

## “God’s Salvation of His Whole Olive Tree” Romans 11:11-36

**Author:** Paul the apostle (a Roman citizen by birth), born to proclaim God’s gospel (Gal 1:15-17).

**Date/Provenance:** Late 50s AD (58-59). Written from Corinth on his third missionary journey.

**Purpose:** Systematic proclamation of the gospel that saves (Rom 1:16-17), Paul’s “Magnum Opus.”

- 11-12 – Paul has just applied the “remnant” principle found throughout the OT to Israel’s rejection of Jesus as Messiah – there always have been and still are those God is saving purely by His grace (v2-6, Eph 2:8-9). The remnant are the foreloved elect (Rom 8:29-30).
  - Now, in v 11-12, Paul explicitly states that part of why Israel has stumbled in disobedience is that salvation would come to the Gentiles – and that this would prompt Israel to jealously. But judgment is not the final word for Israel; the “fullness” of their inclusion (v12) will be sweeter still for those Jews are God’s elect!
- 13 – Speaking as the “apostle to the Gentiles” Paul magnifies how the gospel has gone out to the Gentiles w/such success. Why? To save his fellow countrymen (Rom 9:1-4, 10:1).
- 14-16 – Paul is clearly concerned in this passage with the salvation of the *world* – those opposed to Him (Jn 3:16-17, 2 Cor 5:19). Both Jews and Gentiles are at enmity with God (Rom 3:9, 3:23, 5:8), hence the flow of Paul’s argument is life from the dead for *all* (Eph 2:1-5, cf. v 30-32) even as God is creating a people of both Jews *and* Gentiles (Eph 2:11-16).
  - App: What does this mean about our missions & evangelism in Palestine, Israel?
- 17-24 – The image of the olive tree is one found throughout Scripture. God likens Israel as his vine often in the OT (Ps 80:8-16, Isa 5:3-7, Jer 2:21) and the image is used powerfully by Jesus as well (Jn 15:1-8). Since we are all guilty before God due to sin, we should fear the Lord and *not* be proud (v20, Eph 2:8, Rom 10:3-4). If either Jews or Gentiles think of themselves as *more deserving* of salvation than others, they have missed the very meaning of “grace” in the context of salvation (v6)! If you are a living branch connected to Christ, then it is because of the kindness of God (v22, cf. Lk 6:35, Rom 2:4, Titus 2:11, 3:4-7).
- 25-27 – Fullness of the Gentiles/fullness of Israel parallel lends support to prophetic/mass conversion of “all Israel will be saved” view of v26. However, v26 is about process. The phrase “in this way” (a Greek construction the ESV rightly translates relating to manner, not temporal/logical order using “so” or “then”), relates the salvation of Israel in terms of the salvation of the elect, even as Paul is quoting Isa 59:20 which is about Zion’s redeemer.
  - Another view of “all Israel will be saved” is better: Jews/Gentiles who are true *spiritual Israel* (cf. Rom 9:6 w/Eph 2:14, Gal 3:29, 6:16, also v14-16, 30-32).
- 30-32 – Note, Paul is concerned for the *current* response to the gospel in Rome in his day!
- 33-36 – Concluding this chapter and the entire doctrinal section of the book of Romans, Paul breaks into a glorious doxology highlighting not man but God’s glory (Ps 115:1, Isa 42:8). Appropriate, as salvation is all due to God’s might and grace! The history of redemption, including the gospel going out to the Gentiles and Israel being made jealous and being converted, is due to God’s wisdom and we obviously are not directing these things. Hence, all glory is due Him – the originator, means and end of all things (v36).
  - App: Give glory to God for your own salvation as we approach the table. But also...seek the salvation of others with zeal of Paul for both Jews and Gentiles.