

Romans 11:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Analysis

For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature—*ei gar sy ek tēs kata physin exekopēs agrielaiou* (εἰ γὰρ σὺ ἐκ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἐξεκόπης ἀγριελαίου). Paul reminds Gentiles of their origin: the wild olive, outside the covenant. **And wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree**—*para physin* (παρὰ φύσιν, "contrary to nature") emphasizes the unnatural (miraculous) character of Gentile inclusion. Normal horticulture grafts cultivated branches into wild stock, not vice versa. Gentile salvation is grace-wrought, defying natural expectation.

The a fortiori climax: **how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?** (*pōsō mallon houtoi hoi kata physin enkentrithēsontai tē idia elaia*, πόσῳ μᾶλλον οὗτοι οἱ κατὰ φύσιν ἐγκεντρισθήσονται τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐλαίᾳ). If the unnatural grafting succeeded, how much more certain is the natural re-grafting? Israel's restoration is not merely possible but more likely than Gentile inclusion was. God's covenant faithfulness makes Israel's future salvation certain.

Historical Context

Paul's horticultural metaphor, while agriculturally backwards, makes a theological point: if God could save Gentiles (the harder case), He will certainly save Israel (the covenant people). This reverses any Gentile presumption that they are now God's 'natural' people.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does the 'unnatural' character of Gentile grafting teach about the miracle of grace?
2. How does the 'how much more' argument demonstrate God's greater commitment to Israel's restoration?
3. What assurance does this verse provide regarding God's faithfulness to His covenant promises?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	γὰρ	σὺ	ἐκ	τῆς	κατὰ	φύσιν	ἐξεκόπης
if	For	thou	out of	G3588	by	nature	wert cut
G1487	G1063	G4771	G1537		G2596	G5449	G1581
ἀγριελαίου				καὶ	παρὰ	φύσιν	ἐγκεντρισθήσονται
the olive tree which is wild				and	contrary to	nature	branches be grafted into
G65				G2532	G3844	G5449	G1461
εἰς	καλλιέλαιον	πόσω	μᾶλλον	οὗτοι	οἱ	κατὰ	φύσιν
into	a good olive tree	how much	more	shall these	G3588	by	nature
G1519	G2565	G4214	G3123	G3778		G2596	G5449
ἐγκεντρισθήσονται				τῇ	ιδία	ἐλαία	
branches be grafted into				G3588	their own	olive tree	
G1461					G2398	G1636	

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