

THE BOOK OF ROMANS
"Gentiles Provoking Jews"
Romans 11:11-15

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul is a master logician. He batters down all arguments by his faithfulness to God's purpose for Jew and Gentile.
2. It has just been shown that God is not finished with Israel as a nation (vv 1-4). He has an election according to grace (vv 5, 6).
3. The election by grace relates to the remnant within Israel who believed God (Amos 9:8-10) Micah 2:12; 5:3; 2 Eph. 3:12, 13; Jer. 23:3; Ezek. 14:14, 20, 22; Isa. 6:9-13). Those not in the election by grace were hardened because they did not believe (v 7). Moreover, this was a divine judgment on unbelief (vv 8-10).
4. With so many in the nation having defaulted, now what? God has His purpose for it all. Here is a list of some of them:-

1. ISRAEL'S FALL--temporary 11a

The point to this verse is clear. Is the "stumble" of the nation irrevocable? Note verb stumble is here only in Paul's writings. Is the stumble for a final complete fall? As in v. 1, the specific negative used indicates an emphatic "no." In addition Paul employs a favorite horrifying phrase: perish the thought or banish the idea (KJV: God forbid). Let all, as covenant theologians do, who wipe out the Jew from God's future program take heed!

2. ISRAEL'S SIN--overruled v. 11b

- a. Salvation to Gentiles

The stumbling of Israel opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles. Thus by Jewish falling aside (Greek) salvation came to Gentiles (not now as proselytes or Judaism). This was an historical fact (Acts 10; 11; 13, etc.).

- b. Jealousy by Jews

This is the other side of the picture. Emulation or zeal is perhaps better than jealousy. Idea is that Jew would want what Gentiles have! The careless should awake because God is dealing with Gentiles.

3. ISRAEL'S RETURN--enriches vv.12-14

- a. Brings riches to Gentiles v.12

The reference is obviously to the Gospel of forgiveness coming to the Gentiles by missing the day of their visitation (Lk 19:41-44), Israel moved "riches"

onto the Gentiles. His mercy had to be shown! Israel's fall is also referred to as a "diminuation." This word is found only here and 1 Cor. 6:7. The word has a numerical value. Israel as a remnant (or election by grace), hence a small number. As such, riches go to Gentiles. Besides "riches" and "diminuation," the third critical word of the verse is "fulness." When Israel is again full, i.e. numerically what God desires (cf. v 25), then "much more" will fall out to the Gentiles. What an amazing verse!

b. Affirms Paul's Apostleship to Gentiles v. 13

The "for" of the verse should be "but." This is not a parenthetical item. It is a logical part of Paul's argument. Paul has been saying a lot about the Jews, but now he affirms his position as an apostle of Gentiles. The preponderance of believers at Rome were Gentiles. Paul states that his actions actually glorify or do honor to his Gentile ministry. Thus, he is faithfully discharging his calling.

c. Provokes Jewish Salvation v. 14

The labors among the Gentiles ("riches") and the glorifying (i.e. faithful discharge) of his office demonstrate that Paul has the salvation of at least "some" Jews in view. This in turn would work toward the fulness of Israel (v. 12) which would then bring "much more" to the Gentiles. If anything, Paul was after results unto God among Jews and Gentiles.

CONCLUSION The conclusion is given (v. 15). It reverberates with the thoughts of v. 12 and provides a climax. Looking back over the section, "casting away" is equivalent to "their fall" or "diminuation;" the "reconciling of the world" is equivalent to the "riches of the world" or "of the Gentiles;" the receiving of them" is tantamount to "their fullness;" and the "life from the dead" to the "how much more." "Life from the dead" is the critical phrase. Who receives it and what is it? The primary reference in the context seems to be to Israel restored to the Lord and resurrected (Ezek. 37). However, inasmuch as Israel in place means the world in place, the phrase is extended to the whole earth (Isa. 11:9). What a day that will be (Isa. 40:1-5). Amen