

Session 60: Paul Provokes Israel

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 60)

Referring to last session notes Israel's stumble, fall, diminishing, and fullness are the four terms which we need to understand and appreciate.

Now let us deal with them in view of what Paul is teaching.

Romans 11:11 *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

The "fall" in the opening question of verse 11 is talking about a permanent fallen status. Think of it like this: they stumble, they fall, and they never get up. This kind of fall would mean that God will never restore Israel and he will not follow through on the promises and covenants he made with her.

Paul's answer to that is "God forbid."

How do we know that is the sense of the first part of the verse? How do we know that Paul is not saying that Israel never fell? We know because of what follows in the verse.

Romans 11:11 *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

What does "salvation is come unto the Gentiles" mean? The opportunity to be saved has come to the Gentiles.

We see that Israel did fall, just not permanently. Through Israel's fall, salvation came to the Gentiles and that was meant to provoke Israel to jealousy. Why would God provoke Israel to jealousy if they were never going to be restored? That would not make sense. Verse 11 gives us the idea that God intends to fulfill his plan with Israel. The very fact that God is provoking Israel to jealousy indicates that God still intends to give them their fullness.

That brings us to the next word – the diminishing aspect. But let's look at the timeline first. This happens from Paul's conversion to Acts 8 to Acts 28. (This diminishing happens in 3 pronouncements (phases) see page 700 Session 59.)

Acts 13:45 *But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it*

from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

***Acts 18:5** And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. ⁶ And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.*

***Acts 28: 27** For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. ²⁸ Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*

Let us go back and pick up Romans 11:12.

***Romans 11:12** Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world...*

The fall of Israel did not bring about the destruction of the world, but rather it was the “riches of the world.”

How was God dealing with Gentiles back during Israel’s program? It could hardly be described as “riches.” And how is God dealing with Gentiles now that the dispensational change has brought Israel to the same level as the Gentiles? Has Israel’s fall been to the Gentiles’ benefit? It has been to the benefit of the entire world. Can you name the ways in which the world has benefitted by Israel’s fall?

Discusses the unpardonable sin and the rejection of Jesus Christ (no notes).

***Romans 11:12** Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*

***Colossians 2:13** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 61: Paul Provokes Israel

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 61)

Paul points out we were not apart of Israel and the condition we were in.

Ephesians 2:11 *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; ¹² That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

What has happened to the world since Israel fell? God has been reconciling the world through his Son.

Romans 11:15 *For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

That is the “riches of the world.” In the pastoral epistles, Paul writes to Titus:

Titus 2:11 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,*

The grace of God did not appear to all men in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In fact, it did not appear to all men during Israel’s program at all. Where was salvation during Israel’s program?

John 4:22 *Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.*

No wonder Paul calls this dispensation of Gentile grace the “riches of the world.”

By the way, there is nothing in the Bible, from the calling out of Abraham to the stoning of Stephen in the book of Acts that ever indicated that the casting away of Israel would be the riches of the Gentiles. The prophetic program, always and only, emphasized that the world will benefit and will be blessed through the rise of the nation of Israel.

How has God been dealing with the world since Israel fell? He is dealing with the world under grace, not imputing men’s trespasses unto them. God is being longsuffering as the world enjoys his “goodness” and not judgment.

Romans 11:11 *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

We usually think of provoking as a bad thing, but you can also provoke someone to do the right thing. During the transition ministry of Paul, God was using him to provoke Israel to jealousy. Jealousy was the result of Paul telling the Jews, in their synagogues, that God was now working with Gentiles and not with them in their favored nation status.

Oxford English Dictionary

Jealousy: 3) The state of mind arising from the suspicion, apprehension, or knowledge of rivalry: fear of being supplanted in the affection of a beloved person.

This would certainly be what was in the Jews' minds when they heard Paul talk about what God was now doing with Gentiles and that they were no longer a favored people.

***Romans 11:12** Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles...*

Nothing in Israel's program indicated that Gentiles would be benefactors of Israel's diminishing. Israel's diminishing has been the riches of the Gentiles: as Gentiles believe the gospel of the grace of God, and as Gentiles enjoy God's working with them in spite of the fact that Israel has not yet had her fullness. But guess what? That was part of the message of the mystery! It was not known until Paul made it known. God planned to do something for the world, something for Gentiles, apart from Israel during this dispensational change. Acts 7-28 is the diminishing period.

***Romans 11:11** I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. ¹² Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*

If God could produce riches by the fall of Israel, how much more can God achieve through Israel's fullness?

There is the fourth term: the fullness.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 62: Paul Provokes Israel Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 62)

Romans 11:11 *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. ¹² Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*

Verses 11-12 were designed to produce a particular understanding about Israel in our thinking. Those verses were designed to keep us from thinking that Israel will not or cannot be restored. They were designed to assure us that all God promised to do with Israel he will do with Israel.

Romans 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:*

Verse 13 was saying who Paul was and whom his primary ministry was to. He was an apostle of the Gentiles and he said, "I magnify mine office." Paul magnifies his office not himself personally.

Romans 11:14 *If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*

Back in verse 11, we saw that God was using Paul to provoke Israel to jealousy. In verse 14, the provocation to emulation was something different; as jealousy and emulation are not identical. We know what it means to emulate, to copy, to do as someone else does. In this case, the provocation was to get the Jews to copy what the Gentiles were doing: trusting Christ.

Paul realizes that God is not done with them by any means. He realizes their fullness is yet to come. Paul uses that very issue once again as he deals with Israel. There is more to it than that. Paul now begins posing questions to get us to realize that Israel's fullness is yet to come.

Romans 11:15 *For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

Crabb's English Synonyms

Cast: cast conveys simply the idea of laying aside or putting something from one's self. Throw and hurl indicate a mode of action. What is not wanted is "cast off." What is worthless or hurtful is thrown away. Cast is an indifferent action. Throw always indicates a dislike or contempt. Cast requires no particular effort; it amounts in general to no more than let fall or go. To cast is to set aside.

(See Session 48, page 663 for notes on Crabb's English Dictionary, cast: ending at top of page 664 second paragraph with: 'permanency of Israel being cast away.')

In Romans 11:15, Paul says that Israel has been cast away, in the sense of being 'set aside.' This is not the same meaning of cast away as Paul used at the beginning of the chapter when he says that God has not cast away his people.

***Romans 11:15** For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

Right now Paul is asking the question, "if the casting away...world," that's what God did (he set them aside not to deal with them now) and he is reconciling the world unto himself. He is dealing with the world as a whole. There is difference between Jew and Gentile. "What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

The big issue that we are going to focus on now is the receiving of them. He has only cast them away temporarily and he is going to receive them in the future. Their fullness is yet to come. They will be received and they will get the fullness of God's dealing with them just as had been promised and covenanted and set forth in their scriptures.

In verses 16-24, Paul sets forth the fact that restoration has been provided for already and it's an easy thing for God to do. Indeed, Paul's illustration reveals the naturalness of God resuming his prophetic program with Israel.

***Romans 11:16** For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.*

Go to page 706, Romans 11:16 for notes. (Fifteen minute discussion on the principal of Romans 11:16-24 – grafting of the branches and the meaning of the terminology is however, discussed here.)

What I am mainly after here is to recognize the fact that Israel has fallen. What does it mean that she has fallen; fallen in what way?

She has fallen from her position of being God's chosen people. Israel no longer enjoys favored nation status among the nations of the world. In this dispensation of Gentile grace, Israel is fallen to the level of every Gentile nation.

In the same way that she is presently fallen, she is also 'cast away.'

***Romans 11:15** For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

The temporary setting aside of Israel has resulted in the reconciling of the world.

Does that mean the whole world has now been reconciled to God? No, this is talking about the opportunity for the world to be reconciled and that process of reconciliation is taking place.

2 Corinthians 5:18 *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

Compare that to Romans 9:22-23.

Romans 9:22 *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: ²³ And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*

Israel has lost her place of privilege as God's chosen people. That is not a permanent situation, but she has fallen and remains so throughout this dispensation of Gentile grace. This is the context leading up to verse 16ff. The illustration that follows is not talking about some people getting eternal life (grafted in) and others losing their salvation (broken off) because that is not the context of the passage.

(Note: refer back to page 705 to Romans 11:16, the 15 minute discussion.)

Romans 11:16 *For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.*

To understand the verse, let us identify its terms. What is the firstfruit? It is the first part of a harvest. So Paul says, if the first crop of grains that are harvested are holy – what does it mean for something to be holy? It means to be set apart. More accurately, it is set apart for a specific purpose: a purpose which God himself intends for it.

If the first crop grains are holy (set apart for a specific purpose), then the dough (the lump) that is made from that grain is also holy. This means that just as the crop itself was set apart unto God, the dough that is made from the grains harvested are also holy: set apart unto God.

If the wheat crop is set apart, then anything made from that wheat is also set apart unto God.

The next part of the verse says:

Romans 11:16 *For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.*

If the root of a plant is holy, then the branches on the plant are also holy because the branches are a product of the root. The root is not a product of the branches. The principle is that when something is holy, that which comes from it is also holy.

The application of this with regard to Israel is this: God does not have to look at the lump or look at the branches as unholy (something that he cannot utilize) because the firstfruit and root are holy. Therefore, it is not impossible for God to utilize Israel again in the future.

The provision for restoration is already there, but not only that, but that restoration is easily done. It is natural for God to restore Israel. Paul takes that root and branches concept and he illustrates it in the next verses.

***Romans 11:17** And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;*

Ten minute discussion on wild versus care of olive tree and ‘some of the broken off branch.’
Who are the broken off branches – unsaved Israel (no notes).

Space for personal reflection and notes