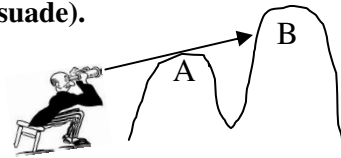


Two theses underlie this Water of Life Series:

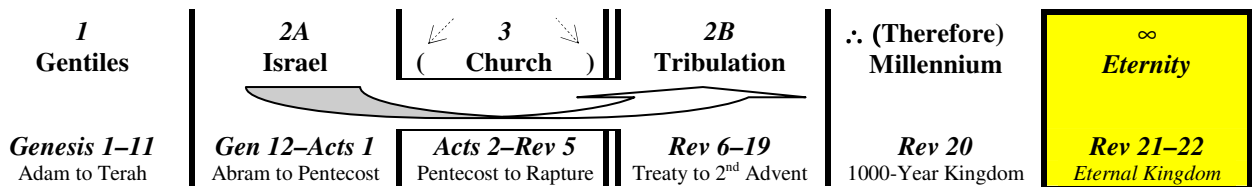
1. We are in the gleaning stage of the harvest,
2. Despite the urgency, avoid arm-twisting (Let the word persuade).

If the first thesis is correct, it gives urgency to our lives. Gaining knowledge (A), though essential, is not the final goal. To glorify God by using that knowledge (B) must be our focus.



**Thesis 1: We are in the gleaning stage of the harvest**

The following outline of history (and pertinent passages) is the context for Romans 11:



**Explanation of the outline (we are introducing this, but will go into more detail in future sessions):**

God administers history on the basis of promises He has made:

1. In Gen 1–11 (= **Age of Gentiles**), He made promises to all humanity, but (starting in Genesis 12) He made promises specifically to the nation that God would make out of Abram. Thus, Gen 1–11 is a time of promises to all of humanity (= Age of Gentiles) Gen 12–Acts 1 (= **Age of Israel**) makes promises to Israel w/o negating earlier promises
2. In Acts 2, God creates what would become a non-Jew/non-Gentile entity, the Church (= **Church Age**). God will keep promises made specifically to the Church AND will keep all promises He had earlier made to all of humanity and all promises He made to Israel. Note the parenthesis: (Church). The NT (esp. Eph 3) asserts that the OT did not reveal the Church: historical parenthesis (between the two parts of the **Age of Israel**: 2A and 2B. Daniel 9 shows that the Tribulation is actually part of the **Age of Israel**. Note the arrow. The double-line between the Church and the Tribulation is because the last event for the Church (the Rapture) is *not* the first event for the Tribulation. That first event of the Tribulation will be the signing of a treaty between the nation of Israel and Satan’s man (the prince). The double-lined border shows a gap between the **Church** and the **Tribulation**.
3. In Christ’s Second Advent, He will not only destroy His enemies at Armageddon, but will establish His Millennial Kingdom. He will set up His Kingdom in such a way that He will fulfill the promises made to (1) all humanity, (2) to Israel, and (3) to the Church. As such, Ephesians 1:10 calls the Millennium: *the dispensation [administration] of the fullness of times*. I understand that phrase as: The Millennium is the dispensation that fulfills all prior time-periods [dispensations]. It lasts 1000 years.
4. After God fulfills all of His promises to humanity, to Israel, and to the Church within history, there will be a transition into the eternal kingdom. I boxed and shaded this, because the eternal kingdom is *after* history. (All prior dispensations are *within* history).

**Romans 11:**

Romans 9–11 argues that God is faithful to Israel, despite appearances to the contrary.

- Romans 9: God is faithful to Israel, despite its **past** sin and rebellion;  
 Romans 10: God is faithful to Israel, despite its **present** sin and rebellion;  
 Romans 11: God is faithful to Israel, despite its **future** sin and rebellion.

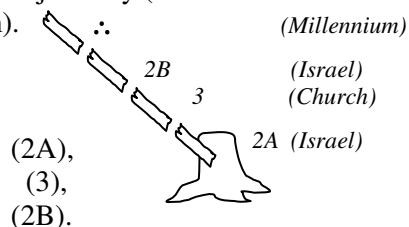
Romans 11 uses a domesticated olive tree to represent two dispensational changes. Paul looks at four portions of the chart from the prior page:

Age of Israel (2A) | Church Age (3) || Tribulation (Age of Israel: 2B) | Millennium (∴)

Romans 11:11 (cf. v 14) says that Israel *has not fallen permanently*, but that a major purpose of God delivering Gentiles (in the Church Age) is to provoke Israel to jealousy (so that Rom 11:26 will occur, allowing Jesus Christ to set up His Kingdom (Millennium).

Romans 11:16-25 uses the imagery of the olive.

- Israel is the stump and original branch (2A),  
 The Church is grafted-in (contrary to nature) (3),  
 Israel will be regrafted-in (Tribulation) (2B).



With this as background, consider Romans 11:25. Paul reacquaints Church-Age Gentiles with the mystery (that the OT did not reveal the Church, but it is parenthetical), so they would not be haughty against Israel, even though Israel is temporarily set-aside for rebellion). The reason Gentiles should not be haughty is that the **partial** blinding of Israel is only temporary.

The temporary partial blinding of Israel will be in effect until *the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*. Look at vv 22-23. God will cut off the Church (at the Rapture) to regraft Israel in. We cannot date the Rapture. It will come with no prior announcement.

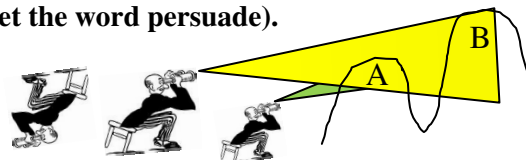
Even so, I believe Luke 21:24b says how God views the general tenor of the Church Age: *And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. [General conclusion] And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

1. Verse 24b says that Jews will not have complete sovereignty over Jerusalem while the times the times of the Gentiles are in effect].
2. On 7 Jun 1967 (during the Six-Day War) Israel gained sovereignty over all of Jerusalem, though they chose to delegate day-to-day administration to Palestinians, to avoid Jihad.
3. 1967 ended both the times of the Gentiles and the harvest-proper of Gentiles in Rom 11:25,
4. We are now within the time of gleaning (after the harvest-proper of Gentiles has ended),
5. When (at an unknown point) God views the gleaning-time as ended, the Rapture will occur,
6. What should be our focus in the time of gleaning? What should be our focus?

**Two theses underlie this Water of Life Series:**

1. We are in the gleaning stage of the harvest,
2. Despite the urgency, avoid arm-twisting (Let the word persuade).

Most of Christendom is upside down, like the man on the left. Apart from learning God's truth, we will never discern what God values.



Christians who value biblical truth (like the man on the right), miss the bigger picture. The man in the center relates biblical truth (A) to God's priorities for our time in history (B). The first underlying thesis of the *Water of Life* Bible study is that an implication of Romans 11:25 is that we live in the time of gleaning (after the harvest-proper of Gentiles has ended). We might say that we are on borrowed-time. Knowing this biblical truth should give urgency to looking for opportunities to share the message of life.

**The second thesis is now pertinent: Despite the urgency, avoid arm-twisting (Let the word persuade).**

I would like everyone to memorize Revelation 22:17 (a few verses before the book ends):  
*And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!"*  
*And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*

**Who speaks?**

*The Spirit* = \_\_\_\_\_ *The bride* = \_\_\_\_\_

**To whom do they speak?** \_\_\_\_\_ (Hint: *ones needing to drink the water of life* = ?)

**How are they to take the water of life?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Why?** \_\_\_\_\_

**We will now consider how it is that *believing* occurs. What is involved in *believing*?**

Most people think of believing as a decision. We often hear people say, "So and so decided to believe in Jesus." There is a popular magazine (*Decision*) published by a well-known ministry. They had a program called: *The Hour of Decision*. We seek to determine whether people decide to believe. Before considering this topic biblically, the film *Twelve Angry Men* will help.

The movie considers a jury's deliberations one sweltering evening in New York City to determine whether a son fatally stabbed his father. The initial ballot was eleven *Guilty* and one *Not Guilty*. The eleven thought that the prosecutor had removed reasonable doubt. Gradually, over the next several hours the ballot reached three *Guilty* and nine *Not Guilty*.

The jury seemed hopelessly deadlocked. Then Juror 8 (Henry Fonda) urged the three who voted *Guilty* to persuade the nine. Juror 4 (E.G. Marshall) argued eloquently and persuasively, initially leaving Juror 8 (Henry Fonda) and Juror 9 (the old man) speechless. Juror 12 (who vacillated easily) did his usual flip-flop, so it was now 8 not guilty to 4 guilty).

As we watch this, bear in mind that our question will be: Do people *decide* to believe?

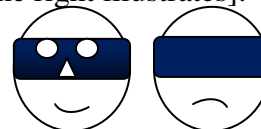
## BIBLICAL TEACHING ON *PERSUASION*

### 2 Corinthians 4:3ff.

<sup>3</sup> But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup> whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, **lest** the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them... <sup>6</sup> For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Note the underlined words in vv 3-4a: *veiled, veiled, and has blinded*

The use of *veils* explains *has blinded*. It is not lacking the means of perception (eyes), but that a veil covers the eyes (preventing any vision). [The picture on the right illustrates].



Note the underlined words in vv 4b-6: *the light, shine, light to shine, shone, and the light*.

The antithesis of blinding is seeing light (that was already shining),

Note the highlighted word in verse 4: *lest* (*eis to mē* + an infinitive)

Literally, it means *unto not*. The idea is to prevent something from happening.

The od of this age veils unbelievers' eyes so light will not shine into their eyes.

What would happen, if he did not veil their eyes? Light would \_\_\_\_\_

Who is *the god of this age*? Should it be translated *the God of this age*?

The method of blinding gives the answer:

When God blinds, He does so by \_\_\_\_\_

When Satan blinds, he does so by \_\_\_\_\_

Here, blinding involves \_\_\_\_\_, so \_\_\_\_\_ is the od of this age

How (according to verse 6) is it that God overcomes veiling?

Does He remove the veil?

Does He do something other than removing the veil?

Question: Is seeing a decision? Is believing a decision?

**Acts 28:24**

This is Luke's summary of how people responded to Paul's last message in Acts:  
*And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken,  
 and some disbelieved [the things which were spoken].*

A Some <u>were persuaded by</u> the things that were spoken	B Others <u>disbelieved</u> the things that were spoken
C Some <u>believed</u> the things that were spoken	D Others <u>were not persuaded</u> the things that were spoken

A equals C  
B equals D

*being persuaded = believing*  
*disbelieving = not being persuaded*

A is the opposite of B  
A is the opposite of D

*being persuaded is the opposite of disbelieving*  
*being persuaded is the opposite of not being persuaded*

C is the opposite of B  
C is the opposite of D

*believing is the opposite of disbelieving*  
*not being persuaded is the opposite of not being persuaded*

**Each of the following means the same thing as the others:**

1. Some were persuaded by what was said; others disbelieved what was said,
2. Some were persuaded by what was said; others were not persuaded by what was said,
3. Some believed what was spoken; others disbelieved what was spoken,
4. Some believed what was spoken; others were not persuaded by what was spoken,

**The moment we are persuaded that something is true, we have believed it.**

**We cannot decide to believe something that we think is false, because we do not believe anything that we think is false. If we think it is false, we do not believe it.**

Let's do an experiment:

**What do we call deciding to believe? \_\_\_\_\_ believe.**

**Romans 4:4–5**

<sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

<sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

**Wages are a debt incurred by an employer. Wages are not a gift.**

**Believing is not a work, so it incurs no debt. Believers receive life as a gift, not a debt.**

**Why isn't believing a work we do?**

**John 6:28–29**

<sup>28</sup> Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

Many have understood the underlined words as: Believing is the work that we do for God.

This first view understands “work of God” as “work [done \_\_\_\_\_] God:

Another option exists: “This is the work\_\_\_\_\_ of God, that you believe”

This second view understands “work of God” as “work [done \_\_\_\_\_] God:

Persuasion is \_\_\_\_\_ God, so that people can believe.

**John 6:44-45**

<sup>44</sup> No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the prophets, “And they shall all be taught by God.” Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

Verse 44 says that no one comes to Christ [believes in Him] unless the Father draws him

How does verse 45 define the drawing that leads people to come to Christ [believe in Him]?

**CONCLUSION**