

Christ The Root

Someone wrote me a letter recently and asked about the identity of the 'root' in Romans 11, so I decided to answer that question with this study.

In the context, the apostle Paul is discussing the casting away of God's people Israel. God did not cast away His people which He foreknew (Rom 11:2), the remnant according to the election of grace (Rom 11:5). But God did blind those who **stumbled on Christ** (Rom 11:7).

Under the **OLD** testament God called His people to a life of holiness.

As God's people they were to be holy because He is holy:

Lev 20:26 And **ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy,** and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

Under the **NEW** testament God called His people to a life of holiness.

As God's people they were to be holy because He is holy:

1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, **Be ye holy; for I am holy.**

God's people were instructed to be holy because He is holy.

I believe that same true principle is being taught by Paul in Romans 11:

Rom 11:16 For if the **firstfruit** be holy, the **lump** is also *holy*: and if the **root** be holy, so are the **branches**.

Since God is holy God's people are to be holy.

Here is what I understand the verse to mean:

Christ is the firstfruit

First Israel was the lump

now the lump includes us Gentiles.

Christ is the root

First Israel was the branches

now the branches include us Gentiles.

We will look to the scriptures and not man's commentaries

for the identities of

- the firstfruit
- the lump
- the root
- and
- the branches.

According to the Bible,

Christ is the firstfruit:

1 Cor 15:20-23 But now is **Christ** risen from the dead,
and **become the firstfruits** of them that slept.

21 For since by man *came* death,

by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order:

Christ the firstfruits;

afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

say: uh-par-**hey**

The same Greek word <aparche> is translated both

singular (firstfruit) and plural (firstfruits).

According to the Bible,

Israel was first the lump:

Rom 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour,
and another unto dishonour?

The lump was a lump of clay:

Isa 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Originally, the house of Israel was the lump of clay:

Jer 18:3-6 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

4 And the vessel that he made of clay

was marred in the hand of the potter:

so he made it again another vessel,

as seemed good to the potter to make it.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?

saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand,

so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

NOW the lump includes us Gentiles:

1 Cor 5:6-7 Your glorying *is* not good.

Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

Just as Jesus told His disciples to take heed and beware

of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees (Matt 16:6-12),

and of Herod (Mark 8:15) which is hypocrisy (Luke 12:1)

so also Paul warned the church of false doctrine:

Gal 5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

According to the Bible 5 other times (besides Rom 11:16),

Christ is the root:

Paul quoted Isaiah's prophecy of Christ:

Rom 15:12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be **a root of Jesse,** and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles;
in him shall the Gentiles trust.

Jesse was King David's father in the lineage of Christ:

Isa 11:10 And **in that day there shall be a root of Jesse,**
which shall stand for an ensign of the people;
to it shall the Gentiles seek;
and his rest shall be glorious.

Isaiah also described Christ as a root

when he prophesied about Jesus' life and death:

Isa 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant,
and as **a root** out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and
when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Twice in the Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:1)

John identified Jesus as the root:

Rev 5:5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not:
behold, **the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David,**
hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Rev 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things
in the churches. **I am the root and the offspring of David,**
and the bright and morning star.

Some men's commentaries teach that Abraham was the root.

But NO ONE ELSE IN THE SCRIPTURE except Jesus Christ
.... is identified as the root. So I will go with GOD's word, not man's.

According to the Bible, Abraham is a **father** of many nations

but the scriptures never call him a root:

Gen 17:4-5 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee,
and thou shalt be **a father of many nations.**

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be **Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.**

Christ is identified as Abraham's seed:

Gal 3:16 Now **to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.**
He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one,
And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Christ is also identified as both David and Abraham's son:

Matt 1:1 The book of the generation of **Jesus Christ,** the son of David,
the son of Abraham.

However BEFORE Abraham was even in existence Christ was.

That's yet another reason Jesus is the root. He was before Abraham:

John 8:56-58 **Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day:**
and he saw it, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,
Before Abraham was, I am.

According to the Bible,

Israel was first the branches:

Jer 11:16-17 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.**

17 For **the LORD of hosts, that planted thee,** hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.

As Jesus described the branches He also taught that

- some of them would be broken off

and

- some of them would **abide in HIM** and bear fruit:

John 15:1-6 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 **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.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself,
except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except **ye abide in me.**

5 **I am the vine, ye are the branches:**

He that **abideth in me,** and I in him,
the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 **If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch,**
and is withered; and men gather them,
and **cast them into the fire, and they are burned.**

The unbelievers of Israel though 'classified' as 'God's people' were
broken off the olive tree because they were not TRULY God's people.

NOW the branches includes us Gentiles:

Rom 11:17 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;

We are **partakers of CHRIST not of Abraham:**

Heb 3:14 For we are made **partakers of Christ,** if we hold the begin-
ning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Though we are Abraham's seed, as is Christ, we are **partakers in Christ:**

Eph 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs,
and of the same body,
and **partakers** of his promise **in Christ** by the gospel:

We are not to mock them that were broken off nor brag about us getting brought in. Being in Christ we are to bear fruit unto holiness:

Rom 11:18 Boast not against the branches.
But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

Unbelieving Israel was broken off and we Gentiles were brought in:

Rom 11:19-20 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

God broke off the natural branches of Israel because of unbelief.

We better not feel **proud** about it. If any Gentiles merely talk the talk, but don't walk the walk then we're no different than they were and God will cut us off -- just like He did them:

Rom 11:21-22 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God:
on them which fell, severity;
but toward thee, goodness,
if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Even though unbelieving Israel was broken off Jews can still get in:

Rom 11:23-24 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.

Israel had the advantage (Rom 3:1-2) but now **anyone** who truly believes - whether Jew or Gentile - can become a branch in the olive tree:

Rom 11:24 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?

Just as in the house of Israel

so also in the 'professing' house of God.

There are vessels unto honor

and vessels unto dishonor:

2 Tim 2:19-21 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his.**

And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 But **in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.**

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, **he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.**

Any branches that are NOT in the olive tree be forewarned:

The Lord will take His vengeance on the vessels of wrath (Rom 9:21)

on the vessels unto dishonor fitted to destruction:

1 Thess 4:3-7 For **this is the will of God, even your sanctification,** that ye should abstain from fornication:

4 That **every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;**

5 **Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:**

6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that **the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.**

7 For **God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.**

The vessels unto honor remain in the house - just like - **the branches**

that believe stay or are grafted in the olive tree and are HOLY.

In the END:

The branches that are in unbelief that do not bear fruit
are broken off and will be cast into the fire to be burned.

The branches that believe and are bearing 'holy' fruit will live:

Rom 6:21-22 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for **the end of those things is death.**

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God,
ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Faith without works is dead (James 2:17,24,26). So examine yourselves:

Titus 1:16 **They profess that they know God;**
but in works they deny him,

being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

If a man claims to believe but he does not show his faith

by his works then he is deceived:

1 John 2:4 **He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**

Gentiles being grafted in Israel's tree - equal to Israel - was a mystery:

Rom 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

If you say one thing and do another it will eventually show up

at the latest, on judgment day. The safe place is to abide in Christ:

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him;
that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence,
and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

This is David Dowell saying, "Think about it!"