

Conrad Bowman (Romans 11) (11-6-05)

We're in Romans 11, and we're going to start with verses 13 and 14, and push forward for as long as I can go. I appreciate your prayers. Good morning Ray, Carol. We are as much as completely in God's hands, depending upon His grace, to affect our healing. That's the process that's on-going with me and my condition. He gives us our individual crosses to bear and He works through the Spirit. I'm not as bad as I look uncomfortable, I'll assure you of that; today I'm miserably uncomfortable, but, it's not that bad.

Verses 13 and 14; Paul says, I speak to you that are Gentiles. This is a significant point in Paul's ministry. All the way up until this point in his particular personal ministry of the Gospel, also in Hebrews, and if we took the time to follow that thought through Acts – you would see it there as well, this is the point when he turned from his brethren, the Jew, to the Gentile. When Paul went into a town, he started his very first opening volley to his Jewish brethren, because he realized the significance of the time of transition that he was in. Now, here in verse 13 of Romans 11 – he's moved through 10 chapters setting the stage for the rest of his ministry of the Gospel. He says "I speak to you that are Gentiles." There were, as Newell points out, many, many Jewish believers who were of Rome – but chapters 9, 10, and 11, are particularly suited to Gentile instruction. He does not want us to misunderstand what God is doing by turning His attention away from the Jew, at this point, to the Gentiles, and winning them to the promises that were made to what Paul says, is the 'root.' *The root, as we learned last week, is not the Lord Jesus. The root is Abraham.*

Now, I want you to pay careful attention to this next subject for discussion--one thing we do in this Church Age that's unusual, and it puts a different flavor on so many Scriptures, is that we read Scripture as if all of the NT was written at the same time, contemporary with the calling of the Apostles, and as an integrated book. Its only integration is the person of Christ and the glad tidings (Gospel) of His having come and returned to His Father. But the message of each one of these books (epistles) stands alone. So you can't necessarily carry over what you've learned from one metaphor, or one example, that was used in another place, and carry that forward exactly as is. For instance: we are so familiar with the vine and the branch. Christ is the vine, and those were attached to the vine, the branches, get their life from the vine. We identify with that very unusual metaphor as one of the branches, drawing life from the Lord, the Vine. Well here, the root and the branches that are being described by Paul in Romans does not come wrapped in that same context. The context demands that the root in

this case must be Abraham, because the Jew received all of their promises from the promise that God made to Abraham, and then reaffirmed then through Isaac and Jacob, and then reaffirmed then to national Israel through David, and brought them to bear fruit fully when the Seed came, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Seed of Abraham. We inherit the promises only because the Seed owns the promises. It's beside the point that Israel rejected the Seed. When Israel rejected the Seed, the Seed was still the holder of the promises, so they effectively cut themselves off from the promises during the period of rejection. That is the time during which Christ was rejected, taken outside the camp of Israel and crucified, was buried, resurrected, and ascended to heaven. Now the promise given to Abraham that Israel was intended to inherit went with the ascended Christ into heaven. While He was, and is, ascended and in heaven the only way that a Jew could obtain those promises was by becoming a Christian. In the Old Testament the Gentile had to adopt Jewish practices of worship and the services of the priests in order to enter into a relationship with God. Now the Jew has to adopt Gentile positional truth and practices of worship suited to this dispensation, in order to obtain the promises. And the context of the promise that they inherit is going to be the context of the Church. In other words, they're going to have to step away from Judaism and into the Church, in order to worship as a *new creation* Christian in order to inherit those promises, because the Seed holds the promise. Now, at one point in God's Plan the Church is going to be completed and Christ and is going to come and claim the Church, His bride, and take the Church to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Then He is going to turn His attention, still as the Seed of Abraham with the promises, to Israel His People, and to the nation of Israel, and the natural sons of Abraham. He's going to turn His attention to Israel once again, and bring them into the fullness of their relationship with their Messiah as Savior. And, the promises will be available to them, as Israel, as Jews, once again. You see that interlude beginning to take shape today.

So Paul says: "I speak to you with the Gentiles, inasmuch as I'm an apostle of Gentiles, or sent to the Gentiles (remember an Apostle is one sent with a message and under the full authority of the sender and Paul is an Apostle of God sent to the Gentiles) "I glorify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy them that are my flesh, and save some of them."

He says, from this point now, my ministry is going to be to the Gentiles. I want you to understand, that in the back of my mind, I'm doing it in order to make those jealous of losing the ministry that way, so that they might come to know God the way we think that He is to be known in this Age of the Church, because

some of them, the Remnant, might be saved. I boast before the Jews of how God works among the Gentiles, saving them, filling them with the Spirit, and with peace. That is what Paul was doing and preaching before his Jewish brothers.

Now, verse 15. He did it to provoke his fellow Jews to jealousy. As long as God maintained fellowship with Israel on the ground of the old legal covenant, Gentiles were out of his direct favor unless they became Jewish proselytes. Now, the same thing is true of Israel. They must become proselytes to the Gentile Christian Church in order for them to realize the benefits of Christ having reconciled the world unto God. The casting away of them (in other words, their rejection of Christ) led to His casting away of them as the object of His affection. In their place came His new love, the Church. This is the principle of *Life from the Dead*. Christ died in order that the new creation would become alive, He being the first fruits in the resurrection and the first new creation Man to enter heaven. The casting away of those to whom He came, only to be rejected, reconciling the world to God by means of His death on the Cross, ultimately receiving of them to Himself again, will be yet another instance of *life from the dead*.

Please understand that they are considered dead, right now, to God. When He comes back to them, and begins to draw them to Himself after the Church is taken, they will come back as *life from the dead*. The dead will come to life. Paul speaks God's words and God never exaggerates.

(11:16) In verse 16. "Now, if the firstfruit is set apart, so is the lump," speaking of the whole lump being set apart hagios (sanctified) and that is the whole lump of fruit, as in a bunch of grapes. In the broader application that is the whole harvest. "And if the root is holy hagios (again, "set apart" or "sanctified") so are the branches. Now, William R. Newell says that "firstfruit" is identified in his mind as believing Israel of the OT (Jeremiah 2 through 3). "He went after me in the wilderness;" Israel was hoping to be the 'sons of Jehovah,' the firstfruit of God's increase, and that's what Paul was referring to. So, the firstfruit, which was Israel, regarding the promises of Abraham (remember we're still talking about Abraham, the root, holding the promise), so the firstfruit is "set apart unto God," and that's faithful Israel. The lump then is also set apart; the lump being the whole of the Israelite nation. It is important we recognize that our perspective on this side of the Cross and ascension is different; for we have been told that Christ is the firstfruit of those OT Saints who were resurrected with Him out of Abraham's bosom. They could not see it before the Cross. If the root is holy, and that's Abraham, so are the branches. So Abraham is the root, and in him, is the promise held. And, we inherited the promise of redemption, as we

have already covered; we inherited redemption because we, according to Galatians 6, became spiritual children of Abraham. Where the Jews are the natural children of Abraham, we are the spiritual children of Abraham. So we are related to the Seed through Abraham, the same manner that Israel is related to the Seed, as regards God's plan of redemption for us. Now, does that mean that we are to inherit what He promised to Israel as their destiny? No, because He has a completely different set of circumstances established as our destiny. The promises are held by the root, and from the root God produced the Seed, and the Seed took the ownership of the promise and moved it to heaven, and that's where we are related to Christ. **We're not related to Christ on earth through an earthly line; we are joined to Him in His death on earth, but our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ is to the ascended Jesus from where He now is.** Our life does not flow from His earthly life. Our life flows from His ascended life; the *new creation life* that we live today on a daily basis, from heaven. That's the subject of the entire epistle to the Ephesians. That study is on our agenda in the very near future; it is our position in Christ in the heavenlies. Our life flows from there. It doesn't flow from here, neither from dealing with the aggravations and results of sin on earth. That's not where we get our life. We get our life from heaven. When you think about it, in some aspects Christian Science doctrine is merging closely with one of the truths that we live by, but they make a whole system of theology out of it, and that's where they wander off. Sin is associated with this earth, and with this world only. In truth, as believers, as saints of this dispensation, our life flows directly from God's throne in the heavenlies to where we are on a daily basis. The problem is we haven't learned how to live like that consistently, so we live according to the dictates of those people who only know how to follow an earthly existence through the behavioral sciences. Or on a more physical level look at our medical practice – I can go down to Baylor and tell my doctors, "let's sit down here for a minute. I know I'm supposed to have surgery this morning, but lets just sit down and pray about this thing and then I'll go home and wait for results. They would think I've gone out of my mind. He would say, I've got my knives all sharpened up, and my saw is ready, and everything is scheduled; and by the way, I get paid by the hour. What's the matter with you? If I send in a bill for some miracle to Medicare, would they pay that? No. But I can send in some outrageous bill for treating something some guy thought might be the cause of your problem and they will pay that willingly. Right; you see how caught up we are, bound up we are, in the way we think and the way we approach life. We daily take as our main resource more of the world's perspective than of God's perspective. Think about those apostles; locked in jail. They had no hope of getting out. Jail there wasn't what jail is here; it wasn't air conditioned, with a sun roof; it was ugly;

stuck in a basement of some stone building with water and sewage running through it. It was a pretty hopeless situation and we find them gathered down there in that dark place, singing and praying. Can you imagine what they thought, when the guards shrieked and the doors opened up? They didn't walk out, they said, just be calm; we are still here. That can only be a Heavenly perspective.

When our life begins to get smaller & smaller & smaller, then His life in us gets bigger, and bigger, and bigger. It is then that we realize that our *condition* is his hold on us, not our hold on Him, and we gather strength from that assurance. That is what Paul is talking about. "It's not you that bears the root, but the root bears you" (verse 18).

Now, before I get there, let me go back to verse 17 because I skipped that one. In verse 17, he said some of the branches were broken off, broken off of Abraham. "And, you being a wild olive, you were grafted in to the root." And the root is Abraham. **That's what Galatians is all about; you are not related to Abraham naturally, you are related to Abraham spiritually.**

We are looking at the ascended Jesus. What they were looking at is an earth-bound Christ approaching the Cross, and he was holding the promises God made to Abraham and Israel on earth. We've got to move this side of the cross, you've got to move to this side of the resurrection, you've got to move all the way to the ascended Jesus in order for this to make any sense at all. **You were grafted into Abraham's Seed, the ascended Christ.** You are a wild olive tree. Doesn't that describe the church? Isn't that the Gentile church? The Gentiles worshiped Diana; they had the temple at Corinth; they had thousands of gods; they were a wild olive tree. And God reached out with the Gospel and took us in and grafted us into the promise that the Seed of Abraham held for all men and women of faith. No wonder He couldn't use us as we were. We were wild! So what he did was a miracle; He resurrected us with *new creation life*, and made us something entirely foreign to the world's existence. That's what came into existence at Pentecost and the evidence of it was astounding to the people on the streets of Jerusalem (Acts 2). There were 120 Galileans in an upper room prayer meeting that all at once were speaking languages that everybody understood. Everybody understood them. Not one of them had gone to the seminary. Not one of them. They got off the fish boat and eventually, following Christ's instructions, found their way into the upper room. The Spirit of God came in as tongues of fire, moving around the room, settled down on the heads of each one of them, and they began to speak in languages. On the street the sounds echoed,

and the people on the street heard those languages and understood what they were saying. Can you see the purpose of God there? They were saying, "Those men are those Galilean fishermen, aren't they? What the heck are we hearing?" The people were amazed. It couldn't be anything but the work of God. It authenticated their message to those on the street. And, it authenticated, as it should have, to those in the room that their life was forever coming from on high. Their lives would never be the same. So they finally began to understand that "it's not you that bear the root but the way the root is bearing you."

Now, "some of the branches" in verse 17 indicates that the church is a remnant out of the Gentile nations, just like the saved of Israel is a remnant out of Israel. We often get accused of being exclusivist, in terms of our beliefs as Evangelical Christians. The accusation is that we believe that so-and-so is not saved. I think that the answer to be consistent. If they believe what they say they believe, then they are as lost as a goose. God is pretty jealous, and He is saving a remnant out of mankind; and if you're feeling a little guilty right now because you're in that remnant, that's OK; because when you look at you, you know what you are, and if you were doing the picking, you probably wouldn't have picked you either. Right? I wouldn't pick me; would you? I'd rather keep better company.

If God in His graciousness chose to use the foolishness of preaching in order to make His point (for He's chosen us, we did not choose Him), then how much do we owe Him for doing that? When I think about all that I know about me and His still choosing me—how can I do less than trust Him with my life? And, I find that I still can't do it. Paul's arguments from Hebrews lead us through Romans, and then he starts through his epistles with the same Gospel. I've been working on Titus this past week, and looking at the instructions to Titus regarding the election of elders and establishing order in the church, and what-have-you. When Paul laid that down, he laid down these startling qualifications. It brought my mind back to the mind of God and the mercy of God and the love of God, in electing those who would make up the body of Christ. When I think of the quality of the Son, and the quality of the Bride, I am astounded at what the Father has done. It is absolutely astounding, and that just has to put us on our knees in grateful adoration of the love and mercy of God.

In Galatians 3:7, they that are saved are the sons of Abraham, and even the gift of the Holy Spirit, it's the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus coming upon the Gentiles – and both of those are found in Galatians chapter 3. There is a great danger, as Paul showed in Romans that the Gentiles glory over the Jewish

branches, and forget it's not you that bears the root but that the root bears the root.

Our attitude toward Israel today is kind of bi-polar. One, if we know anything about our Biblical history, and about Abraham's history in connection with this, we ought to be eternally grateful to Israel for having brought us this Heavenly messenger. Understand, Israel would have cut all that off, they would have never given us access to Him but for God's will. They cast Him off, and outside the camp at that. That's what the epistles of James and 1st and 2nd Peter are all about. They would have cut us off from God grace completely and never accepted us as spiritual brothers. They still have an attitude on their part about accepting Gentiles into their body. So, the natural reaction with many Gentiles is, nya, nya, nya, now look at where we are. We are the church and you are not; so we approach Israel as if we are superior beings.

[Someone asked a question. Someone else made a comment – could not hear]

There is only a very small remnant today of the Jews that accepted Christ as Savior. That remnant has now been incorporated into the church.

[Another comment – could not hear]

Jesus Christ and the Seed, because the Seed was the promise to Abraham. The key there, and Newell didn't put it in his text, it's "The Faith," those that are of "The Faith." There's an article in the text there. (Remember that there is no indefinite article ("a" or "an") in the Greek; there's only a definite article. There is no such thing as an indefinite article in the Greek. The article in the Greek is there before faith, so it's "The Faith." Now, that means it's coming down to a specific faith with content, and the content of faith is what makes one part of the seed of Abraham. In other words, they can't redefine faith. You've heard me say it before, the whole issue of salvation in every age (dispensation), as far as I'm concerned, is content, the content of your faith.

[Comment – Does that mean that all people of the faith, from every age, are in a single body regarding their standing before God?]

Conrad Bowman. When Paul says Gentiles that are of the faith, are "spiritual Israel" (Galatians 6) he is not lumping them together with saved Israel, but with Abraham. He's already said, "Why are you doing it?" It is to provoke those that are Jewish, and should be, to make them jealous; to make them jealous. That's

right. It's there and it's as solid as a rock. The message is in the details. It's in the details of the grammar. It comes down to articles. It comes down to the details in the text. This text, this book that we revere, is so inordinately perfect in terms of the details that it forms a single rock on which we build on the foundations that Christ established for His Church. Here it is (holding up the Bible), it's the Word, and it's there in the details.

So, Paul says, in Romans 11, there's a great danger, that we begin with glory over the Jewish branches and forget that they actually came out of the same root that we did, Abraham. Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Branches were broken off when Christ cut off Israel from the promises in order that we might be grafted in and inherit the promises in the Seed. The despising of the Jews and the hard persecution of them by Christendom is one of the three great scandals of history.

Someone asked about the other scandals.

Newell says there are three great scandals of history. The first one is the persecution of their own prophets by the Jews. The second is the hatred unto death against the witnesses and truth of the gospel by Papal Rome, the crusades with its inquisition, tortures, and darkness. The third is the hatred of the Jews by professing Christians, by those who profess faith in a Savior who Himself was an Israelite after the flesh. In that, we would include the holocaust. The Dark Ages would certainly be part of it. It swept Europe. It has been easier in this country in that regard than it has anywhere else in the world, because they were given a place. It's going on in Europe again now. Look what's happening to France. France without moral moorings is now flying apart and there's not a voice of reason or mercy in the whole nation, because they have walked away from the Gospel. It's not there. It's simply not there. They are living at the culmination of the age of reason, and they can't reason their way out of their darkness, because men are inherently unreasonable. We just are, you know. Young people there are without anything to do, without a job, without any identification, and they do what young men do. They turn their testosterone loose and they break everything they can get to. That's the way they show their resentment.

Paul and Gayle did that; not the Apostle Paul, but my brother Paul. They weren't very old, he and my brother Gayle, who is two years younger than I. Cowboys and Indians movies; they watched Cowboy and Indian shows on Saturday, and they rode their stick horses home one day and went next door, where a lady and two daughters lived in a one room house. They rode their stick horses across the

yard and into the small house. That house looked like a little camp house, so they imagined themselves having a cowboy fight in that house. They totally trashed the house, turned over everything and virtually wrecked the place. Well, Wayne didn't know not to tell about that that, so Paul and Gale rode their stick horses back home and Wayne rode his into the kitchen and said, "Boy Mom, you ought to see this house." Gayle took to the woods while Wayne told mother about how they had a cowboy fight at Neva's house. Mom said, "let me go see." So Wayne and mother when over to the house, and you can imagine what followed that. She started crying, and called Gayle, and he came out of the woods with his tail between his legs. Mom gave them all a good whipping then went to cleaning. She would stop, call them back in, and do it again. Seven boys she had to raise. Never any of this, "I'm going to tell your father when he gets home." Oh no. Justice was a lot faster than that; right on the spot, and quick. Swift. So, we avoided contact with Gayle and Wayne for quite a while. The rule was, if you were in the room when something happened, everybody got a whipping. It didn't matter how old you were, or even if you were in the family. No attention was paid to any protest that he was innocent and had nothing to do with the deed. The answer to this was, "Don't hang around with evil doers." That settled it. Dad said, 'If you lay down with dogs, you get up with fleas.' That was the second explanation and both made perfect sense.

Conrad tells a story of when he was in high school, and he would be riding around in somebody's car at night, and some guy would come up with something we had never done before, and it was going to be destructive. And I would say, "Guys, you've got to drop me off at the house." Why; "because, if my dad finds out about this, and he will, I'm dead. My life's over." I couldn't do it. And dad said, "that's good," because sometimes that's your only excuse in front of your friends—"I'm afraid for my life, I can't do that." That's how I feel as a Christian about some things – I can't tell you how often in life, between 40 and 45, having been in the business world a long time, and somebody would say why don't we do so-and-so, and the answer was, "Guys, I can't do that. I can't do it. My father will find out. And my life, as I know it now, will be over."

[What about the comment that "Everybody else is doing it?"].

Conrad Bowman. The mob can be wrong.

Look at verse 22, and I'm going to close right there. Verse 22. Here's the point. Behold then, the goodness and severity of God. Isn't that the way it is? Behold then, the goodness and severity of God. To them that fell, severity, but, if you

continue in His goodness, otherwise you also will be cut off. This is a solemn word.

[Discussion]

If you continue in His goodness. You will be in God's goodness, "if" a first class condition.

In the New Testament the word "if" can be taken in one of four ways.

First Class Condition. If – and it is true.

Second Class Condition. If – and it is not true.

Third Class Condition. If – and maybe it's true, and maybe it's not.

Fourth Class Condition. If – and I wish it were true, but it's probably not.

Now you can run into "if" in all four cases, but, look at the difference in meaning. If you continue in His goodness, and you do, is better translated, "since you continue in His goodness," God's goodness. Now, what is the goodness referred to here? It talks about ministering the gospel, and the witness, what-have-you.

[More discussion – inaudible].

Now I want you to remember what those four conditions are. [Conrad gave a quick review – see above]. You will need to go to a Dictionary like W. E. Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words to determine what that "if clause" is. That's called a conditional clause in the Greek and it's all through the Greek text because it defines exactly what the author means to say.

[A question and comment].

Conrad Bowman. Christendom at large includes professing Christians.

The whole context here is blessing. It's not talking about a change in your standing, or position. It's talking about cutting off from the blessing held by the seed of Abraham in heaven [could not hear last part].