

Romans 11:16a

In making his point, that Israel hasn't "*fallen beyond restoration*," that Israel hasn't gone too far by rejecting and crucifying God's Son, in that Israel will ultimately be restored to its fullness, Paul uses a couple of analogies...

The first is the "*first fruit and the lump*"... Using the metaphor of "*Dough*."
And the second, "*the root and the branches*"... Using the metaphor of an "*Olive tree*."

The "*Key*" to correctly understanding this section is to understand that Paul is speaking in terms of "*nations*" as a whole, not "*individuals*." Extremely important to understand this, looking at this passage, through the context of "*individuals*" will only confuse you. Paul is writing from the "*Big picture*" aspect, looking at the "*overall scheme*" of God's plan of salvation. The things that Paul is writing here covers thousands of years, going back to the promised "SEED" of Eve, to Abraham throughout every generation, even down to the "*return of Christ!*" So it's important to understand this, that Paul is referring to "*Nations*" rather than "*individuals*."

The EMPHASIS in both of these metaphors is... "*Connection to the Covenant*."

- 1) The LUMP is part of the PIECE...
- 2) The BRANCHES are part of the ROOT...

Both have to do with the "*Certainty*" of the future Restoration of Israel...

And as we will see in both of these metaphors, without a doubt, Israel will be restored to fullness... But it will not be on the basis of Israel's Faithfulness to God...but God's Faithfulness to Israel. God will be faithful to "*His Covenant*" He made with "*Father Abraham*" in spite of Israel's unfaithfulness! Eventually, God's glory will return to Israel, Israel will shine in its fullness! But it will not be because of anything that Israel has done, it will not be as a result of Israel's faithfulness. Israel will be saved by the faithfulness of God to His Word, by His remaining faithful to the Covenant He made with Father Abraham.

It is important to know, "Who's Who" in these metaphors...

Abraham is the "*Firstfruit*" of the "*Lump*" with Israel being *the Lump*.

Abraham is the "*Root*" of the "*Tree*" with Israel being *the branches*.

God made a covenant with Abraham... That in him, God would raise up a nation that would number as the stars! The promise was made to Abraham and his seed! Starting with Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel). Thus, the nation of Israel is the seed of Abraham, thus Israel are the "*Children of the covenant*." Does that mean that every individual Jew, who was of the lineage of Abraham was saved? Absolutely not. They thought so...but that was not the case. The true children of Abraham were those who walked by "*Faith!*" In the days of Christ, the majority of the nation was "*lost*" in that they trusted in the righteousness produced by the Law. Jesus discusses this at length in John 8...

John 8... If you believe not that I am He...you shall die in your sins...

You are not of father Abraham...but you are of your father the devil...

Individually, the children of Israel were physically the "*Seed of Abraham*," but spiritually, they were the "*Children of the devil*." Even though they were "ISRAEL," they were not all Israel, as Paul says here in Romans 9:6...

Again, I stress the importance of looking at this passage here in Romans 11, from the standpoint of the NATION, not the individual. Many of the nations Israel HAVE stumbled that they should fall! Fall means

“ruin.” All who trusted in the Law and rejected Jesus Christ...*died in their sins!* Individually, a large number of Israel have stumbled at the message of Christ, and have fallen, thus perishing in their sin. But what Paul is talking about here is the Nation as a whole. In the big scope of God’s redemptive plan, even though the nation as a whole has fallen, by rejecting Christ, in the end, they will be restored to their fullness upon their receiving Christ as their King...

Here in Romans 11, Paul is referring to Israel as a Nation, and the role of the nation in God’s plan of salvation! Specifically explaining the current situation of Israel in that plan. They don’t want anything to do with Christ; they still reject Him to this day. But as Paul says, that’s all part of God’s plan! Here in Romans 11, Paul is simply declaring that “*Everything’s going according to plan.*” Israel’s fall was all apart of God’s plan. God used them to bring about the salvation of the world, to all who would believe. Israel has been blinded by God, and they will remain that way until the “*fullness of the Gentiles*” be come in. When the last Gentile is saved, Christ will come back, Israel will be restored, and Christ will rule and reign on the earth...

Listen very carefully...

God has not “*Cast Israel aside*” for **destruction**...

But rather God has “*Set Israel aside*” for **His purposes**...

(Vs 16a) ¹⁶*For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy...*

Paul derives his metaphor from Numbers 15:17~21...speaking of the “*Offering up to God the first CAKE of Bread made from the grain harvested.*”

(Numbers 15) ¹⁷*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,* ¹⁸*Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you,* ¹⁹*Then it shall be, that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave offering unto the LORD.* ²⁰*Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave offering: as ye do the heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall ye heave it.* ²¹*Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave offering in your generations.*

Firstfruit refers to the “*First Part.*” It could be any type of offering, grain, dough, animal, oil, spices, etc... But whatever the offering, it was to be the “*First*” part or the *initial* or the *best part*.

They offered to the Lord... “*The Crème of the Crop...*”

The offering was really simply the worship of God. It was a tangible way, a physical way of saying thank you and acknowledging the sustainer of Life! In partaking in the offering, the worshiper was declaring God to be the Lord of their lives, giving Him honor and praise for His goodness and provision.

This is where Israel fell short of righteousness... They would offer the dough, the first cake, but only because the Law commanded them to do so. Their heart wasn’t in it! They did not come to the temple to worship God for His goodness, to acknowledge Him as Lord and provider. They did not come with hearts of gratitude, thanking God for His provision... They simply came out of obligation and duty to the Law...

Warren Weirsbe...[The worshiper was bringing to the Lord the fruits of his labor and the evidence of Gods goodness. Today we bring money as an offering to the Lord, acknowledging that we wouldn’t have that money if He didn’t give us jobs and the ability to work.](#)

I want to suggest that even more than money, we should offer God our TIME...
The offerings were a form of worship...

Proverbs 3...⁹*Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:*
¹⁰*So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*

(Numbers 15) ²⁰*Ye shall offer up **a cake of the first of your dough** for an heave offering: as ye do the heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall ye heave it.* ²¹***Of the first of your dough** ye shall give unto the LORD an heave offering in your generations.*

The “*Firstfruit Offering*” was an offering to the Lord of the first part of the dough attained from the bountiful harvest the Lord had supplied. It was giving back a portion of what He had given them! Which is really important to understand Paul’s point. Even though the offering was a small piece, it still represented the entire loaf. All the loaf was from the Lord!

Keeping that in mind, helps make Paul’s point clear...

Paul uses this metaphor to make his point that *Israel* has not fallen beyond restoration. Israel will yet be restored, and *enjoy the covenant blessings* of God.

The point here is, that it will be solely on the basis of God’s faithfulness to Israel, not Israel’s faithfulness to God. The NATION will rise again solely based on God’s fulfillment of the Promise He made to Abraham! God’s promise was made to Abraham and “*His Seed,*” the nation Israel!

(Illustration of Dough) Israel will rise again and enjoy the blessings of the covenant, entirely based on the fact they are “*Part of Abraham!*” God’s covenant was to Abraham and His seed. The whole lump was set apart for the purposes of God. Abraham was one **of MANY** (Lump).

Based on God’s faithfulness...and not Israel’s, God would fulfill His promise to Israel! Israel would no doubt be restored to fullness, and partake of the glory and blessings of God once again. They had not fallen as one might think...but rather are simply fulfilling the plan of God and have brought salvation to the world.