

Romans 11:1-7, 11-12 (NKJV)

1 I say then, has God cast away His people?
Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the
seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not cast away His people whom He
foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scrip-
ture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God
against Israel, saying,

3 "LORD, they have killed Your prophets and
torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and
they seek my life"?

1

Rom. 11:4 But what does the divine response
say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven
thousand men who have not bowed the knee
to Baal."

5 Even so then, at this present time there is a
remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works;
otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of
works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is
no longer work.

2

Rom. 11:7 What then? Israel has not obtained
what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it,
and the rest were blinded.

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they
should fall? Certainly not! But through their
fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has
come to the Gentiles.

12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and
their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much
more their fullness!

3

- National Israel tested God in the wilderness, disobeyed His laws, turned to foreign alliances and idolatry, and rebelled against Him countless times through the centuries
- God disciplined His wayward children on numerous occasions – famines, plagues, locusts, storms, defeat by enemies, captivity, dispersion, destruction of cities, etc.
- But despite God's merciful discipline, Israel continued to rebel and stiff-arm God

4

- Despite numerous preachers with "beautiful feet" sent to proclaim the gospel of peace (10:15), the nation's leaders killed the prophets and even killed God's own son!

- God's summary:

Rom 10:21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I
have stretched out My hands to a disobedient
and contrary people."

- Prompting Paul to ask:

Rom 11:1a I say then, has God cast away His
people?

5

Zane Hodges, Commentary on Romans:

This question is relevant even today. Over the
centuries of Christian history right up to the
present day many have claimed in one way or
another that Israel's special relationship to God is
over. This is often softened into the concept of a
new Israel which the largely Gentile Church sup-
posedly fulfills. But Paul knows nothing of this.
His concern here is not about a so called spiritual
Israel, but about the real, physical nation that
goes by that name. No suggestion of anything
like a spiritual counterpart to Israel can be dis-
covered anywhere in chaps. 9–11.

6

The answer to Paul's opening question:
Rom 11:1b Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God:*

Paul considers his own calling as an apostle a guarantee that God has not rejected His people! He, a persecutor of the church, had been called by Jesus to be His servant – irresistibly. For Paul this is proof that God will not give up on His people. He will do with all what He did with him.

7

- God might feel like obliterating Israel, as He nearly did during Moses' day, but Moses interceded then, and Paul intercedes here:

Rom 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh.

Rom 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

8

- Will God cast away His people? NO!

Rom 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

- God has made promises to Israel that He will fulfill *through* Israel!
- Nothing can keep God from fulfilling His Word, not even His "incorrigible child"
- Thankfully, God's arsenal of discipline has not been exhausted – His final disciplinary technique will bring Israel to repentance

9

1. What does Israel's "time-out" mean for Israel?

Rom 11:2a God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.

James Dunn: Just as the choice of Jacob and rejection of Esau was without regard to their future conduct (9:10–13), so Israel's status as God's people remains unaffected by Israel's latest and most serious failure.

- But God has set aside His people for a time, while He works to call out another people for His name, all the while disciplining His son Israel, to bring the nation to repentance

10

Rom 11:2b-3 Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, "LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"?

4 But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

- Paul recalls the OT account of Elijah, who was chased by Jezebel after the triumphant victory of calling fire down from heaven on Mt. Carmel

11

- Elijah felt very alone and afraid – in fact, he felt as if he were the only one taking a stand for God
- But God reminded him that seven thousand others were standing strong also – a remnant
- Paul's point in the ensuing verses is that, in like manner, God has preserved many Israelites who are living for Jesus – they are the ones who have embraced the *word of faith* message that Paul has been proclaiming, the gospel of kingdom inheritance

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- Incidentally, Paul is not talking about matters of initial salvation – as if the remnant were regenerated Israelites and all the others were not regenerated
- Israel was a regenerate nation at the point in history in which Paul is writing
- The same was true when Elijah prophesied to Israel
- That is important to remember, for it shapes our interpretation of this text and the *grace/works* discussion in v. 6, and the *salvation* in vs. 11 and 26

13

Rom 11:5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

- Notice the phrase at the end of v. 5: *the election of grace*
- This does not refer to initial salvation

14

- Calvinists believe God elects some to salvation which, by default, means He has elected all the others to damnation
- Important interpretation principle:
- *Election* in the Scriptures is unto *service*, not eternal life (regeneration)
- God doesn't elect some to be saved and condemn all others – but He does elect some to service – to become *sons to glory* – and it seems His election is based on foreknowledge

15

Rom 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

- Election is God's choosing and setting aside for rigorous training, those He knows are choosing to follow Jesus in discipleship
- Many Jews in the church at Rome had not only embraced Jesus as the Messiah, they were also on the pathway of sanctification unto reward – *they* were the remnant according to the election of grace

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- Other Jewish believers had embraced Jesus as Messiah, but continued to observe the Mosaic rituals, thinking that would sanctify and make them righteous before God
- Paul condemned **WORKS OF THE LAW** in Rom. 3-4, emphasizing that God wants His children to depend on His Son Jesus for daily victory over sin and righteous behavior
- It is important to interpret 11:6 in light of Rom. 4, not in light of Eph. 2:8-9, which has no bearing on this verse

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Rom 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works [of the law]; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works [of the law], it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

- Many of the Jewish believers at Rome were depending on keeping the Mosaic rituals to put them in good standing with God
- But that was all wrong, for they were not depending on God's grace to live righteously
- Rather, they thought they were entitled to grace because they were keeping the Mosaic rituals

18

- They put the cart before the horse, so to speak – and they even had the wrong horse!

James Dunn, Commentary:

What Paul objects to is “works” understood as a qualification for God’s favor simply because it is they which qualify for membership of the covenant people and which sustain that identity as God’s elect. It is this reduction of God’s election to matters of ethnic and ritual identity which Paul sees as the fatal misunderstanding and abandonment of God’s grace and of the election of grace.

19

Rom 4:4 Now to him who works [i.e., does works of the law – see Rom. 3:20, 28], the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

5 But to him who does not work [i.e., do works of the law] but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

- According to 5:2, we access God’s grace by faith
- And so Paul uses Abraham as an example in ch. 4, emphasizing that he did works (long before the law ever existed) BY FAITH

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- In other words, Abraham accessed God’s grace by faith and lived accordingly, not according to some system of entitlement, and God counted it to him for righteousness;
- God considered Abraham righteous because he obeyed in faith
- Merely keeping the works of the law doesn’t please God
- Rom. 11:6 must be interpreted in that context

21

- Paul is writing to these Jewish believers and emphasizing that God has graciously chosen them to live as Christ’s disciples – they are the remnant
- So they need to stop living legalistically and start accessing God’s grace by faith to live in a manner pleasing to God (Rom. 5:2)
- Those who are legalistic actually spurn God’s grace, even though they think they are earning His favor
- Legalistic living nullifies grace-living!

22

- Paul sums up this part of his argument :
Rom 11:7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.
- Despite keeping the Mosaic rituals, Israel has not received God’s grace, to which the nation believes it is entitled
- The elect have obtained His grace, because they have trusted God for the grace to live righteously
- All the rest live in blindness

23

- Paul then quotes two OT prophecies :
Rom 11:8 Just as it is written: “*God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day.*” (a paraphrase from Isaiah):
Isa 29:10,13 For the LORD has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes ... Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.

24

- God has allowed Israel to pursue its own way, giving them over to stupor (slumber), blindness and deafness
 - Jesus gives a similar description to the church at Laodicea in Rev. 3
- Rev 3:17 You say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

25

Paul then quotes from Psalm 69:

Rom 11:9 David says: "*Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them.*

10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always."

26

Zane Hodges: In Paul's mind their table would most likely be a reference to the special provisions and blessings God had granted to the nation (enumerated in 9:4-5). Their very sense of privilege and blessing (an undoubted source of Jewish pride) had lured them into a feeling of "worthiness" that motivated them to vainly seek righteousness by means of the law (11:7; 10:3). But this vain search for law-based righteousness was a snare as well as a trap into which they had fallen; their search should have convicted them of their sinfulness and led them to the righteousness of God (Rom 3:19-22).

27

- Consequently, in v. 10 Paul essentially repeats what he said earlier – let their eyes be darkened – seems to be referring to spiritual blindness.
- The latter half of the verse portrays the image of a man hunched over due to a great burden
- In Israel's case, it is the spiritual burden of pride and legalism, which was characteristic of the Pharisees and held the nation back from repentance

28

2. What does Israel's "time-out" mean for *Gentiles*?

Rom 11:11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

- Paul is asking what is likely on the minds of some of his audience:
- Does Israel's stumbling mean they are going to fall apart completely as a nation?
- The answer: certainly not!

29

- *but through their fall* – this second usage of the word *fall* is a different Greek word
 - The NASB correctly translates it, *through their transgression*
 - As a result of Israel's transgression, *salvation* has come to the Gentiles
 - Remember the definitions given for *gospel* and *salvation* in 1:16
- Rom 1:16a For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes [literally, *to every-one who is believing*].

30

- Paul is writing to believers – thus, this *salvation* is NOT the initial salvation of one's spirit (Rom. 8:16)
- Rather, this is the good news of kingdom inheritance
- *Salvation* in this sense is twofold: a) ongoing salvation of the soul – i.e., sanctification unto reward (e.g., James 1:21; Matt. 16:24-27)
- and b) deliverance from God's temporal wrath, because those whose souls are being saved are living righteously

31

Arlen Chitwood, Had Ye Believed Moses:

"Salvation" coming to the Gentiles as a result of Israel's "fall" has nothing to do with eternal salvation [but] with the same thing Israel relinquished — salvation in relation to the proffered kingdom. And "Gentiles" is used in this passage the same way Paul previously used the word in the first chapter of this book, referring to saved Gentiles, those forming the Church (v. 16).

32

Arlen Chitwood, Had Ye Believed Moses (cont'd):

The reason for the very existence of the Church, or the fact that the "salvation" referenced in Rom. 11:11 can even be realized by Christians, has to do with that referred to as Israel's "fall." Israel rejected the proffered kingdom and crucified the One making the offer. The kingdom was then taken from Israel (Matt. 21:43), and an entirely new entity — the one new man "in Christ," — was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected (1 Peter 2:9-11).

33

- Paul says in v. 11 that this salvation coming to the Gentiles is designed to *provoke [Israel] to jealousy* – how so?

Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.

34

Acts 13:47 For so the Lord has commanded us: "I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth."

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.

35

Acts 13:50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

- This is a classic example of the Jews being provoked to jealousy by the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to Gentiles
- It will likely intensify during the tribulation, when multitudes of Gentiles will embrace Messiah and the gospel of the kingdom, when the 144,000 Jewish evangelists proclaim that message globally

36

Paul then makes a remarkable statement:
Rom 11:12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

- The word *fall* = the same as the second usage in v. 11, meaning “transgression”
- The word *failure* is new, meaning “diminished or defeated”
- Thus, the storm cloud of Israel’s transgression has a silver lining!

37

- The Gentile world has actually been enriched by Israel’s time-out, for Gentiles are now receiving the gospel of grace and the gospel of kingdom inheritance – in this present age!
- The Holy Spirit is seeking out *sons to glory* from His predominantly Gentile church
- And if that is the glorious result of Israel’s stumbling, HOW MUCH MORE if Israel were to be restored to fellowship with the Lord by embracing His Messiah!

38

- Incidentally, that WILL happen going into the next age – the Millennium will be a glorious age indeed, for Israel will be God’s priestly nation to all the nations of the world

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God*:

The issue is nothing less than the promise to Abraham that through his posterity all nations of the earth would be blessed. Abraham will be the inheritor of the world (Rom. 4:13)! This blessing has no limits! – it goes far beyond the riches the church has received.

39

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God (cont’d)*:

The greater riches that were promised by the prophets are not the salvation of *some* people, called by God from the nations, while the vast majority will remain doomed. No, the promise is for *all* humanity ... These riches will not come until “all Israel” is saved ... As long as only a fraction of Israel serves its Messiah, there can be no salvation for all the nations.

40

- Paul now addresses the Gentiles, referring to himself as an apostle to the Gentiles – which is, indeed, what God had called him to be (see Acts 9:15)

Rom 11:13-14 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.

41

- He desires to leverage his ministry so as to provoke Jews to jealousy, so that some will receive the gospel of kingdom inheritance and experience deliverance from God’s wrath through righteous living

Hodges: His goal is that the Jews should say, “We want that too.”

42

Rom 11:15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

- Paul says something similar to what he had said in v. 12, but here he uses different terminology
- *being cast away* = rejection – Hodges translates it *throwing aside* – which is temporary (Israel's time-out)
- Israel's temporary "being cast to the side" has resulted in *the reconciling of the world*

43

Zane Hodges, Commentary:

Reconciliation is inherently a two-party process, but the first step was taken at the cross where God reconciled the world to Himself by imputing their sins to Christ (2 Cor 5:19). Therefore the world is no longer estranged from God by an unbridgeable gulf of sin. As a result, the believer can experience personal reconciliation to God by faith (2 Cor 5:20). Thus the whole world has been reconciled as a result of Israel's fall.

44

Zane Hodges, Commentary (cont'd):

In the process of rejecting Messiah and crucifying Him, Israel precipitated her own throwing aside. But the result of this tragic loss of opportunity and privilege was the reconciling of the entire world. In the cross, Israel's supreme sin becomes God's supreme act of reconciling love (5:8) to all mankind.

45

- In light of this glorious news for mankind following Israel's *rejection*, Paul wonders out loud in the latter half of v. 15 if Israel's *acceptance* will result in *life from the dead* – of course, he knows it will!
- What does he mean by *life from the dead*?
- Paul is obviously speaking of resurrection – at least the resurrection of believers – that will occur when Israel is restored to fellowship with Jehovah
- He referred to this glorious day in ch. 8:

46

Rom 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

20-21 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

- THAT will happen when Israel embraces Messiah and repents at His second coming

47

- How will that result in *life from the dead*?
- Not only will the saints be resurrected, so will national Israel
- Israel will then become ruler of the nations – pointing people to Jesus their Messiah
- The *sons to glory* will ascend to their assigned places of rulership in the New Jerusalem

48

- When God's three firstborn sons (Jesus, Israel, and the *sons to glory*) step into their assigned roles, there will be a tremendous spiritual life from the dead, as multitudes are turned to Messiah
- And that will continue throughout the entire Millennium!
- Hodges refers to this as "a resurrection of the world itself."
- So we are beneficiaries of Israel's time-out!
- In fact, this was all planned by God

49

Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God:*
In Romans 5:18-19 (and 1 Cor. 15:20-28) we read that all humanity, since Adam, will be saved through what God did for humankind in Christ. In Romans 8:19-21 we are informed about the role of God's children in this process of redemption. But now we hear that God will not do that without the Jews. The salvation of all peoples – full "riches for the Gentiles" and "life from the dead" – will not come about before the Jewish people have accepted Jesus as their Messiah.

50

- Jesus told His disciples about this glorious coming era and how we as God's children should prepare for it:
Matt 19:28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

51

- The word *regeneration* in v. 28 means *rebirth or restoration*
- Christ's Messianic kingdom will truly be a world resurrection, a rebirth, a time of reconciling and restoring for all mankind
- Jesus promises that those who have paid a price to follow Him in discipleship now will receive abundant reward and inherit the life for that age
- What a glorious prospect!
- Are you on that pathway of reward?

52