

# Our Covenant-Keeping God

## Part Two

This is the second part of a message entitled Our Covenant-Keeping God. As stated in the first part, I was challenged to prepare these messages because I have had some confusion concerning the covenants; and I wanted to get it straightened out. Probably the most confusing thing to me about the covenants was Jesus' words to His disciples at the Last Supper. **Luke 22:19 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.** I couldn't figure out how this all works with the New Covenant being made with Israel, when I knew that Jesus was giving His blood for me, too!

I think my confusion in part had to do with the way the Bible is formatted, being divided in the Old and New Testaments. Most of us has been taught to think that the Old Testament had to do with the Jews; and the New Testament has to do with the Church. But is that exactly the way we should understand it?

Let's look for a moment at the timeline on the board, focusing on the time period between Abraham and the first coming of Christ. We know that there were 430 years between the promises made to Abraham and the establishment of the Law – the Mosaic Covenant (Gal. 3:17). The Law was given to Israel through Moses, for the purpose of pointing them to their Messiah -- the One Who would fulfill the Old Covenant and bring in the New. It was a covenant made on Mount Sinai and it laid out a standard of conduct, so to speak, which was to teach them how they were to live in the Promised Land as they waited in anticipation of the coming of their Messiah. The Old Covenant was to remain in force until it had been fulfilled by One to Whom it pointed, with the New only being inaugurated through His own death. **Hebrews 9:16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. 18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.**

So this covenant covered the time from Mt. Sinai until the death of Jesus! Therefore, the Old Covenant was still in effect throughout the greater part of all four Gospels, which makes perfect sense since John the Baptist's ministry, Jesus' ministry, and the ministry of the 12 sent out by Jesus all had to do with Israel. An example of this is found in **Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'**

In the gospels, the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens was strictly made to the Jews, because the Jews were the only people on the earth at that time who could have received this offer. The kingdom had to do with the promises made to Abraham, *and to his descendants*. We know that Abraham was going to have descendants in two realms – heavenly and earthly (spiritual

descendants through his Seed, Jesus Christ; and physical descendants through Isaac and Jacob), but the Church -- those who would make up the *spiritual* descendants of Abraham -- was not instituted until Acts chapter two. Therefore, throughout the entirety of the gospels, only Abraham's physical descendants could be in view in regards to the offer.

With all of this in mind, how should we consider the break between the OT and NT?

Pastor John has been leading us through a study of the Book of Malachi, the last of the OT Prophets. The message Malachi gave was a message replete with warnings, cast alongside the continual call to repentance, which really had been the message of each and every one of the prophets preceding him, and actually was the message of John, Jesus and the Twelve after him. Let's read the last words in this book: **Malachi 4:4 "Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. 5 Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."** It is at this point that God's Word was complete. Yes! Complete. Everything God needed/wanted to say to His people had been said. The New Testament then was only going to be an unfolding of what was in the Old. There is nothing in the New that is not in the Old. If God's Word was not complete here at the end of the Book of Malachi, then how could *the Word become flesh*? God's Word had to be complete in order for Jesus -- Whose name is the Word of God -- to come in the flesh.

Then let's consider the 400+ years between the two Testaments. Was it really a 400-year period of *silence* on God's part? Why would He be silent? Would He not have been speaking to His people during those 400 years through the Holy Spirit, just as He speaks to us today? It's now been about 1990 years since John wrote the last book in the NT, yet even today we can "hear His voice." **Hebrews 3:7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE... 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.... 15 while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."** Of course, He spoke to those in Israel who would "hear His voice" during that time between Malachi and the gospels.

Then there is something else to think about in all of this. The very *last* thing God said to His people Israel through Malachi is the very *first* thing He spoke to His people Israel, even 400 years later through the Angel Gabriel. Before any portion of the gospels were written, God sent Gabriel to appear to a priest whose name was Zacharias, who was married to Elizabeth; and being in their old age, they were childless. The Angel told Zacharias that he and Elizabeth would indeed have a son, and that this son would be the one to go before the Lord as His forerunner, His herald, if you will, *in the spirit and power of Elijah*. The angel, speaking of their son, said: **Luke 1:16 "And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and**

**the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."**

Amazingly (but not surprisingly) God picked up *exactly* where He left off some 400 years prior! And wouldn't that just be so? God's immutability must certainly be seen in this. He *remembered* where He had ended in speaking to His people so many years prior, and just to show that He remembered, the *first* thing He said through the Angel Gabriel, after such a long "silence", was a repeat of the very last thing He had spoken before He had become "silent". And much more so would this be emphasized through the specific person to whom God sent the angel. It is no coincidence that the message concerning the child *who was to come in the spirit of Elijah* and prepare the way for the beginning of the fulfillment of the OT writings was to be given to a man whose name was *Zacharias* (a name which means *God Remembers*); who was married to *Elizabeth* (a name which means *God of the Oath*). And still even *more* amazingly, the Angel specifically told Zacharias that he would name his son *John* (a name which means *the grace or mercy of the Lord*). So right here, encapsulated within this small family in Israel, God was revealing to His people that He had *remembered* the *oath* that He had sworn to Abraham, and in His **grace and mercy**, He was preparing to fulfill the promises.

With all of that said, should we really see a division here between what is called the Old and New Testaments? Should we really think that the Old Testament is solely dealing with the Jews and that the New Testament is dealing with the Church? Technically speaking, the Old Covenant did not pass off the scene until the very moment Christ died. And it wasn't until *this* very moment the New Covenant was inaugurated. This means that the Old Covenant was still totally in effect during all but the last chapter in each of gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and all but the last two chapters of John, revealing that Jesus would have lived by the Mosaic Law until the very moment He breathed His last; until the very moment He said the words: **John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.**

Could we just stop for a moment and consider this question? **What** was finished? We have learned in these recent years that *everything* that was required to be in place for the full scope of salvation to come to pass was finished in the work of Jesus at the cross.

- He died as Passover Lamb – that was finished – a work necessary for eternal salvation.
- He died the Sacrifice whose blood was to be placed on the heavenly Mercy Seat – that was finished – a work necessary for the salvation of the soul.

I wonder, though, if we should view something else as being finished. Look at this verse in the Book of Hebrews. **Hebrews 8:13 When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.** So it looks like we could add this to the list of the things that were finished at the last breath of Jesus:

- The Old Covenant was finished.

It really *was* finished! The Old Covenant became totally un-ef-ficacious at the very moment He gave up His spirit. Jesus had said the night before: "This is the blood of the New Covenant, which is given for you." And the audience in that room the night of the Last Supper was a total Jewish audience!

(So now I can put to rest my confusion about the blood of the New Covenant being given to the Jews. Yes, it was. But I also know that Jesus, our Passover, has been sacrificed. He died on the cross for my sins and for yours. He is our Passover. His blood is on the Mercy Seat in heaven for my sins and for yours. He is our High Priest, forever making intercession on our behalf at the Right Hand of the Father. But the offer of the blood for the New Covenant is totally Jewish. I get it now!)

So from this it simple to see that the greater portion of the four gospels would have to be seen as part of the Old Covenant, rather than the New. The Jews at the time of Christ's first coming should have been expecting with great anticipation the prophecies and promises to begin unfolding. One thing they should have been anticipating was that which Jeremiah wrote: **Jeremiah 31: 31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, "declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."** But until the death of the One making the new covenant took place, all remained under the Old.

So now, in seeing all of this, then we might wonder how we should view the message in the gospels with respect to Christians. We know that *the Gentiles seeing a great light* was something that was prophesied in the Old Testament. **Isaiah 9:2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.** Of course this is an OT reference to the Church. A man named Simeon was in the Temple when Mary and Joseph brought Baby Jesus in to be circumcised on the 8th day, and at the sight of Jesus, he quoted from Isaiah speaking of the salvation that the Child would bring: **Luke 2:29 "Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart In peace, according to Thy word; 30 For my eyes have seen Thy salvation, 31 Which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Thy people Israel."**

And of course, it is not only here where the Church is alluded to in the gospels, but in other places as well. We'll remember that *Jesus left the house and sat by the seaside* in Matthew 13 as He began speaking to the crowds in parables. *The house* alluded to Israel; *the seaside* alluded to Gentiles. Jesus was indicating that there would come a point when He would set Israel aside *for*

*a time* and deal with Gentiles. Also in Matthew 16, Jesus told the disciples explicitly that He would *build His Church*.

All of that to say that Christians can certainly learn about the Church in the gospels, as much as they can learn about the Church in the Old Testament, but the Church didn't actually come into existence until Acts 2. And there was a reason for it then. Israel – as a Nation -- refused to repent and rejected the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens even after three years of Jesus' public ministry. This had to be the case in order for Old Testament prophecies to be fulfilled, as it had been prophesied that they would reject the Messiah! Paul spoke of this to the Church at Rome: **Romans 10:16** However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" .... **18** But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD." **19** But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? At the first Moses says, "I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU." **20** And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO SOUGHT ME NOT, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME." **21** But as for Israel He says, "ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE." Here Paul is quoting OT Prophets, revealing that the very thing that was prophesied, had come to pass in the first coming of Christ with respect to the Jews and their rejecting Jesus. And this had to be the case, for God to be able to bring the LIGHT to the Gentiles. Paul goes on to explain further in **Romans 11:8** just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY." **9** And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM. **10** LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER." **11** I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them *jealous*. And so there we have it! In the end, they not only rejected the offer, but they also crucified their Messiah. And this was an inexpressible blessing for us, to be sure!

So the offer that was being made to Israel – the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens – was withdrawn from Israel just 2 or 3 days before Jesus was crucified. In the last week of His life prior to His death, Jesus gave the parable of the Vineyard. Toward the end of this parable, He said: **Matthew 21:38** "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.' **39** And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. **40** Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" **41** They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons." **42** Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?" **43** Therefore I say to you, the

**kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.** Just a few days later, Jesus gave His blood – the blood of the New Covenant for them!

Let's go back to the board here, and see these events on the timeline. A few days after Jesus withdrew the offer, Jesus died, and three days later rose from the dead. This brings to a close all four gospels. The Old Covenant had come to an end, having been completely fulfilled in and by Jesus; the New Covenant had been inaugurated by His death, but not yet established. (In order for the New Covenant to be established, Israel had to repent as a Nation. And repentance simply hadn't happened yet. In fact, Israel will not repent until this point in time right here, at the end of the tribulation. But we'll leave the details of that for another day.)

We know there was a 40-day post resurrection ministry, but we are not given many details about it. We can know that once Jesus withdrew the offer of the kingdom from the Jews (a few days before His death), that there is no record of the kingdom being *publically* mentioned again until the Day of Pentecost. In fact, the details that are recorded of His post-resurrection ministry reveals that He only appeared to the handful of Jews – only to those who had accepted Him as their Messiah and who had believed His message. There is no record of Him appearing to any other Jew in His resurrected body. This reveals that the withdrawal of the kingdom was a real and tangible withdrawal. He had fully withdrawn the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens from Israel as a nation.

Even though Jesus was not public in His post-resurrection ministry, those few Jews with whom He spoke, He spent the 40 days speaking to them about the kingdom. It says in **Acts 1:1 The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. 3 To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.** Well, there we are! He spent the 40 days speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom, but not to the general public. The offer had been withdrawn back in Matthew 21. But let's keep reading here in Acts 1 as it leads us into the next place on the timeline we need to go: **4 And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." 9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; 11 and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the**

same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem... and waited.

They waited for 10 days. Then on the Day of Pentecost, something quite dramatic took place. **Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. 5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and marveled, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?**

This was an event of tremendous importance, as several things happened here. For example, for the first time in the history of mankind, Abraham could now have *spiritual* descendants, as the Church -- the Body of the Christ, who is the Seed of Abraham -- was instituted on that day. Now *the stars of the heavens* could begin accumulating in numbers, as promised to Abraham. But this event didn't just have to do with the Church; this event was very significant to Israel as well. It was the beginning of the fulfillment of a prophecy made by the Prophet Joel: **Joel 2:28 "And it will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days..."**

This began a period of time when the Kingdom of the Heavens was re-offered to Israel along with the call for national repentance, only this time the offer would be made *by the new creation* -- the Church. The very individuals who had previously been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, were being sent again to the same house with the same message, only here, the group of individuals delivering the message had become part of the New Nation, a new creation: **II Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** So if during the original offer of the kingdom the Nation had accepted, they would have remained as members of the Nation of Israel. But in the re-offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens, any individual Jew, who would believe in Jesus as their Messiah, would of necessity become a part of the New Nation. **Ephesians 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.** In a respect then, and perhaps in the fullest sense possible, we can understand that the offer of the heavenly kingdom was completely taken from

the Nation as a whole in the days just prior to Jesus' death, and now was being re-offered to the nation as individuals.

However, if the Nation as a whole repented at this point in time (during the re-offer), then the New Covenant would have been established right then and there; and the Kingdom of the Heavens would have been established. Herein is perhaps a Divine paradox. We know that there has to be 6 thousand-year days play out prior to the Coming of the Lord on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. And we know that this time period covering in the Book of Acts followed the close of the 4<sup>th</sup> day, and was the dawn of the 5<sup>th</sup> day, and yet, a valid re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens was being made to Israel, and along with that re-offer the establishment of the New Covenant. (We might want to remember here that due to the rejection and crucifixion of Christ the 4<sup>th</sup> day actually stopped 7 years short of its fulfillment. The 4<sup>th</sup> day still has 7 years to play out on the earth, which we know to be The Time of Jacob's Trouble.)

This period of the re-offer (recorded in the Book of Acts) lasted for about 30-35 years until about the mid-to-late 60's (perhaps even until 70 AD, with the destruction of the Temple and City). However, it is believed that the Book of Acts closed out approximately in the mid 60's. This period would need to be seen as a very *unique* time in history, for it appears to be the *only* time in history that God simultaneously dealt with two groups of people – Israel and the Church. But once the re-offer was withdrawn by Paul in the last chapter in Acts, Israel was fully and completely set aside and will not be re-visited until the time of Jacob's Trouble, which will follow the Resurrection and Rapture of the Church.

In clearing up the heretofore confusion that has existed concerning the New Covenant with respect to the Church, it is very helpful to understand something about this is a unique period of man's history. During this period of time, many of the epistles were written -- not all, but many! And in trying to come to understand how the Church meshes with respect to the New Covenant, some passages which had been confusing are confusing no longer! Here is a passage in point: **II Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.** Now it makes sense!

So please allow me to summarize all that is on the board as a review of these two messages.

In closing these messages, I would like to read a full chapter in Romans, as it summarizes the understanding I hope we have come to now.

## Romans 11

1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED THY PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN THINE ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." 4 But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."

5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time [the time of the re-offer in which Paul wrote this epistle] a remnant according to God's gracious choice. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. 7 What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; 8 just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY." 9 And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM. 10 LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER."

11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. 12 Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! 13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too. 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. 22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

**25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." 27 "AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. 32 For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all. 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? 35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.**