

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 11:11-14

Verse 11: "Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery?"

Paul is not expressing a hope about every person who is genetically Jewish. Being born Jewish is not the key – since Paul has stated that "True Israelites" can be separated out of genetic Israel.

Jesus' Teaching on Sheep and Goats – See: Matthew 25:31-46

What Paul is about to say to us concerning the future of Israel is not about individual Israelites. He's asking what will happen to True Israel? What will happen to the promises God made to the nation of Israel – not the individuals?

- **"What Will Happen To Israel?"** - Verses 11-12

"Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. 12 But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!"

Paul rejects the notion that God has completely rejected all of Israel: Just as God sheltered a remnant of prophets during Elijah's ministry, Paul insists there is a "remnant" of Israel – "True Israel".

- **"Salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious."**

John Stott's Commentary on Roman: "A chain with three links":

1. Through Israel's fall, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

2. The Gentile's salvation will make Israel envious and so lead to her restoration or "fulness".
 3. Israel's restoration and "fulness" will bring yet much greater riches to the world.
- **"Because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious."**

Moses' prediction of God's intention: "I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding." - Deuteronomy 32:21

"[Paul] is giving a theological interpretation to historical events."

Salvation came to the Gentiles – in part – because Israel largely rejected the gospel. We hear John 1 echoed here. "He came to his own, but they did not receive him."

The Book of Acts: Four examples of the Jews' rejection of the gospel led to the Gentiles believing the same information.

- 1st missionary journey to Pisidian Antioch: Acts 13:46
- 2nd & 3rd missionary journeys to Corinth and Ephesus: Acts 15-18
- 4th Missionary Journey: Paul's reception in Rome: Acts 28:23-29

Paul's quote from Isaiah 6 during 4th missionary journey: "... *This people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.*"

Israel is divided between those who will hear and those who won't. Those who hear become what Paul calls, "True Israel" or "The Remnant" – while those who refuse remain hardened.

The Jewish Rejection: The Gentiles' Opportunity

Romans 11:12: "But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!"

First, Israel's transgression has meant riches for the world: God followed His plan to use Israel's fall to open the door for the Gentiles. The Jews were jealous of the Gentiles joining the Kingdom of God.

Two implications: 1. Israel's loss because of their rejection of the gospel. 2. The blessings that will result when True Israel is restored.

God's purpose in allowing Israel's hardening was to make them jealous of the blessings the Gentiles took in Israel's absence. He wanted them to be jealous so that they would want those blessings for themselves.

- **Paul's Second Pass: v. 13-16**

"I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry 14 in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches."

1. While Paul definitely preaches to the Jews, it is the Gentiles that have become the target of his apostolic ministry. See: Romans 1:1; 1:5; 5:16.

Paul's hope: "Somehow ... arouse his *own people to envy and so, by persuading them to believe in Christ, save some of them.*"

A surprisingly low expectation on Paul's part? Two responses: 1. Paul is being a realist. By the time he wrote Romans, he had spent decades preaching the gospel to the Jews and Gentiles. What pattern had he

observed? The vast majority of Jews rejected the message, while large numbers of Gentiles embraced it.

2. Paul takes into account his efforts are only one part of what God is doing to restore True Israel.

Pew Research Center Study:

“Christians currently make up just 2% of Israel's adult population. As of 2010, Christians made up 4% of the population in the Middle East-North Africa region.”

About 23 million [out of Earth's 7.3 billion] people describe themselves as Christians. The vast majority of that 23 million are Gentiles. The latest estimates indicated that only 350,000 Jews claim to be Messianic.

Is there hope that Paul's aspirations will be successful?