

Kindness

GOD'S PLAN FOR REDEMPTION INCLUDES ALL PEOPLE.

Romans 11:11-24

11 I ask, then, have they **stumbled so as to fall?** **A** Absolutely not! On the contrary, by their transgression, **salvation has come to the Gentiles** **B** to make Israel jealous. **12** Now if their transgression brings riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will **their fullness** **C** bring! **13** Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Insofar as I am an **apostle to the Gentiles**, **D** I magnify my ministry, **14** if I might somehow make my own people jealous and save some of them. **15** For if their rejection brings reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? **16** Now if the **firstfruits** **E** are holy, so is the whole batch. And if the root is holy, so are the branches. **17** Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, though a wild olive branch, **were grafted** **F** in among them and have come to share in the rich root of the cultivated olive tree, **18 do not boast** **G** that you are better than those branches. But if you do boast—you do not sustain the root, but the root sustains you. **19** Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” **20** True enough; they were broken off because of unbelief, but **you stand by faith.** **H** Do not be arrogant, but beware, **21** because if God **did not spare the natural branches,** **I** he will not spare you either. **22** Therefore, consider God’s kindness and severity: severity toward those who have fallen but God’s kindness toward you—if you remain in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. **23** And even they, if they do not remain in unbelief, **will be grafted in,** **J** because God has the power to graft them in again. **24** For if you were cut off from your native wild olive tree and **against nature** **K** were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these—the natural branches—be grafted into their own olive tree?

Exploring Key Words

- A** Earlier, Paul told the Romans that Jesus and salvation by faith were stumbling blocks for the Jews (9:32). The logical question was, *Could they recover from this stumbling?*
- B** The Jews’ rejection opened the door to salvation for the Gentiles. This would make Israel “jealous,” creating a spiritual longing that could move God’s people back toward Him.
- C** “Their full inclusion” (ESV; NIV). Paul argued that while Israel’s rejection of the gospel brought blessings to the world, their eventual restoration would be even greater. (See v. 15.)
- D** Though a Jew and eager to minister to Jews, God had called Paul specifically to share the gospel with Gentiles (see Acts 9:15).
- E** An offering taken from the initial reaping at harvest (see Num. 15:17-21). The holiness of the firstfruits (early Jewish believers) sanctified “the whole batch” (future Jewish believers).
- F** When branches from one tree are joined to a different tree. Gentiles were like wild branches grafted into a cultivated olive tree, representing God’s family. See “Dig Deeper” on page 48.
- G** Paul warned the Roman Gentiles to avoid arrogance. They depended on Israel’s root, not the other way around.
- H** Gentiles were grafted only because they had faith in Christ. Their belief sustained them as members of God’s family.
- I** God judged the Jews’ lack of faith, and He would do the same in regard to Gentiles (see v. 22).
- J** Jews who turn back to God will be redeemed. They are not beyond hope.
- K** Grafting is not a natural event. Likewise, God would move outside what might be considered normal to restore His people.



NOTES

Rejection (Rom. 11:11-16)

- Many Jews, the people God first entrusted with the gospel message, had rejected God. As a result, the gospel was shared with the Gentiles, who accepted it.
- Paul said that salvation among the Gentiles could serve to make the Jews “jealous.” Though they had “stumbled” (v. 11), they could one day be restored if they turned back to God.

Grafted (Rom. 11:17-22)

- Paul explained that the Gentiles did not replace the Jews in God’s plan. Using an agricultural illustration, he said the Gentiles were like wild olive branches grafted into a tree that represented God’s family.
- Salvation is by faith. The gospel message should produce a heart of humility and evangelism, not a spirit of boastfulness.
- The Gentiles needed to remember that just as God would judge Jews for their unbelief, He also would judge Gentiles who turned away from Him.

Restoration (Rom. 11:23-24)

- Unbelieving Jews can repent and be saved by faith in Christ. God is able to restore the “natural” branches to the tree.
- God can work in the hearts of Gentiles and Jews, bringing both into His family.

Summary Statements

God’s plan for redemption includes all people.

- We can be assured that the gospel is for all people.
- As members of God’s family, believers should embrace humility and resist spiritual pridefulness.
- Believers can take comfort in knowing God has the power to save those who repent.

Memory Verse

Romans 11:33

Key Doctrine

God’s Purpose of Grace

Election is the glorious display of God’s sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. (See Ephesians 1:4-6; 1 Peter 2:9-10.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](https://www.goExploreTheBible.com).

ENGAGE

When was the last time you received an unexpected invitation to something? (PSG, p. 82)

- Who should be included on the invitation list? That question often puts event planners in a tough spot. They must determine how many invitations can be sent based on the event's purpose and the budget available.
- Ultimately, these planners are forced to wrestle with the difficult decision of who will receive an invitation and who will not. They would never simply declare that everyone is invited. In most cases, someone has to be left out.
- In contrast, God never closes the door on anyone who will come to Him by faith. His invitation is open to all.

What has God shown you about His open invitation to everyone? (PSG, p. 82)

Bonus: When have you felt excluded? When have you enjoyed being included?

EXPLORE

REJECTION (ROM. 11:11-16)

Bonus: When can rejection be a good thing?

- Paul considered whether or not the Jews had gone too far in their rejection of God's gift of salvation. He answered the question decisively: Absolutely not! While they had stumbled over Jesus, their rejection opened the gospel door for the Gentiles. Paul said the Gentiles' acceptance of Jesus would make the Jews jealous and would lead them back toward God.
- Instead of pouring cold water on the fire of the gospel, Israel's rejection of Christ fueled the blaze. Gentiles everywhere experienced reconciliation with God. Paul pondered what would happen when Jews actually returned to God. He compared it to a resurrection where life is sparked from death.
- The early Jews who did believe (like Paul) were the "firstfruits" of a larger revival to come (see Num. 15:17-21). The holiness of this initial group of Jewish believers set the stage for the holiness of those who would believe one day.

What may cause someone to reject the gospel? (PSG, p. 85)

GRAFTED (ROM. 11:17-22)

Bonus: How hard is it to fit in when you're the "new kid"? What makes the transition easier?

- Paul compared Gentiles to a wild olive branch. God grafted them into a cultivated tree (Jewish believers) so they also could thrive as His people. The grafted branch flourished because it enjoyed the privilege of receiving the same nourishment that had enriched the cultivated olive tree.

- Gentiles might have been tempted to brag about their acceptance of the gospel compared to the rejection by the Israelites. But Paul said boasting would show that Gentiles had forgotten the central truth about salvation. It's not about the branch, but about the root. The applause over salvation belongs to God.
- God made no distinction regarding who would be saved. But neither did He exhibit any distinction regarding His severity. He would judge anyone who had fallen into the trap of spiritual arrogance.

When might we feel boastful of our spiritual blessings? How can we turn from spiritual pride to genuine care? (PSG, p. 88)

RESTORATION (ROM. 11:23-24)

Bonus: When have you felt like you crossed a "point of no return" in life? How did it feel to know that second chances are possible?

- The stumbling of the Jews did not represent a permanent rejection by God. If they would return to God and accept His offer of salvation through Jesus, they would be saved.
- God has the power to restore broken Jewish branches just as He grafted in Gentile believers. God's ways are motivated by His love, not by what makes sense to others.

What do you learn about God's heart from His willingness to restore those who previously rejected Him? How might that influence the way you view people who have walked away from faith? (PSG, p. 89)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss practical ways you can include everyone in hearing the gospel message.

In what ways would a lack of humility prevent you from sharing the good news of Christ? (PSG, p. 90)

As you reflect on this week's verses, identify at least one person you might be tempted to consider "unreachable."

Commit to pray for that person's salvation. What barriers do you need to remove so you can share the gospel with that person? (PSG, p. 90)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 89)

Use multiple Scripture passages to understand a major doctrine.

This session emphasizes a Christian's eternal security once he or she has accepted Christ as Savior. Paul's teaching refutes the idea that true believers are in jeopardy of losing their salvation. Read the following Bible passages and note what each one teaches about the security of the believer: Matthew 10:22; 24:13; John 5:24; 6:37; 10:27-28; Romans 8:38-39; Philippians 1:6; 1 John 2:19; 3:9; Jude 1:24-25.

Write "security" on the board and allow adults to share words or images that come to mind when they see that word. Direct volunteers to read the passages listed in the Bible Skill activity on page 89 of the PSG. Lead a brief discussion on what those verses teach regarding "eternal security" and why it's so important for believers to understand and accept.

OBJECT LESSON: OPEN DOOR

During the session, open the door completely, then close it firmly. Open the door and leave it ajar. Point out that whether a door is open or closed—or how far it is open—sends a particular message. Encourage adults to share times when they walked through a door they wished they hadn't and why.

Explain that in Romans 11, Paul stated that the door of the gospel is still open for all people to approach Christ in faith. Say: *It might seem like the Jews have closed the door, but God is still at work, meaning the door is ajar until a spiritual awakening comes to fruition.* Highlight how the rejection of the gospel by the Jews opened the door wide for the Gentiles to hear and accept the gospel.

Emphasize that from God's perspective, the door is always open. Say: *He is always ready to welcome anyone who will come to Him in faith.*

DIG DEEPER

GRAFTED INTO GOD'S FAMILY

In Romans 11:17-24, Paul used the image of an olive tree to explain how Gentiles became part of God's covenant people. The metaphor would have shocked some of his audience. Wild olive branches (Gentiles) were added to the cultivated tree and thrived by drawing nourishment from its root (the promises given to Abraham). This is more than an agricultural illustration. It is a powerful picture of spiritual adoption.

Once outsiders, Gentiles are now full participants in God's family through Christ. Their inclusion is not based on lineage, law, or heritage, but on His mercy and grace (vv. 17-18). While the church has not replaced Israel, believers are still called God's children.¹

At the same time, Paul warned Gentiles not to boast or to assume superiority. If God did not spare the natural branches (unbelieving Israel), He will not spare arrogant Gentiles either (v. 21). The grafting metaphor humbles us. It reminds us that we are not the root, and we stand by faith alone (v. 20).

This passage is not just about proper theology. It is also about our identity as people of God. Believers are adopted into a story that began long before us, yet we are fully accepted. In His grace, God has done

something that seems completely unnatural. But considering His character, it makes complete sense for God to include all who come to Him in faith.²

Grafting is not just about belonging. It's also about becoming. God does not call any believer—Jew or Gentile—to simply sit on the tree. Rather, we receive life from it. We are nourished by God's promises, His Spirit, and His people. Adoption is not a second-class status. It is full inclusion by grace, through faith, into the rich heritage of God's redemptive plan.

Sources

1. John Stott, *The Message of Romans*, The Bible Speaks Today, (InterVarsity Press, 1994), 301.
2. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Baker Academic, 1998), 614.

BONUS CONTENT



God's People

Paul compared Israel to a cultivated olive tree, with Gentiles as wild olive branches grafted onto the cultivated tree.