

LESSON 24 11:13-36

Election by God is a sovereign act whereby he chooses to bless certain individuals with the gift of salvation, though they are deserving of eternal condemnation. The Jews were chosen by God to be the means whereby this salvation would be provided to all mankind, and consequently many of them came to believe in God as their Savior. However, over the course of time their focus shifted from God to the Law. Therefore, God sent His Son at the perfect time to reestablish in the minds and hearts of humanity the focal point in salvation, Himself. The Gentiles grew to accept this, whereas the Jews grew to reject it. As a result, the Gentiles are now of primary interest to God.

GENTILES, YOU WERE GRAFTED INTO THE TREE 13-24

One of Paul's motivations to reach the Gentiles was to incite the Jews to jealousy. Oh how Paul loved his countrymen. He acknowledged that with their dismissal of the gospel, the world has come to benefit, but how great would it be if they came back? Then the whole world would be in good shape.

He then likens the Jews to the firstfruits offering of bread. The rest of the dough is the world. It is not bad, just not the first. He also uses the analogy of a tree; if the roots are good (which likely references our Savior), then what branches grow naturally, or are grafted in will flourish. We as gentiles are the wild branches grafted into the tree. This must not be grounds for pride, or arrogance, but rather, let us remember that all of us are dependent upon the roots. Our whole focus shifts toward humility and we grieve that branches had been broken off so we might take their spot. Not only do we bow in humility, but we also fear knowing that God is in a position to break our branch off to allow for another.

GENTILES, YOU ARE A TESTIMONY OF GOD S MERCY 25-36

Paul wanted us as Gentile believers to understand clearly that the Jews had been hardened for a period to allow us the opportunity to come into the fold. Now we must understand that this was done so that Israel (the faith) could come to fulness. If you think about it in light of the gospel, in general, we must acknowledge that the Jews stand as enemies so we may come to faith. If you think about it in light of God's elective activity, the Jews are beloved because God still has redemptive plans for them.

Paul also adds, the gifts and calling of God does not, nor can it change. In reality all of humanity are or have walked in disobedience, therefore the mercy of God is amplified. At this we, with Paul would hold forth the greatness of God. He says, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?' 'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." – 33-36