

Wild By Nature Romans 11:16-24

All churches have their problems. The church in Rome during Paul's day was no exception. There seems to have been some racial tension within the church between Jewish believers (a relatively small number) and Gentile believers (the majority). Why?

- (1). The Jews rejected the Messiah and demanded He be crucified.
- (2). Persecution of the early Christians came at the hand of the Jews.
- (3). The Jews as a whole continue to reject the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How far the Jews have fallen. The Jews were the physical descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abram was an idolater from the land of Ur, but God set His grace upon Him. God said He would bless him. *"Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven"* (Genesis 15:5). *"And he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness"* (Genesis 15:6).

God's favor to Abram is a beautiful portrait of **God's grace to the believer in Christ.**

- (1). We are *"dead in trespasses and sins"* (as Abram was dead to child-bearing).
- (2). God produces for us (spiritual life) as He produced for Abram physical life (Isaac).
- (3). Abram's faith in the work of God obtained for him a right standing (righteousness) with God, just as our faith in God's work through His Son brings us righteousness from God. This is what is called *"the righteousness of God by faith"* (Romans 3:22).

The Jews, except for a remnant, reject this righteousness that comes from God and is found by faith in Christ. They (the natural branches) are broken off from the blessings of Abraham (God's righteousness). But Paul says *"Boast not against the branches"* (v.18).

I. You were wild by nature (vs. 17, 25).

(a). Dead to God's blessings (b). Unfruitful in life (c). headed for the firebrand pit.

II. Yet, you were wanted by Another (v. 18).

You were chosen by God, grafted into the blessings of Abraham. You received from God His righteousness. He reached down and gave you life and made you His child. Why? *"According to the good pleasure of His will"* (Ephesians 1:5).

III. Now, you are warned by an Apostle (v. 21).

Don't be haughty and arrogant toward the Jewish people. Yes, they are blind. Yes, they are cut off from the blessings of Abraham. But if God spared not the natural descendents of Abraham, He very well may one day not choose to spare the Gentiles.

IV. Finally, be warned by an announcement (v. 25).

There is coming a great revival of faith in Christ among the Jewish people. This is prophesied by Paul in at least five verses in Romans 11 (vs. 12, 15, 24, 26, 28). As we have seen there is disagreement over when this will happen (or happened), but the truth is clear --- God is not through with the Jew. *"Do not boast against them."* *"God is able to take away their blindness and their hardness and turn them to the Lord; he can by his mighty power work faith in them and bring them to Christ."* **John Gill**