

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

Redemption in Romans **Lesson 11: “The Election of Grace”**

God has given “the righteousness which is of faith” (Rom. 10:6) to everyone. In fact, “The word is nigh thee,” that is, “the word of faith” (vs. 8). Righteousness by faith has been given to every man. “God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3). The logical conclusion is that when one fixes his faith in Christ, choosing to believe, God can then dwell within the believer through the power of the Holy Spirit, effecting a change of mind (Phil. 2:5), dispensing the righteousness already prepared in advance for him (being “before ordained,” KJV), into the experience of the believer (Eph. 2:10). This is why, in Romans 10:4, it says that Christ is the fulfillment of the law. Jesus, in the same fallen sinful human flesh that we all have, lived a perfect life, thus fulfilling the law in Himself as a heritage for the human race held in trust for each individual member. When we say “Yes” to Him, He can then fulfill that law in you and me—in our experience. This is not an offer—it is a *promise*, a *gift*. Claim that promise. Hold God to His Word. He loves it when you do this.

In the Bible, God is said to do what He does not prevent. For example, in Exodus 7 and 8 where it says that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart it also says Pharaoh hardened his own heart. God did not prevent Pharaoh from hardening his heart, although He could have, but Christ died so that we all might have the power of choice. Pharaoh had the power to choose, and he chose of his own free will to harden his heart. And, later in history, Israel themselves, by their own free will, chose to slumber (Rom. 11:8). We also have the power of choice. Let us not harden our hearts but let us allow God to have control of our thoughts so that we might partake of the divine nature through His promise (Phil. 2:5; 2 Peter 1:4). In the meantime, don’t blame God should the Bible say God does something that looks on the surface to be bad. The Bible is merely using a figure of speech.

Jesus Christ is the Root and the Trunk of the living Vine (the olive tree). We are the branches (John 15:1-5). The original (natural) branches were of the stock of Israel. Corporately, these branches were all cut off (at the stoning of Stephen), and afterwards the Gentiles began to be grafted in. If the fall of Israel resulted in the enriching of the world, and the diminishing of them the enrichment of the Gentiles, just think of what will happen when they accept the truth! (Rom. 11:12). If some of those from Israel (seeing the joy that you have in Christ) should be grafted in with you—that would be as life from the dead (vs. 15). And so Romans 11:20-21 makes sense, “... because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.” None of us have any cause to boast, for we are all nothing without Christ. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile (Rom. 10:12). This is because we all can be grafted together

to the same Vine (the good olive tree), standing together through faith in Jesus Christ, and partaking together of the blessings of spiritual Israel.

It is after this manner that all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26). “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). All believers in Christ are accounted citizens of spiritual Israel, the seed of Abraham. The fullness of the Gentiles, the fullness of Israel (“overcomer”), the receiving of the fullness of the inheritance by both Christ and spiritual Israel will be fully accomplished together at the second coming of Christ.

E. J. Waggoner, one of the 1888 messengers, has this to say about how all Israel will be saved:

“In Romans 11 the apostle very forcibly illustrates the way in which the promises to Israel could be fulfilled, even though all the literal descendants of Jacob should forfeit their right to the inheritance. In the first and second verses he declares that God has not cast away his people. This might lead us to suppose that literal Israel are yet the chosen people of God, if he did not say in verse 5 that those that remain are ‘according to the election of grace.’ Then he represents Israel by an olive tree. Some of the branches have been cut off, and the Gentiles, a wild olive tree, have been grafted in. This grafting is contrary to nature, for the grafts partake of the root and fatness of the tame olive tree into which they are grafted, and bear the same kind of fruit. He warns those who are thus grafted in not to boast, since they stand only by faith, and that as the natural branches were broken off because of unbelief, so they may likewise be removed. The Jews, the natural branches, may become part of the tree, but if they do, it will not be as original branches, but as spiritual grafts. Thus the people of Israel are only a spiritual people,—those who are Christ’s,—‘and so all Israel shall be saved’” (*The Present Truth*, “The True Israel,” July 5, 1888).

“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith” (Hab. 2:4). If salvation was merely an *offer*, there would still be something for us to do—and for us to boast about. But salvation is a free gift (Rom. 5:18). There is nothing about which we have to boast or be lifted up.

When any of us chooses to believe, the righteousness of Christ which is given to all men, becomes imparted righteousness in our individual experience. Justification by faith in Christ is the alienated heart receiving the atonement. The cross of Christ reconciles the sinner to God and brings him into harmony with the commandments of God. In fellowship with Christ, “the man which doeth those things shall live by them” (Rom. 10:5).

“For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness’ (Rom. 4:1-3). What was it that was accounted to Abraham for righteousness? He believed God. When God said a thing, Abraham believed it. He said ‘that is so.’ ‘And he believed in the Lord, and he accounted it [his faith] to him for righteousness’ (Gen 15:6).

“Now do you believe that Abraham became righteous in just that way? Honestly now, do you? Do you know that it was as simple a transaction as that? Suppose the Lord called you and me out tonight. No, He can do it without calling us out. He called Abraham out doors to show him the stars, but He can show us sins without calling us outdoors.

“Has He shown you a great many sins? Now He says, If you are able to number them, ‘they shall be white as snow.’ What do you say? Amen. Then what does the Lord say? ‘You are righteous.’ Are you? Do people become righteous as easy as that? Is it as simple a transaction as that? Yes, amen. Thank the Lord!

“The only thing that can keep you and me out of the kingdom of God is to tell the Lord that He lies” (A. T. Jones, *Give Us This Day Our Daily Good News*, No. 135; taken from 1893 *General Conference Bulletin*, pp. 378, 379).

—Craig Barnes