospel of Jesus Christ going to the world and people preponderantly Gentile being reconciled to God through Christ. What has happened is that a people, the Gentiles, who were once low on me, not my people, verse

Peter 2.10, who were castoffs, cast away from God, are now reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

They are now part of God's people. Just as Israel once had the blessings, the Gentiles now have all the blessings of redemption. And not just as the Gentiles were once cast away, Israel is now cast away.

But this is not the end of verse 15, nor is it the end of the history, nor the end of the story. Israel's rejection and the receiving of the gospel by the Gentiles is placed directly alongside of Israel's being received back. Paul is not speaking of a scattered people's reception as a remnant of Israel, but of Israel as a whole.

Just as Israel as a whole is now cast away, so too will Israel as a whole yet be received. Moreover, this restoration of national Israel as a whole back to God will be so glorious that to see it will be like seeing life from the dead. This is what Paul longs to see.

Simply, individuals within Israel, here and there, coming to faith in Christ, as blessed as that is, cannot be viewed in such a glorious manner as life from the dead so that the Gentiles in Christ are astounded. Indeed, such an event as Paul is describing here has not yet even hit the consciousness of the Gentile church. I believe it's going to take an outpouring of God's grace upon Israel as a nation for the church to realize that this is nothing other than life from the dead.

Now, until this happens, while God's grace is primarily being poured out on the Gentiles, until God's grace is once again poured out on the body of Israel, Paul's concern is that the Gentile believers would not view the Jews in a derogatory or arrogant manner. Now, sadly, the basic motif of the predominant view of the Gentile church has been, as I see it, and I'm around the church, I was gonna say the Gentile church, but that's a redundancy, it's the church, has been a kind of, most often, silent anti-Semitism, which is very easy to be acceptable today, even in the church, when the geopolitical understanding of what's happening in the Middle East, the majority view is accepted very often in the church. When you have to hear Lowell Greene wondering, Lowell Greene, wondering what's going on in churches in Canada, in the United Church, speaking with such belligerent anti-Semitism, you know something on that level is reaching the consciousness of people, if the church is affecting them that way.

This view in the church, thinking that the Jewish people have been cut off, cast off forever, and are just a bunch of Christ killers, I heard that expression just two days ago again, I was stunned. Christ was killed for, died for his people. We, his people, nailed him to the cross, it's not the world, he didn't die for every single sin of those in hell, or else they'd be forgiven in hell.

No, we are those, if you wanna say, think of Christ killing, think of it in terms of oneself. I know it's hard to think of things that way, but we nailed him, our sins nailed him to the cross. To think of the Jews as just a bunch of Christ killers not worthy to be even cared for, do you know at times cults even erupt that have this view, like the British Israel, I don't know if you ever heard that, or the Worldwide Church of God, they teach, straight out teach, this is what they teach, the 10 lost tribes of Israel are none other than the Anglo-Saxon people.

That's really remarkable. That the Jews are forever cast off. Now, this idea comes from, and I won't take long, just quickly to mention to you, from the words covenant.

Covenant is berit, and man, the Hebrew for man is ish. Together, you put it together, you have berit ish. Berit ish, not British, berit ish.

And they take it that that's now what any person who wants to know who the 10 lost tribes are, it's the British. Now, this, I hope you can see, is not what any serious student of scripture should consider a substantial exegetical argument. Paul is very sensitive to the danger facing the Gentile believers of looking derogatorily and arrogantly upon the body of Israel.

Instead, the Gentile church needs to view Israel from a proper biblical understanding, neither viewing them in a higher than biblical manner, which I've seen in a number of places, it makes me very uncomfortable, nor viewing them derogatorily and arrogantly. And if you wonder what I mean by a higher, I'll discuss it with you in the discussion class. This is so important that Paul spends nine verses just on that idea in verses 16 through 24, dealing with this issue.

In verse 16, Paul says that if the first fruits are holy, the lump is also holy. If the root is holy, so are the branches. Now, that takes us back to Numbers 15, 17 through 21, in which Moses teaches that the consecrated bread that is set apart and is holy.

Therefore, he says the rest of the batch is holy. And that's similar to Ezekiel 44, 23, and 30, where God says that the priests are to teach the people the difference between what is holy and what is unholy, and that the first fruit of their dough is to be set apart, causing the rest of the batch to be holy. Why? So that a blessing will rest on your house.

Additionally, Paul, in verse 16, refers to first fruits. And he links this passage to some passages such as Leviticus 23, 17, and bringing to mind the holiday of the first fruits, Shavuot, in which the idea is that the harvest of the first fruits is never intended to be isolated from the rest of the fruit, because they were the first fruit of a harvest that would come. Paul uses these principles.

That's how he gets what he says. He's going through Tanakh. He's going through the Old Testament.

And he applies them to Israel. And he says that the original set-apart portion of Israel is holy. What then is the original set-apart portion of Israel? It is the root, that is, the fathers of Israel.

And Paul is arguing that since the root was set apart, thus so too the rest of Israel as a nation is set apart. And this is especially true in the light of verse 28, which says that Israel is beloved on account of the fathers. Paul's argument, moving from the first fruits and the root to the entire batch, the mass, and the branches, is that God is not through with the nation of Israel.

God originally set them apart as holy, and thus Israel is still holy, is still set apart. In other words, if God has set apart these first fruits of Israel, then he has set apart the entire harvest. This latter-day harvest of Israel is exactly what Paul's argument is leading to, which means that if there is to be no restoration of the nation of Israel, then verse 16 makes no sense.

Seeing this, Paul goes on to warn the Gentile believers not to be arrogant regarding their salvation, because, as he teaches in verses 19 through 21, that some of the branches of the olive tree, which is Old Covenant Israel, were broken off so that you Gentiles can be grafted in. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid, because if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Remember that it is not you that supports the root.

The root supports you. They were broken off for your unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Therefore, do not be arrogant, but fear.

And then Paul's argument against arrogance concludes in verse 24. After all, if you Gentiles were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to your nature, were grafted into Israel a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree? Israel, as a nation, is not permanently done away with, but will be grafted back into the tree from which it came, and which now contains branches from wild olive trees as well. The wild branches that have been ingrafted, that is the body of Gentile believers, are warned to not take this for granted or become arrogant about it, because their blessing in Christ came through the Jews.

Their faith in Christ is rooted in the Old Covenant nation and the Old Covenant people, and God will not tolerate the wild branches being arrogant toward the root and the natural branches, regardless of the wretched state of the natural branches at this time, because God will graft these branches in again. At this point, Paul has come to the place in verses 25 through 26, where he is going to give the conclusion, the climax to his entire argument. I'm going to just take a moment to enter briefly into this climactic conclusion this morning, but I really want to finish it with all of you tonight.

That's why I've locked the door so no one can get out today, so you'll all be here this evening. Sorry about that. I hope you'll understand.

I'm kidding. Don't have that look. I was, okay.

Paul begins his climactic conclusion this way. I do not want you to be ignorant. That's a strong word.

What Paul is about to say is something extremely important, something that we are to know and something we are not to be ignorant of, and this continues the sense of the warning that preceded it. We are not to be arrogant in our position with respect to Israel. We are not to be ignorant.

What are we not to be ignorant of? We are not to be ignorant of the mystery, the mystery, and we are not to be ignorant of the mystery so that we are not arrogant, so that we are not wise in our own estimation. How are we to understand a mystery as Paul refers to it? Romans 16.25 says, "Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past." A mystery is something that has been hidden and is now revealed. These mysteries are the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory, 1 Corinthians 2.7. "This is wisdom and knowledge which God through his word reveals to us, but which remains incomprehensible to unbelievers." Among the mysteries that God reveals to us, there is one mystery which in Romans 11, Paul says, this is the only time he says, don't be ignorant about this.

This is the mystery that a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and so all Israel shall be saved. What in the light of Paul's argument does this mean? And that's what we're going to see tonight. That's the conclusion of the whole issue we've been looking at last week and this week.

But for now, I want us to remember what we have seen this morning and the lessons that we need to learn from it. First of all, things are not always the way they seem. I met a man the other day, a really old man, and we had an opportunity, I took the opportunity, I should say, to talk.

And so we talked for a while. I was attempting to tell him of Christ and he was attempting to tell me of his passion, karate. This elderly man that I didn't think had the energy possibly to even stand up and raise his arms enough to do this has been fighting to the present day in full contact martial arts, to the present day.

I told him that I would never have guessed it looking at him and he just looked at me and smiled and said, things are not always the way they look, the way they seem. So too with God's plan for Israel. It's a plan that extends far beyond our imagination to us it seems and appears that Israel is cast off, which is true.

But things are not just always what they seem because Israel is not irretrievably cast off but will be grafted in again. In the second place, the reason for Israel's ingathering is simple. We read in James 5.11, the Lord is full of compassion and filled with mercy.

The reason will not be Israel that they're grafted in. It will not be something special in Israel any more than the reason is during this age of the church that the Gentiles are grafted in because there was something special about the Gentiles. It has been, it has always been the compassion and the mercy of God and that alone.

And it's that mercy and that compassion which will bring all the glory to God and not to any man or any nation. Number three, do not be arrogant regarding your salvation. Be joyous, be thankful, but don't be arrogant.

In his perfect plan, God chooses those whom he will and he chooses to save them how he wills and his plan is not yet finished on this earth. But know this, all those whom God saves, we read in Ezekiel 11, he takes out their hearts of stone and gives them a heart of flesh that they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and do them, that's verses 19 and 20. Now having said this, we have to see that God, having saved us, expects us to follow his commands.

Another very hard to take comment for the church today. They don't want to hear that. Immediately you have people, if I'm saying this around the church, might be people just sitting there going, legalist, even to just mention law, to mention commands.

That's horrifying really when you think of what the predominance of such construct and ideas throughout the scriptures, that we are to live, in other words, according to his word, not according to our feelings, not according to what we want to do or makes us feel good doing, to give ourselves wholly and entirely and wholeheartedly to him. And in the process, we are to be humble, remembering that we have nothing at all to be arrogant about. As far as God is concerned, one really good way to work on crushing this arrogance towards which we all have, all of us have a tendency, is to look upon Israel in a biblical manner and with gratitude.

There, here's a way, look to Israel with gratitude and look to them biblically, not in arrogance or contempt or with higher than biblical view that you might bring to it, but to look to Israel with gratitude for them being more than just a branch. But as Paul calls Israel in verse 16 of this chapter, the root, Israel's not just a branch in the olive tree that belongs to God. Israel is the root of the olive tree that today supplies and keeps these ingrafted branches supplied with water and sustenance for life.

Without Israel, there would be, so to speak, no old covenant and no Messiah. And knowing this and understanding Paul's argument, the church should labor to see Israel provoked to jealousy, that they, the natural branches, will be grafted back in that they too, as a national ingathering, may be saved and bring forth even further riches and glory and reason for gratitude. Fourth, the future of Israel.

Can you see at this point what Israel is to God? Can you see that his desire to restore Israel is, so to speak, I mean, I'm anthropomorphizing in this respect, but you understand what I'm saying, it's a passion

for God and a part of God's plan that is so surprising and awesome that, as we will see tonight, it is called musterion, that such a restoration is close to the heart of God and that it is sin and it is dangerous sin for the entire world to heap such contempt upon Israel and to cast Israel into the garbage heap of history when his plan is national restoration. So let me just wrap this up for now. You see, friends, this is about Israel, but it's not just about Israel.

This, as you can see, is also about you. It is imperative how you view Israel, for they, as Paul says, are beloved for the sake of the fathers. Don't let the world's view of Israel keep you from praying for Israel's salvation, to keep you from ministering to Jewish people.

They need Christ desperately. They've grown up hating Christ. I know what it was like to think Christianity meant, you know, just they say Christ killers, Christianity meant Jew killers, Jew haters.

Their defiance, and people talk about, oh, I can't talk to these Jews, they're so defiant, they're so arrogant, et cetera. Okay, but you know what? Their defiance is often a cloak for all the wretched hatred they've received over the millennia. Don't let their hardness harden you.

Not only are they yet dear to the heart of God, but also their ingathering as a nation into the true Israel of God will bring in riches that have yet been unseen and as yet are unimagined. Remember, the difference is this. You have Christ, they do not.

This is not an opportunity for arrogance, but for an opportunity to be used by God in bringing back his old covenant people. But even before you seek to do this, consider yourself first. Are you saved? Your eternal destiny, humanly speaking, rests in some ways, humanly speaking, in your answer to that question.

Are you saved? Not in your opinion do you think you're saved, but are you saved? Even as we look with Paul at the future of Israel, you are hearing even now the gospel of your salvation because right now, this minute, you are being urged to a faith that is in Jesus Christ. You are being urged to become part of the international Israel of God. That's my name for us, for the entire body.

I've never heard it before. The international, cosmic Israel of God. You are urged to become part of this through faith in Christ, through the saving of your soul, with a trust in Jesus that will guide you through this life and even more, guide you through death and guide you into his glorious presence forever.

And in doing that, bring him, our God and Savior, bring him glory and honor and praise and dominion. And as we saw last time in Isaiah, eternal worship of our Lord God from his people, from our lips and from our hearts, before the throne of grace now and forevermore. Amen.

Father, we pray that we would look at all things right. That means we would be willing to open the Bible and not just have a view on a subject, especially those subjects that get closer and closer and nearer and nearer and dearer and dearer to your heart. I pray, God, that you would bless us as a people, that we would be a blessing to others, that we would have gratitude for what you've done to us, that we would be humbled by it and that we would, in humility, seek to see others share in this great blessing.

We pray for the Jew. Today, we remember the Jewish people. And I can't remember the last time that we actually prayed for the nation of Israel, especially with it being surrounded by enemies on all sides who want to destroy them and a world who is increasingly, and to me, incredibly, in support of this, in support of that nation simply being the most atrocious nation in the world.

God, they are a secular, God-hating people, but none of the atrocities I hear that surround them are ever being performed on their own people by their own hands, by their own willing hearts. That doesn't make them save, but it certainly makes a reason to stop seeing them as a blight upon this world, especially since they are close to your heart. And I pray that these realities for the gathering in of the Gentiles, for the gathering in of Israel, that this fullness will be seen and that we will rejoice in the Mousterian.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

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