

The Parable of the Vineyard and the Marriage Feast (part 3 in a 4 part study)

Rejection. Replacement. Judgment. Certainly sounds permanent. But it's not. This article will be devoted to proving just that, as we consider the text of Romans 11. In this singular chapter of New Testament Scripture, we have the answer to the dilemma regarding the permanence of Israel's replacement with the Church.

Paul in his discourse, seeks to prove Israel's temporary replacement with the Church, by first appealing to himself and a remnant of other Jewish believers who had trusted Christ as Savior and Lord (11:1-10). He then explains the positive purpose for the replacement: an opportunity for the entire world to experience God's plan of salvation (11:11-17).

Paul also knew this would not suffice in effectively dealing with Gentile arrogance and condescension within the Church toward Jewish people as a whole. After all, they crucified the Son of God, their promised Messiah. Why should they be offered any respect, let alone a second chance? Paul provides an answer to that question by means of an analogy. The apostle portrays the Kingdom program of God as consisting of a tree; with roots, trunk and branches. Gentile inclusion in the Church is then described as wild branches grafted into an already existing tree (11:17-24).

Having clarified the Gentiles place in the Kingdom of God, in relation to that of the Jewish nation, Paul then informs Jews and Gentiles alike, of the everlasting place which Israel occupies in the prophetic plan of God, by means of this incredible statement in Romans 11:25-29 –

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved, just as it is written, ‘THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB. THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.’ From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.”

There is coming a day and time, when God's purpose for the Church Age will be fulfilled. At that moment, God will once again turn His attention to His chosen people, the nation of Israel; in order to restore them to His favor and fulfill every promise made to them regarding a kingdom here on earth. That day is approaching faster than many of us may realize.