

Romans 11:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Analysis

Paul introduces the olive tree metaphor: **And if some of the branches be broken off**—tines tōn kladōn (τινες τῶν κλάδων) refers to unbelieving Israel. They are branches, not the root—part of the covenant people but now broken off through unbelief. **And thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them**—agrielaios (ἀγριέλαιος, "wild olive") describes Gentiles. Grafting a wild branch into a cultivated tree is agriculturally backwards—normally you graft cultivated into wild stock. Paul's point: Gentile inclusion is unnatural, a miracle of grace.

And with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree—synkoinōnos tēs rizēs tēs piotētos (συγκοινωνὸς τῆς ριζῆς πιότητος). Gentiles now share (synkoinōnos, "co-partaker") in the covenant blessings of Abraham. The root is the patriarchs; the fatness (piotēs, πιότης, "richness") is covenant blessing. Gentiles are grafted into Israel's olive tree, not replacing it. This refutes supersessionism—the church does not replace Israel but is grafted into Israel's covenant.

Historical Context

Olive trees were central to Mediterranean agriculture, providing oil for food, light, and anointing. A cultivated olive tree represented Israel (Jeremiah 11:16; Hosea

14:6). Paul's metaphor would be vivid to his Roman audience, many of whom understood olive cultivation.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does the 'unnatural' grafting of Gentiles teach about grace and the miraculous nature of salvation?
2. How does the olive tree metaphor refute replacement theology (the idea that the church replaces Israel)?
3. What responsibilities come with being grafted into Israel's covenant blessings?

Interlinear Text

Eἰ	δὲ	τινες	τῶν	κλάδων	ἐξεκλάσθησαν	σὺ	δὲ
G1487	And	G5100	G3588	of the branches	be broken off	thou	And
		G1161		G2798	G1575	G4771	G1161
ἀγριέλαιος	ὧν	ἐνεκεντρίσθης	ἐν	αὐτοῖς	καὶ		
a wild olive tree	being	wert grafted in	among	them	and		
G65	G5607	G1461	G1722	G846	G2532		
συγκοινωνὸς	τῆς	ρίζης	καὶ	τῆς	πιότητος	τῆς	
partakest	G3588	of the root	and	G3588	fatness	G3588	
G4791		G4491	G2532		G4096		
ἐλαίας	ἐγένου						
of the olive tree	them						
G1636	G1096						

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 11:16 (Parallel theme): The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.

John 15:2 (Parallel theme): Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Ephesians 3:6 (Parallel theme): That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Psalms 52:8 (Parallel theme): But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

Matthew 21:43 (Parallel theme): Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Acts 2:39 (Parallel theme): For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Colossians 2:13 (Parallel theme): And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Isaiah 27:11 (Parallel theme): When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.
