

Lesson 17 – HANDOUT (Rocky – 05/18/2025) **THE FUTURE OF NATIONAL ISRAEL**
(Romans 11:1-36)

OPENING SCRIPTURE: Speaking to the Gentiles in the Church at Ephesus, PAUL writes:

2:11 Remember, formerly you (GENTILES) were 2:12 separate from CHRIST, excluded from THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL, and STRANGERS to THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE, having NO HOPE and WITHOUT GOD ... 2:13 but now IN CHRIST JESUS you have been brought near by THE BLOOD OF CHRIST ... (in order to) 2:15 MAKE OF THE TWO ONE NEW MAN, abolishing in HIS BODY the enmity (between Jews and Gentiles), reconciling them both in ONE BODY THROUGH THE CROSS, (so that the GENTILES) 3:6 have become FELLOW HEIRS and FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE BODY and FELLOW PARTAKERS OF THE PROMISE, ... (this being) 3:9 THE MYSTERY which for AGES was HIDDEN IN GOD – Ephesians 2:11-13, 15-16; 3:6, 9 (edited).

★PAUL addresses THE MYSTERY OF ISRAEL and ISRAEL'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH IN THREE KEY NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES: **ROMANS 11**, **EPHESIANS 2**, and **EPHESIANS 3**.

THE EPHESIAN CHAPTERS do not focus exclusively on ISRAEL AS A NATIONAL ENTITY the way **ROMANS 11** does, but they do address the inclusion *in some way* of GENTILES into THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL (*Ephesians 2:12*) ...

Now this requires some explanation because **THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL is not the same thing as THE NATION OF ISRAEL ... GENTILES are not incorporated into THE NATION OF ISRAEL**. When a GENTILE comes to faith in CHRIST through the Gospel, he does *not* become a JEW, but he does share in THE SOTERIOLOGICAL¹ BENEFITS OF THE NEW COVENANT.

The Gospel breaks-down 'the dividing wall' that once separated JEWS and GENTILES (*Ephesians 2:14*), so ... THE MYSTERY PAUL refers to is ... GENTILES now are FELLOW HEIRS and FELLOW PARTAKERS OF CERTAIN BENEFITS AND BLESSINGS IN CHRIST that come through THE NEW COVENANT (*Ephesians 3:6*) ...

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COVENANT THEOLOGY vs. DISPENSATIONALISM – COVENANT THEOLOGY is based around THREE THEOLOGICAL COVENANTS².

In contrast, DISPENSATIONALISM recognizes BIBLICAL COVENANTS, *e.g.*, GOD'S COVENANTS WITH NOAH, ABRAHAM, MOSES, DAVID, and THE NEW COVENANT ... **COVENANTS that are explicitly articulated in Scripture**. DISPENSATIONALISTS recognize these covenants as historical agreements initiated by God and recorded directly in the biblical text. As such, we hold they are to be understood LITERALLY, not ALLEGORICALLY.

There are key differences in how COVENANT THEOLOGY and DISPENSATIONALISM approach the Scriptures, and as a result, how they view the CHURCH and ISRAEL. COVENANT THEOLOGY makes use of ALLEGORY quite frequently as an interpretative tool, while DISPENSATIONALISM takes a more literal approach to biblical interpretation.

Two examples will illustrate how ALLEGORY is used as an interpretative tool – one example is from ORIGIN (3RD-Century A.D.) and the other from AUGUSTINE (4TH-5TH Centuries A.D.). Both examples will be allegorical interpretations of THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

¹ The term 'soteriological' refers to all that pertains to the Doctrine of Salvation.

² These three covenants are: the Covenant of Works, the Covenant of Grace, and the Covenant of Redemption. By 'theological covenants' I mean covenants that are not explicitly articulated in Scripture but are deduced logically from Scripture and assumed to form the framework designed to explain God's Plan of Salvation.

ORIGEN: In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the man going to JERICHO from JERUSALEM is ‘ADAM’ (*i.e., the human race*). JERUSALEM is PARADISE (*the Garden of Eden*). THE ROBBERS are demonic forces set on disrupting the plan of God. THE PRIEST AND THE LEVITE are THE LAW and THE PROPHETS, neither of which is able to save ‘ADAM.’ THE SAMARITAN is CHRIST and THE INN is THE CHURCH. Finally, THE TWO DENarii are THE SACRAMENTS or THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

AUGUSTINE: AUGUSTINE built off of ORIGEN with the following, added *insights*³: THE BINDING OF THE WOUNDS represents RESTRAINT FROM SIN, while THE OIL AND WINE represent COMFORT and HOPE. Finally, THE INNKEEPER is THE APOSTLE PAUL.

Granted, these are extreme examples of ALLEGORY and modern COVENANT THEOLOGIANS typically stop short of these extremes – but THE HYDRA OF ALLEGORY still can be found when they suggest ISRAEL in THE SCRIPTURES is not ISRAEL but THE CHURCH.

Now in contrast, let’s look at representative Biblical Covenants: THERE ARE THREE BIBLICAL COVENANTS that underpin **ROMANS CHAPTER ELEVEN**: (1) THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, (2) THE DAVIDIC COVENANT, and (3) THE NEW COVENANT.

(I.) The primary covenant of these three is **THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT**⁴. This covenant contains THREE MAJOR PROMISES God made to ABRAHAM and his DESCENDANTS through ISAAC:

I will make you (into) A GREAT NATION, in A LAND I WILL GIVE TO YOU, and I WILL BLESS YOU both individually and corporately – Genesis 12:1-3.

- ★ So God promised ABRAHAM **A LAND** (*the Land of Canaan*), **A SEED** (*by which He means descendants – some of whom will be kings*), and **BLESSINGS**, (*personal blessings and national blessings*) – BLESSINGS that will include THE MESSIAH through whom both THE JEWS and THE GENTILES will be blessed.

[THEN IN 1 CHRONICLES – GOD MAKES A COVENANT WITH DAVID (see also 2 Samuel 7:8-16)]

(II.) **THE DAVIDIC COVENANT**⁵ is an expansion of THE SEED PROMISE of THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT. It assumes the existence of *future progeny*, and in later iterations, it promises *kings* will be part of that future progeny.

When your days are fulfilled that you must go to your fathers, I will set up one of YOUR DESCENDANTS after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. I WILL BE HIS FATHER and he shall be MY SON; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him ... But I will settle him in MY HOUSE and in MY KINGDOM FOREVER, and HIS THRONE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER – 1 Chronicles 17:11, 13-14.

(III.) **THE NEW COVENANT**⁶ is an expansion of THE BLESSING PROMISE of THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT and as such affords us insight into THE REDEPTIVE PLAN OF GOD.

Behold, days are coming, declares THE LORD, when I will make A NEW COVENANT with THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL and with THE HOUSE OF JUDAH, not like the covenant I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of THE LAND OF EGYPT (THE

³ I use the term ‘*insights*’ with ‘*tongue-in-cheek*.’

⁴ See Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18; Luke 1:72-73; Acts 3:25; Romans 4:1-25; Galatians 3:6-29.

⁵ See 2 Samuel 7:8-16; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14; Psalm 89:3-4, 28-37; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 13:22-23; Romans 1:3; Revelation 22:16. Compare also Genesis 49:8-12 where Jacob blesses his son, Judah, and prophecies that the scepter (*divinely ordained kingship*) will not depart from the Tribe of Judah.

⁶ See Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Luke 22:20; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:15; 10:15-18.

MOSAIC COVENANT) – My covenant which they broke – although I was a husband to them – declares THE LORD.

But this is the covenant I will make WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL declares THE LORD; I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ for they all will know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares THE LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more – Jeremiah 31:31-34.

What we see is a continuity between what God promised He would do, what He has done, and what He will do in the future – and His divine actions all involve AN ELECT REMNANT who are the recipients of these promises, guaranteed by unconditional covenantal certainty.

And even though these promises ALL – *without exception* – are made with ISRAEL, a way exists in which GENTILES benefit from the covenantal blessings God promised to ISRAEL.

★ How we interpret these covenants is key to how we view ESCHATOLOGY and THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH.

NOTE: It is my position that the term ‘ISRAEL’ is never used in the Bible to refer to anything other than ‘ETHNIC ISRAEL,’ except in a limited number of cases where the biblical writer(s) is contrasting faith with works-righteousness. In these few cases, ‘ISRAEL’ is used symbolically.

Having made that claim, there are THREE DEBATED PASSAGES to which COVENANT THEOLOGICALS *‘flock,’* so I need to clarify them:

(1) For he is not A JEW who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is A JEW who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men but from God – Romans 2:28-29.

In this passage PAUL’S primary audience is made up of JEWS. We know this because *verse 17* begins by saying, “*But if you bear the name JEW.*” Then he lists privileges and responsibilities that pertain to JEWS (*the Mosaic Law, boasting in God, etc.*). And he criticizes the hypocrisy among JEWS who teach the Law but do not keep the Law.

PAUL argues that a relationship with God rests on something other than physical descent. In concert with *Galatians 3:29* [*“And if you belong to CHRIST, then you are ABRAHAM’S DESCENDANTS (and) heirs according to the promise”*], when addressing JEWS, PAUL often contrasts physical descent (*which has its benefits*) with a spiritual association with ABRAHAM that is based on following his faith-example recorded in *Genesis 15:6*.

To our point, these verses are not intended to merge the CHURCH into ISRAEL, or vice versa, but to show that, whether JEW or GENTILE in origin, only those who are of faith (*and not works*) can rightly claim to have a relationship with God.

(2) But it is not as though the Word of God has failed. For they are not all ISRAEL who are descended from ISRAEL – Romans 9:6

Once again, PAUL is emphasizing the role of the promises made to ABRAHAM, promises that run through the NEW COVENANT, the mechanism through which salvation comes to JEWS and GENTILES alike. As in the previous example, the Apostle is addressing Israelites. His point is, ‘*some Israelites are believers and some are not.*’ This has been the case from the beginning. JACOB

was a believer, but his brother ESAU was not – though both were descendants of ABRAHAM. This verse has nothing to do with ISRAEL as a nation versus the CHURCH; it is about salvation, irrespective of the dispensation in which one lives.

(3) And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the ISRAEL of God – Galatians 6:16

In this passage PAUL is simply using language his readers will understand to refer to MESSIANIC JEWS who have come to faith and are members of the Galatian Church.

So hopefully it is clear as to the interpretative method (*aka our hermeneutic*) we use to draw conclusions about Scripture, and by following a dispensational model, we draw clear distinctions between Israel and the Church – and since we make this distinction, we hold that there is a definite, clear and certain future for ETHNIC ISRAEL that is distinct from what God is doing today through the Church.

To demonstrate how this affects Eschatology, it is our position that at THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH (*notice is it the Rapture of THE CHURCH not the Rapture of ISRAEL ... in other words, the Rapture is 100% a 'church-related-event' and 0% a 'Jewish-related-event'*) ... it is our position that when the Church is caught up (*ἁρπάζω – pronounced harpázō*) to meet our savior in the clouds, as per **1 Thessalonians 4:11-18** – THE CHURCH AGE will end, ushering in THE GREAT TRIBULATION in order to complete the 70th Week of Daniel Chapter Nine.

THE OLIVE TREE ANALOGY (*Romans 11:17-24*)

THE ENTIRE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF GOD with respect to MAN'S SALVATION, includes all the divine truths: CREATION, ELECTION, REDEMPTION, JUSTIFICATION, ADOPTION, CONVERSION, SANCTIFICATION, and GLORIFICATION. [AND REMEMBER – GOD IS USING THE GENTILES TO PROVOKE ISRAEL TO JEALOUSY IN ORDER TO BRING THE NATION TO REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION – *Romans 11:14*] – THIS IS PART OF THE ENTIRE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF GOD.

(NOW) VERSE 17 – In this verse two important terms are used: (1) 'BROKEN OFF' and (2) 'GRAFTED IN.' *And these terms are defined for us:*

- THE ROOT OF THE OLIVE TREE IS THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.
- The Natural Branches that are 'BROKEN OFF' represent 'UNBELIEVING ISRAEL,' *while ...*
- The Wild Branches that are 'GRAFTED IN' represent GENTILES who have followed in THE FAITH EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM, and by FAITH graciously have been allowed to partake in THE SALVIFIC BLESSINGS OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

Nowhere is it said, or even *remotely implied*, that THE CHURCH has REPLACED ISRAEL.

THE OLIVE TREE ANALOGY illustrates how SALVATION-BLESSINGS FLOW through God's Covenant with ISRAEL to us, who primarily are of GENTILE LINEAGE.

On the night of JESUS' ARREST HE RATIFIED THE NEW COVENANT at THE SEDER MEAL ON PASSOVER.

- Every person in that room was a JEW; there was not one GENTILE present, nor would a GENTILE have been allowed to be present.

[Remember THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN – A GENTILE – who conversed with JESUS and made a request of Him ... to which He replied: "*First let the children eat all they want, for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.*"

- She replied: “*Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.*” JESUS then said, “*For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter*”] – Mark 7:24-29.

I’ve never heard anyone use this specific phrase, but it seems appropriate to refer to these blessings as ‘OVERFLOW BLESSINGS.’

- The promise of BLESSINGS was made to ABRAHAM. And every aspect of THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT was ratified with JEWS – never with GENTILES.
- But by AN ACT OF INFINITE GRACE, God has grafted us into THE NATURAL OLIVE TREE so we can share in THE BLESSING OF SALVATION, even though we are not the recipients of the ABRAHAMIC PROMISES [*‘Through you THE GENTILES will be blessed’ – Genesis 12:3.*]

So we have this picture of AN OLIVE TREE. This tree has a solid root system PAUL refers to as ‘**THE RICH ROOT OF THE OLIVE TREE**’ (*lit., THE ROOT OF FATNESS*). This ‘RICH ROOT’ is THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

This covenant is not our covenant, but we are allowed to share in the rich blessing of SALVATION that flows to us THROUGH THE NEW COVENANT as a result of being ‘GRAFTED INTO THE NATURAL OLIVE TREE.’

VERSES 18-21 – GIVE US WARNINGS AGAINST UNWARRANTED ARROGANCE: ‘*Do not be arrogant toward THE NATURAL BRANCHES*’ (vs. 18). ‘*Do not be conceited – but fear*’ (vs. 20).

VERSES 19 & 21 – EXPLAIN WHY ARROGANCE AND CONCEIT ARE UNWARRANTED: ‘*It is wrong to allow the knowledge of our ELECTION to lead us to believe we are in any way better than THE JEWS; we are not! THE JEWS still have preeminence because **THEY ARE THE NATURAL BRANCHES OF THE OLIVE TREE**. And if God did not spare ISRAEL, on what basis does ANY GENTILE think God will spare **THE WILD BRANCHES THAT WERE GRAFTED ONTO THE NATURAL OLIVE TREE?***’

There is no place in the CHRISTIAN LIFE for ARROGANCE. CHARLES SPURGEON once said, ‘Don’t get upset when people speak ill of you, for you are far worse than even they realize.’

(IN) VERSE 22 – We see two sides of God’s nature – A BALANCE IF YOU WILL – and each side is based on A DIVINE ATTRIBUTE: (1) SEVERITY that flows from GOD’S PERFECT JUSTICE; and (2) KINDNESS that flows from GOD’S INFINITE LOVE.

VERSE 23 – IS A THIRD-CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE – PAUL is addressing ETHNIC ISRAEL and he sets forth A HYPOTHETICAL POSSIBILITY ... (*that is the purpose of THIRD-CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCES – they express ‘POTENTIAL’*).

ETHNIC ISRAEL was broken off because of UNBELIEF, but they are NOT LOCKED OUT from the possibility of RESTORATION. But in order for RESTORATION TO OCCUR; in order for them to be GRAFTED IN AGAIN, ISRAEL must REPENT and when that occurs, THEY WILL BE GRAFTED IN AGAIN – ‘*ASSUMING THEY DO NOT PERSIST IN UNBELIEF.*’

PAUL is saying, ‘RESTORATION IS POSSIBLE’ – but it hinges on REPENTANCE and FAITH. *BELIEF is THE HUMAN RESPONSE that leads to RESTORATION.*

[READ VERSE 24] – VERSE 24 IS A REALITY CHECK couched in another A FORTIORI ARGUMENT.

But before we unravel this argument, let’s recall what PAUL said in EPHESIANS:

Remember, formerly you GENTILES were separated from CHRIST, excluded from THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL and STRANGERS to THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE – having NO HOPE and WITHOUT GOD ... But you have been BROUGHT NEAR BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST – Ephesians 2:11-13 (Edited).

PAUL'S A FORTIORI ARGUMENT in VERSE 24 should be understood as follows:

- (YOU GENTILES) were like *WILD OLIVE BRANCHES*, and not part of *THE CULTIVATED OLIVE TREE (ISRAEL)* – [REMEMBER: THE COVENANTS BELONG TO ISRAEL] –
- These WILD BRANCHES were GRAFTED IN CONTRARY TO NATURE. (*This represents GENTILE INCLUSION, enabling us to be recipients of SALVATION BLESSINGS THAT FLOW FROM THE NEW COVENANT WITH ISRAEL.*)

NOW HERE IS THE A FORTIORI ELEMENT OF PAUL'S ARGUMENT ... This being the case ...

- If God can do the more difficult thing – (GRAFT IN WILD OLIVE BRANCHES: THE GENTILES) – how much easier is it for Him to RESTORE ISRAEL – (GRAFT IN AGAIN THE NATURAL OLIVE BRANCHES: ISRAEL)?

GOD'S OMNIPOTENT POWER AND MERCY make THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL not only POSSIBLE but PLAUSIBLE.

- This bolsters THE BIGGER ARGUMENT of ROMANS 9 – 11 that 'GOD HAS NOT REJECTED HIS PEOPLE' –
- What appears to be TOTAL REJECTION is a TEMPORARY PARENTHESIS in GOD'S PLAN FOR THE SALVATION OF MANKIND.

IN SUM, if God can do the hard thing – *the inclusion of GENTILES* – how much easier will it be to RESTORE ISRAEL.

THE MYSTERY – A PARTIAL HARDENING HAS COME UPON ISRAEL.'

[READ ROMANS 11:25-32] – We are informed of A MYSTERY, hidden across the span of all the Ages – and this is THE MYSTERY: '**A PARTIAL HARDENING HAS COME UPON ISRAEL UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN.**' (*This is THE MYSTERY revealed in VERSES 25-27.*)

VERSE 25 – 'A PARTIAL HARDENING HAS COME UPON ISRAEL.' There are two important points to note about this 'hardening' (πώρωσις – pronounced pōrōsis):

(1ST) **IT IS PARTIAL** – The hardening is NOT 100% exclusionary. THE EARLY CHURCH was made up primarily of JEWS; PAUL was A JEW; TIMOTHY was A JEW. Being AN ETHNIC JEW does not prevent any individual from believing THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST and finding forgiveness at the Cross.

(2ND) **IT IS TEMPORARY** – The thrust of the chapter leads to THE NATIONAL SALVATION and RESTORATION OF THE NATION. And then A TIMEFRAME is given: 'UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN.'

THIS PHRASE – THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES – IS USED TWO WAYS:

(A) It is used as 'A PROPHETIC TERM' that refers to the time between NEBUCHADNEZZAR and THE 2ND ADVENT OF CHRIST – *This is the time when THE GENTILE NATIONS predominate in the world order... but ...*

(B) It also is 'A SALVATION TERM' that refers to the completion of God's Plan to call out of THE GENTILE WORLD the number of ELECT GENTILES who were APPOINTED UNTO ETERNAL LIFE BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD ... *And this is how we should understand 'UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN' in this passage.*

... When the last Elect Person in the Church Age believes the Gospel, THE TIME OF THE GENTILES WILL BE FINISHED – and when that takes place, THE RAPTURE will occur.

Then in VERSE 26 he sets forth what will take place at THE 2ND ADVENT OF CHRIST: *THEN ‘ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED.’*

Does this mean every living ISRAELITE at the time of JESUS 2ND ADVENT will find personal salvation? Probably not. It is commonplace to say, ‘ISRAEL REJECTED THE MESSIAH,’ but did every JEW reject THE MESSIAH? NO! Many JEWS received JESUS as THE MESSIAH, but we still say, ‘ISRAEL REJECTED THE MESSIAH.’

Here the term ‘ALL ISRAEL’ refers to THE NATION OF ISRAEL, not to every single citizen of ISRAEL. What will occur is a national recognition of JESUS as MESSIAH by the nation in a manner that is deemed, ‘*ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED.*’

Now we need to remember VERSES 5, 17, and 25:

- *In VERSE 5 PAUL said “There is A REMNANT that will be SAVED BY GRACE.*
- *In VERSE 17 he said, ‘Branches have been broken off,’ but he does not say ... ‘All the branches have been broken off.’ And now he says ...*
- *In VERSE 25: THE HARDENING OF ISRAEL is partial not a complete hardening – and by the reference to THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES ... and particularly by the word ‘until,’ we know it is a temporary hardening.*

[READ ROMANS 11:33-36] – These closing verses are a DOXOLOGY, a hymn of praise to God, acknowledging THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE WISDOM OF GOD.

- What is in view are Sovereign Election (*Romans 9*); Israel’s present unbelief alongside the Gentile inclusion (*Romans 10*); and finally, God’s ongoing plan for the Restoration of Israel (*Romans 11*).

The question in VERSE 35 IS RHETORICAL: *Has anyone given to God anything that puts God in debt to us?* Of course, the answer is a resounding NO!

God is self-sufficient and His Grace is unearned, a non-meritorious favor bestowed on THE ELECT, not because it is deserved, but because it pleased God to do so. Therefore: GLORY BE TO GOD FOREVER!