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Is there a Future Hope for Israel?

Romans, Part XLI

Romans 11:11-32

Stuart W. Bryan

I. The Parable of the Older Son (cf. Lk 15:11-32)

II. Has God Cast Israel Away?

In Romans 9-11, Paul addresses God's dealings with Israel. Has God completely cut them off? Certainly not! First, God's hardening of ethnic Israel is not _____ (11:1-10). God continues to show mercy to ethnic Israelites, bringing His elect to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Second, God's rejection of ethnic Israel is not _____ (11:11-32). God will bring the Jews back into His favor in the future; He will revive ethnic Israel once again.

Romans 11:11-32

¹¹I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their [trespass], to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. ¹²Now if their [trespass] is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! ¹³For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. ¹⁵For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy...

¹⁶... [Also] if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ¹⁸do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." ²⁰Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²²Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

²⁵For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; ²⁷For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." ²⁸Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³²For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

III. Have God's Promises to Israel Been Revoked?

A. Current failure but future fullness (11-15)

First, Paul insists that Israel's current failure to recognize her Messiah was God's means of bringing salvation to the nations – and that the spread of salvation to the nations will eventually result in revival within _____. Gentiles are now no longer "*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise*" (Eph 2:12) but "*fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*" (Eph 2:19). Gentiles have been "*brought near*" to God's covenant "*through the blood of Christ*" (Eph 2:13). And God will use the Gentiles to bring Israel back to the faith of their fathers.

B. God has cut them off but is able to graft them back in (16-24)

Paul argues that nothing precludes this future work within Israel. Though Israel has been cut off from God's covenant at present, God is _____ to graft them in again and will do so. Hence, Gentiles must not boast over Israel but continue in the faith.

C. Beloved for the sake of the fathers (25-32)

God will have mercy upon Israel even as He is having mercy on the nations because He is faithful and has not forgotten the promise He made to the _____. He has used the Jews to bless the Gentiles and will use the Gentiles to bless the Jews.

IV. Application

A. Don't Despise the Jews (cf. 9:4-5; Jn 4:22)

First, Paul's words to the Romans remind us as predominantly Gentile Christians not to despise the Jews. Paul writes, "*remember that you do not support the _____, but the root supports you*" (18). We Gentiles inherited the faith from the Jews. Hence, our attitude toward them should be one of gratitude and our goal should be their conversion: that they be grafted back in among God's people.

B. Beware boasting over the Jews (1 Cor 10:1-11; Is 61:5-7)

Second, Paul warns us that we are not to boast over the Jews (18). Instead, we are to learn from them lest we too abandon the faith. This reveals that the line separating good and evil does not go between ethnic groups but through every human _____.

"If we believe, with Paul, that evil is our shared human heritage - that our hearts share the same corruption, that those at the top and the bottom are united in having idol-factory hearts - then something powerful and ego-deflating happens. It becomes impossible to go through life with a self-serving mindset that envisions halos over your own head and horns on everyone else's. What if we soaked into our bones the unflattering truth of our tragic group identity in Adam's fall? We would see that gut wrenching malevolence can't be reduced to a color, a gender, an economic problem. It is a human problem. Since I'm human, it's my problem. And if you are a descendant of Adam - which is to say if you're not a toad or a squirrel but a member of the human race - then it's your problem. It is all of our problem... A biblically informed reading of history would tell us to care for the oppressed and to take their stories seriously as God's downtrodden image bearers, but it would also do something [else]. it would inspire us to see history not purely through the perspective of the oppressed but also through the lens of the oppressors. Why? Because the same human nature in the Aztecs layer, the Atlantic slave trader, and the Auschwitz executioner resides in us too. If we don't seriously reckon with that uncomfortable truth, then we can all too easily become the next round of self-righteous oppressors. (Thaddeus Williams, pp. 45-46)

C. Bless the Jews, don't burden them

God has blessed the Gentiles through the Jews and will bless the Jews through the Gentiles so that no one can boast. God has demonstrated that both Jew and Gentile are *disobedient* and in need of His grace, in order *that He might have mercy on _____* (32). Paul insists, in other words, that *the salvation of the Gentiles is to result in blessing for the Jews.*

V. Conclusion