

**DESIDERATA<sup>1</sup>**  
**THE GIFT OF THE JEWS**  
**ROMANS 11:11-24**

**BIG IDEA: CHRISTIANS OWE THE JEWS A DEBT OF GRATITUDE & ATTRACTIVE WITNESS**

**INTRODUCTION:**

- A. For 2000 years the Jews have been having a rough go of it.
- B. *Alarmingly, parts of Europe are now so awash in malicious anti-Semitism that graffiti and placards declare, “Jews, return to the ovens!”*  
*How, in the realm of reason, common sense, and rational thinking can such bizarre actions be explained? The answer is as old as Jewry itself: Hatred for Israel and the Jewish people is satanically inspired. The fantasy of the “final solution to the Jewish problem” did not originate with Hitler and the Nazis. It is the story of the ages.<sup>2</sup>*

**WHAT WE OWE THE JEWS**

- A. Gratitude for Our Salvation **VERSE 11a**, Again I ask [**lit., Therefore**]: *Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles...*
  - 1. **Ephesians 2:14**, *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility...*
  - 2. **Josephus** in *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 15, 11, 5] ...says of the second court of the Temple: “This was encompassed by a stone wall for a partition, with an inscription which forbade any foreigner to go in under pain of death” .... In 1871 one of these prohibiting tablets was actually discovered, and the inscription on it reads: “Let no one of any other nation come within the fence and barrier around the Holy Place. Whosoever will be taken doing so will himself be responsible for the fact that his death will ensue.”<sup>3</sup>
- B. Compellingly Attractive Witness **VERSE 11b**, ...to make Israel envious. **VERSE 14**, in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.
  - 1. **MORRIS**: *It is a matter for profound regret that just as Israel refused to accept this salvation when it was offered to them, so the Gentiles have all too often refused to make Israel envious.*
  - 2. *Unfortunately, it was in the name of Jesus that their forefathers were persecuted, their families separated, and hundreds of thousands were put to death. In that sense, the name of Jesus is offensive to these people.*  
*A common conclusion among Jewish people is that for 2,000 years Jesus and Christianity have brought them little but trouble. To them, the name of Jesus has meant heartache. A rabbi once said, “If Christianity has nothing more to offer than it has for the last 2,000 years, I want nothing to do with it.”<sup>4</sup>*
- C. Confidence in their Future **VERSE 12**, *But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! **VERSE 15**, *For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*
  - 1. *Excising Israel from the huge segment of the Bible delineating God’s promises to the Chosen People—past, present, and future—is a popular trend today among Protestantism’s theological luminaries. The growing Replacement Theology mutation of God’s Word gives evidence that even some touted**

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<sup>1</sup> *Desideratum: Something considered necessary or highly desirable.*

<sup>2</sup> Elwood McQuaid, “Imperishable Remnants,” *Israel My Glory*, May/June 2009, 8.

<sup>3</sup> William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press: 1958), 130-131.

<sup>4</sup> Fred Hartman, “Jesus in Modern Judaism,” *Israel My Glory*, Decv/Jan 1995/1996, 15.

evangelical leaders have followed the pack of “God is through with Israel” ranters<sup>5</sup>.

- D. Gratitude for Paul **VERSE 13**, *I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry*
- E. Humility as Latecomers **VERSES 16-18**, *If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. <sup>17</sup> If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, <sup>18</sup> **do not boast** over those branches. If you do, **consider this**: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.*
1. **MORRIS** sees a reference here in **Verse 16** to **Numbers 15:20-21** *Present a cake from the first of your ground meal and present it as an offering from the threshing floor. <sup>21</sup> Throughout the generations to come you are to give this offering to the LORD from the first of your ground meal.*
    - **MORRIS** also believes that the “holy root” (Verse 16), and the “nourishing sap” (Verse 18) both refer to the Patriarchs, principally Abraham.
  2. **MORRIS ON VERSE 17**: *The normal process was to take a shoot from an olive that bears good fruit though it does not grow vigorously and graft it onto a wild olive stock, whose fruit is poor but which grows strongly. The result is a tree with vigorous growth which bears good olives. Paul, however, talks of the reverse process, of grafting a wild olive onto the stock of a good olive and later even of grafting back some of the good olive branches that have been cut out. All this has led to some caustic comments on Paul’s knowledge of what went on in olive orchards. To this two things may be said. One is that Paul is well aware that what he is talking about is “contrary to nature” (v. 24); he is not referring to something that went on every day in the olive orchards he passed. The other is that there is evidence that the grafting of a wild olive into a good olive tree is not as daft as many commentators have assumed. When an old olive tree had lost its vigor, it seems that one remedy in antiquity was to cut away the failing branches and graft in some wild olive shoots. The result was said to be the reinvigoration of the failing tree.*

#### WHAT WE SHOULD LEARN FROM THE JEWS [CF STEARNS ON JUDGMENT LETTER FROM JESUS]

- A. God’s Election Is Not to Our Credit **VERSES 19-20a**, *You will say then, “Branches were broken off **so that I** could be grafted in.” <sup>20</sup> Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and **you stand by faith**.*
- B. Salvation Requires Perseverance **VERSES 20b-22**, but **be afraid**. [**MORRIS**: “fear” in the sense of reverent awe.] <sup>21</sup> *For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will **not spare you** either. <sup>22</sup> Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that **you continue** in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be **cut off**.*
1. **CALVIN**: Paul is not...discussing here the special election of each individual, but is setting the Gentiles and Jews in opposition to one another. (In Morris, 416)
  2. **MORRIS**: His hypothetical Gentile has no mortgage on the blessing. Jewish branches were cut off on account of unbelief; why should he think he is immune? There is no room for smug complacency.
- C. Never Say “Never” about Anybody **VERSES 23-24**, *And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be **grafted in**, for **God is able** to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup> After all, **if you** were cut out of an olive tree that is **wild** by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will **these**, the **natural** branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!*

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 8.

Alderwood Community Church  
May 24, 2009