

God's Plan for Israel and the Gentiles
Romans 11:11-15
September 22, 2021

Review and Context

Theme of Romans: The gospel of God (1:16-17)

Chs 9-11 The gospel and Israel

- In 9:1-5, the apostle in a very personal way introduced the problem (from the human standpoint) of Israel's unbelief (rejection of the Messiah)

- *Thesis:* 9:6a "But it is not as though the word of God has failed."
 - The OT's numerous promises to the nation of Israel, of spiritual salvation through the Messiah

 - Examples include:

Ezek. 36:24–28 "I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Jeremiah 31:31-36

Deut 30:6; Zech 12:10-13:1

- The apostle proves that the word of God has not failed, using five arguments that center on the following:
 1. God's sovereign election of some individuals and not others (9:6b-29)
 2. Israel's reliance on works rather than faith (9:30-10:21).
 - Israel is responsible for their failure to believe in Christ
 3. The remnant of believers within Israel (11:1-10)
 4. God's temporary rejection of Israel (11:11-24)
 5. Israel's future salvation (11:25-32)

The Passage
verse 11

Question: Verse 11 speaks of Israel's "trespass." What was their trespass? How does Paul's previous teaching on God's sovereignty relate to their trespass?

11 “So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall?...”

1. A question about the nation of Israel, who is the subject of chapters 9-11
2. “stumble” refers back to 9:32b
 - Speaks of Israel’s failure to believe in Jesus Christ
 - Spoken of in 10:3 as a failure to “submit to God’s righteousness” revealed in the gospel
3. Asking if their stumbling is a permanent fall, a fall into irretrievable spiritual ruin
 - **NET** “stumble into an irrevocable fall”
 - **NIV** “stumble so as to fall beyond recovery”
4. The question was raised by the apostle’s teaching that God hardened the majority of Israel (**vv 7-10**)

11 “...By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.”

1. The apostle most emphatically denies such an idea. A reversal is coming.
2. Israel’s stumbling is part of a plan God is sovereignly fulfilling that will lead to Israel’s future salvation
3. This sovereign plan encompasses both the Jews and the Gentiles

“through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles”

1. Israel’s “trespass” refers back to their stumbling
2. **Matt. 8:11–12** “I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
3. **Matt. 21:43** “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.”
4. **Acts 13:46** “And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.”
5. Also Acts 28:25-28

“so as to make Israel jealous”

1. Alludes to Deuteronomy 32:21, which the apostle quoted in 10:19
2. A jealousy that leads to salvation (11:14)

3. Part of God's purpose is that Israel would recognize that Jesus is the Messiah and desire the spiritual blessings the Gentiles are receiving from Him, and consequently believe in Him
4. Grievously, the church at times has acted contrary to this
5. *John MacArthur*: "It should be the desire of every Christian to manifest the spiritual realities of a transformed life that would draw unbelieving Jews to belief in our Lord and their Messiah."¹
6. *John MacArthur*: "God's ultimate purpose in setting Israel aside was not to drive His people further away but to bring them back to Himself. He wanted to make them face their own sin and its consequences, to sense their alienation from Jehovah and to recognize their need for the salvation that He now offered the Gentiles."²

verse 12

"their full inclusion"

1. **CSB, NKJV** "fullness"
2. **NASB** "fulfillment"
3. **NET** "full restoration"
4. Means their reception of the fullness of the blessings God promised them

God chose the nation of Israel and blessed them in order that they would be an instrument of His blessing to the nations

- **Gen. 12:2-3** "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Paul is teaching that in some sense the blessings that will come to the world through Israel's future restoration will be greater than the blessings that have come to the world through Israel's failure.

1. Great blessings that will follow Christ's return
2. Christ spoke in Matthew 19:28 of this future time as "the regeneration" (NASB), or "the renewal of all things" (NIV)

13a "Now I am speaking to you Gentiles"

- The apostle is concerned to apply what he is saying in this passage to the Gentile majority in the church at Rome

¹ MacArthur, *Romans 9-16*, 109.

² MacArthur, 109.

vv 13b-14

1. The apostle is guarding against Gentile believers wrongly concluding that Paul's focus on Gentiles means God has permanently set Israel aside
2. The purposes of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles include making some Jews jealous in order that they would be saved.

verse 15

Question: Verse 15 speaks of "their rejection" and "their acceptance." In this verse, who is rejecting whom? And who is accepting whom?

The verb form of the term "acceptance" is used in the following verses with God as the subject:

- **14:3** for God **has welcomed** him.
- **15:7** Therefore welcome one another as Christ **has welcomed** you, for the glory of God.

Repeats the main idea of verse 12, using different terms

"life from the dead"

1. Includes the physical resurrection of the saints, and more
2. Blessing for the whole world comparable to resurrection
3. The point is that this blessing goes beyond reconciliation

Conclusion

God's act of setting Israel aside was not an after-thought, or an outburst of emotional anger, but is temporary and has a definite purpose that involves Israel's future salvation, and Israel being an instrument of God's blessing to the world.

As we will see in our next study, God's purpose in each stage of salvation history includes humbling the pride of man so that God alone will be exalted.