

# THE LOOKOUT

MARCH 2022

## Unit: ROMANS (Part 3)

### Theme: HOLY

**Overview:** The pace of our lives does not lend itself to taking “time to be holy.” God is righteous (Part 1) and has justified us in Christ (Part 2). God expects those who have been justified to live in holiness (Part 3). In these lessons, which close out our study of Romans, students will learn how baptism puts one on a path to holiness, how God’s law exposes unholiness, how the root of that holiness goes back to our spiritual ancestors, and how God’s people live out holiness in the context of sacrifice.

## HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.

**VIEW OF BIBLE 5-1022**

**LESSON AIM:** Pursue holiness as part of your new life in Christ.

**LESSON TEXT:** Romans 6:1-11

**SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT:** Acts 22:16, 18, 22; 1 Corinthians 6:11-12; Ephesians 5:1-2

**STORY**

**RAISED TO A HOLY LIFE**  
BY MARK SCOTT

Mark Scott is a pastor in the Church of Christ. He is the author of the book *Raised to a Holy Life*, which is available for purchase at [www.raisedtoaholy.com](http://www.raisedtoaholy.com). He is also the author of the book *How to Live a Holy Life*, which is available for purchase at [www.howtoliveaholy.com](http://www.howtoliveaholy.com). He is also the author of the book *How to Live a Holy Life*, which is available for purchase at [www.howtoliveaholy.com](http://www.howtoliveaholy.com).

**Tabs** indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.

**APPLICATION**

**DON'T FORGET YOUR BAPTISM**  
BY DAVID FAUST

David Faust is a pastor in the Church of Christ. He is the author of the book *Don't Forget Your Baptism*, which is available for purchase at [www.dontforgetyourbaptism.com](http://www.dontforgetyourbaptism.com). He is also the author of the book *How to Live a Holy Life*, which is available for purchase at [www.howtoliveaholy.com](http://www.howtoliveaholy.com). He is also the author of the book *How to Live a Holy Life*, which is available for purchase at [www.howtoliveaholy.com](http://www.howtoliveaholy.com).

**DISCOVERY**

**BY MICHAEL C. PECK**

1. What does it mean to be baptized?
2. What does it mean to be baptized?
3. What does it mean to be baptized?
4. What does it mean to be baptized?
5. What does it mean to be baptized?
6. What does it mean to be baptized?
7. What does it mean to be baptized?
8. What does it mean to be baptized?
9. What does it mean to be baptized?
10. What does it mean to be baptized?

Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

**WEEK OF MARCH 20, 2022**

**LESSON AIM:** **Appreciate the heritage that is ours because of the faith of the patriarchs and other faithful.**

**UNIT:** Romans (Part 3)

**THEME:** Holy

**LESSON TEXT:** Romans 11:11-32

**SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT:** Exodus 19:3-6; 1 Peter 2:1-9

## HOLY ROOT, HOLY BRANCHES

BY MARK SCOTT

When Christians read the Bible, they recognize the heritage from which it comes. If believers are the branches (and they are, John 15:5), then, according to Romans 11, the patriarchs and the other faithful in the Old Testament are the root.

One way to solve the pastoral challenge of helping Jews and Gentiles get along will be to show them how they fit into God's program to save both in his cosmic plan. This is the content of Romans 9–11. It all happens under the sovereignty of God, but it is a bit like dominoes—one must fall before others can fall.

**Gentile Inclusion and Jewish Envy***Romans 11:11-24*

The Jewish believers in the church at Rome felt squeezed out of God's plan and blessings because the Gentiles were given the right to come into God's family. Some Roman Jews evidently thought that since their forefathers had failed to walk in faith, there was then no hope for them. Paul affirmed just the opposite.

Did the Old Testament Israelites stumble in their faith? Yes, but did they stumble in an irrecoverable way? *Not at all!* In fact, God used their stumbling as an avenue for the Gentiles to come into God's plan. Israel transgressed (failed, lapsed, or erred), which allowed the Gentiles to experience *salvation*. But God leveraged this to *make Israel envious*. Once again, we see this formula at work: Jewish rejection led to Gentile inclusion, which led to Jewish jealousy. That jealousy then would drive them into belief.

Paul took *pride* (glorified) in his apostleship to the Gentiles to help his own people. If the Gentiles would be reconciled to God by virtue of Paul's ministry, what would happen if the Jews would be stirred to *envy* and come into the kingdom? That would be joy unspeakable. So, Paul used two metaphors to illustrate his point. The first one, *dough*, was rather simple. If the dough (i.e., the Jews) was offered as the *firstfruits* to God, then the *whole batch* (Jews and Gentiles together) would be holy.

The second metaphor, *root and branches*, was more complex. To be clear, the root, with some broken-off

branches, was Israel, and the ingrafted branches were the Gentiles. The Gentiles are referred to as a *wild olive shoot* that has been *grafted* (inserted with a puncture) into the tree. This should give the Gentiles pause and not make them feel superior. The same God who grafted them in can take them out. The key to both Jew and Gentile is faith (this has been Paul's theme throughout the Epistle). Wild branches and natural branches are maintained by the root through faith.

**Jewish Hardening and Gentile Embrace***Romans 11:25-32*

God was working his plan. Therefore, ideas of ethnic inferiority or superiority should be jettisoned. The *hardening* (becoming calloused) of Israel cracked open the door for Gentiles to come into God's family. Therefore, *in this way all Israel will be saved*. This is a difficult phrase since in this section (Romans 9–11) "Israel" has been understood to be physical Israel (i.e., Jewish descendants). In that sense, Gentiles are not Israel. However, when one considers how inclusive Paul has been to those of Gentile descent (Romans 2:28-29) and how inclusive God has been in times past with those outside Israel (e.g., Exodus 12:38), then "all Israel" that will be saved would be Jews and Gentiles who come to God in faith.

Paul marshaled support for such a wide embracing conclusion from Isaiah 59:20-21 and 27:9. A *deliverer* would come from *Zion* (Jesus?) and push *godlessness* and *sins* away. This would put an end to the *hardening* Israel had experienced. For the most part, the Jews had opposed the Christian faith and church in its infancy (cf. Acts 13–21), but that does not mean God washed his hands of Israel. They were, after all, elect. (Is this a promise to hold them together as a people at the very least?)

God's call to Israel could not be taken back (it was *irrevocable*). The call had already gone out. If God went back on his promise to Israel it would undo his love for the *patriarchs*. And disobedience on the part of Jews or Gentiles is no problem for God. He handles that with judgment or mercy, and mercy triumphs over judgment (cf. James 2:13). The holy root and the holy branches can be in solidarity through the obedience of faith. ■

## DON'T CHOP AWAY YOUR ROOTS

BY DAVID FAUST

We worship “the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come” (Revelation 4:8), so our view of God should shape our perspective about the past, the present, and the future.

We can’t live in the past. Our relationship with God shouldn’t rely on a nostalgic preoccupation with the way things used to be. Ecclesiastes 7:10 advises, “Do not say, ‘Why were the old days better than these?’ For it is not wise to ask such questions.” Faith invigorates us in the present and hope propels us toward the future.

But we shouldn’t forget the past. The Christian faith is rooted in historical events. The annual Passover observance reminded the Israelites about their long-ago deliverance from slavery. The Psalms called worshippers to praise the Lord for his faithfulness to past generations. At the Last Supper, Jesus instructed his disciples to eat and drink in remembrance of him. Remembering can be an act of worship. It keeps us in touch with our roots. The apostle Paul told Timothy, “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead” (2 Timothy 2:8).

### The Root Supports You

Romans 11 compares God’s covenant people to an olive tree. Some of the branches (unbelieving Jews) have been cut off, while the Gentiles are like fresh branches grafted onto the tree. Paul cautions the Gentile believers not to be arrogant and consider themselves superior to their brothers and sisters of Jewish descent. Instead, these grafted branches owe a debt of gratitude for the life-giving sap they now receive from God’s tree. Through a remnant of faithful Israelites, Jesus the Messiah came to bring “salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).

Paul reminded his readers, “You do not support the root, but the root supports you” (Romans 11:18).

Isn’t that an interesting turn of phrase? “The root supports you.”

This lesson was originally intended for first-century Christians who struggled to unify Jewish and Gentile believers in the body of Christ, but it’s not a stretch to see how it applies to us. We shouldn’t be prideful that God has grafted us like branches onto his tree. Instead, we should be grateful for those who paved the way for us—who supported us so we could bear fruit for the Lord.

It’s easy to find fault with previous generations, and it’s OK to be honest about their flaws. But we should respect and honor our faithful predecessors who supported us and gave us roots in the faith.

Did Christian parents do their best to bring you up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Were you influenced by hardworking teachers who shaped your character and informed your mind? Have you known churches that faithfully teach God’s Word, serve their communities, and demonstrate God’s love by giving generously and caring for others? Have you been blessed by youth groups, camps, Bible colleges, and seminaries that challenged you to deepen your roots in the faith? Are there friends and family members who have loved you, advised you, and enriched your relationship with God over the years?

Who has supported your walk with God and helped you grow in your faith? “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).

**Personal Challenge:** Think of two or three people who have deepened your roots in the Christian faith. Tell them why you appreciate their impact on your life. **L**

## DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. Please answer one of these questions:

- What can you thank God for today?
- What struggles did you face last week?

2. With whom did you share your struggles as you shared the good news last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **Romans 11:11-32** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to briefly restate the passage in their own words.

3. How would you state the overall message of this passage?

4. Let's dig deeper:

- How does the olive tree illustrate God's family?
- What do you learn from this passage about God's plan for Gentiles (non-Jews)?
- What do you learn about God's plan for Israel (Jews)? [Note: In Old Testament usage, "all Israel" need not mean every Israelite.]
- What attitudes and spiritual mindset were Gentiles to take as God works out his plans?
- What part does the "deliverer . . . from Zion" play in all this?

5. What do you learn about God's character from this passage?

- What do you learn about his sovereignty?
- What do you learn about his grace/mercy?
- What do you learn about his patience?
- What do you learn about his faithfulness as a promise-keeping God?

6. What do you learn about people?

7. What do you learn about obeying God regardless of your understanding of how he is working?

8. What attitude should you take as you share the gospel?

9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."

10. In what way do you need assurance of God's promises this week?

**For Next Week:** Read and reflect on **Romans 12:1-21** as we continue studying Romans. You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. **11**