**Week of May 19, 2019**

**Romans 11:11-24**

11 I say then\*, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid\*: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. 12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? 13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as\*\* I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh and might save some of them. 15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? 16 For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches\*, take heed lest\* he also spares not thee. 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell\*, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

**Understanding the Scriptures**

In today’s lesson Paul reminded the Gentiles that salvation came to the Gentiles because of two reasons:1) the Jews rejected the Gospel, 2) the rejection of Jesus by the Jews as their Messiah, led to Jesus’ death on the cross and subsequent resurrection. Paul described the Jew’s rejection of Jesus as stumbling. Stumbling work indicate the Jews were down, but they could get back up. Paul warned the Gentile believers against boasting and pride and reminded them that they were recipients of God’s blessings. Paul used the metaphor of the tree of Israel with Abraham to describe the engrafting of unnatural branches (Gentiles) into the tree where the natural branches (Jews) were cut off. The process of turning a wild olive tree into a fruit-bearing tree was to engraft a branch from a cultivated tree into the trunk of a wild tree. This comparison reminded the Gentiles to be thankful to God’s grace, understanding that neither the Gentiles nor the Jews were any better off than one another. Some Gentiles believers that the God had written off the Jews for their unbelief and God offered the Gentiles the gift of salvation in the Jews’ place, but that was not true at all. God assured the Jews’ through Paul, that the root is Israel, onto which the whole Church has been engrafted or connected to God. If the unbelieving Jews believe in the Gospel, in honor of God’s eternal covenant promise to Abraham and his descendants as God’s chosen people, they will be grafted in again and accepted by God. Essentially, Israel need to despair; their people ware still precious to God, but each of them must now accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

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