"THE GENTILES' ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL'S FALL"

Romans 11:11-24

8-9-2020

INTRODUCTION:

***As Gentiles, <u>we need to check our attitude</u> (specifically, toward God's rejection of Israel).**

What should our attitude be toward fallen Israel?

I. <u>GRATITUDE</u> for the <u>WISDOM</u> of God (v. 11-16)

We should be grateful for two reasons:

A. God in His wisdom turned Israel's rejection into <u>riches</u> for the Gentile world (v. 11-14)

B. God in His wisdom turned Israel's rejection into <u>reconciliation</u> for the Gentile world (v. 15-16)

II. <u>HUMILITY</u> because of the <u>WORK</u> of God (v. 17-20)

(Don't think you were really something superior for God to save ("graft") you)

III. <u>FEAR</u> because of the <u>WARNING</u> of God (v. 20b-22)

IV. <u>FAITH</u> in the <u>WONDER-WORKING POWER</u> of God (v. 23-24)

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INTRODUCTION: How do you feel about the fall of others? Many feel good about it because it makes you look better by way of comparison. Beware of Measuring yourself with others (2 Cor. 10:12 – "…but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise".

Obadiah prophesied about the doom and destruction of Edom because she laughed at Israel's calamity (SEE book of Obadiah).

As in past history, there is a danger today of Gentiles despising Jews, and forgetting the source and channel of their own spiritual blessings (Thomas, p. 298).

***As Gentiles, <u>we need to check our attitude</u> (specifically, toward God's rejection of Israel).**

What should our attitude be toward fallen Israel?

I. <u>GRATITUDE</u> for the <u>WISDOM</u> of God (v. 11-16)

God's ways are so amazing, so wise, that Paul triumphantly praises the wisdom of God as he closes this chapter (v. 33).

God's wisdom is seen in verses 11-16 by His ability to turn a bad situation into a good end!

We should be grateful for two reasons:

A. God in His wisdom turned Israel's rejection into <u>riches</u> for the Gentile world (v. 11-14)

V. 11
The question is: Has Israel (the Jewish race) stumbled for the purpose that they would fall beyond recovery? Was Israel's fall God's intention?

The negative adverb ("not" -) in this question expects a No answer. Lit. "They did not stumble in order that they would fall, did they?" ("No!")

"God forbid" = May it never be!

"Through their fall" = By means of their transgression ("to overstep a known boundary; to sin against light) salvation was offered to the Gentiles (who did not have the light that Israel had)

God's purpose in allowing (not causing) Israel to stumble (cp. 9:32-33) was not for her downfall, but so that salvation would extend to the Gentiles.

Paul went to the Gentiles after the Jews rejected his message (Acts 13:46-47, 18:5-6; 22:21; 28:25-**28**).

If Israel had not stumbled, would not the Gospel have been brought to the Gentiles? Yes, it would have been!

Question: Is God teaching us that Israel stumbled in order that the Gospel might go to the Gentiles? Or with the result that the Gospel might go to the Gentiles?

Answer: Result (cp. same idea in verses 19-20).

"For to provoke them to jealousy" = to provoke someone to jealousy means to causes someone to want (desire) what you have.

Jealousy refers to someone having a zeal to get something. Usually, the word is used in a negative sense, but here it is positive (cp. v. 13, 14).

Paul's statement in verse 11 is almost paradoxical. God actually used Israel's stumbling so that God's Word might go to the Gentiles and in turn provoke some Israelites to desire what others had but they themselves did not have

Today people need to see what we have in Christ. They may be jealous over the peace that exists in your home, or by your calm, spirit-controlled ability to handle problems, tragedies and even death. But this actually shows that they know they need what you have.

V. 12
"Fall" = transgression

"Riches" = we are wealthy in Christ! (Eph. 1:3ff)

The church today is richly benefiting in the New Covenant promised to israel in Jer. 31:31-34 (cp. Heb. 8:6).

"Diminishing" = failure, crushing defeat

The phrase "How much more" (used frequently in Romans - EX: 5:9, 10, 15, 17; 11:24) shows that Paul is arguing from the lesser to the greater.

The point is this: If the fall and failure of Israel meant riches for the rest of the world, how much more riches will be had by the world when the time of their "fullness" comes?!

The word "fullness" refers to a "full number" of people.

SEE Paul's use of "fullness" in verse 25. When the full number of Gentiles finally come to Christ (a number only known to God), God is going to lift the partial blindness of Israel and save a great host of Jews (v. 26).

V. 13
"For I speak to you Gentiles - an indication that Paul is writing to Gentile (not Jewish) Christians at Rome (cp. 1:13, 15:15-16).

"The Apostle of the Gentiles" = objective gen. - Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles (the other apostles brought the same message Paul preached, but they brought their message to the Jews; cp. Gal. 2:7-9; Rom. 15:16).

Paul magnified (lit. glorified) the fact that he, though a Jew, was a minister to the Gentiles ("nations").

Why did he "rub in" such a point to the Jews? Answer: Because he wanted to provoke the Jews to get jealous ("emulation") and desire the same Lord he had and end up getting saved (v. 14).

V. 14
"Emulation" = jealousy. Same Greek word as in verse 11.

"Them which are my flesh" = those related to me in the flesh (Paul's physical relatives).

B. God in His wisdom turned Israel's rejection into reconciliation for the Gentile world (v. 15-16)

V. 15

"Casting away" = Israel's rejection by God.

"Reconciling" = to form a relationship. To go from enmity to friendship (Ro. 5:11).

The picture is of God sternly (cp. v. 22) throwing aside a nation that has rejected Him, and then forming a friendship relationship with those through the world who would come to Him.

"Receiving" = the opposite of "casting away." It refers to God opening up His arms and receiving unto Himself repentant Israel.

God's reception of Israel again - Zech. 2:1-13

[NOTE: Zech. 13:8-9 - Two-thirds of Israel will be killed (v. 8); one-third will be refined through the fire and saved (v. 9)]

"Life from the dead" - SEE: Ezek. 37:1-14 - "Valley of dry bones."

Resurrection of Israelites will occur before the kingdom.

Israel's reception back again is to be of infinitely greater value to the world than their fall (Thomas, p. 294).

Again arguing from the lesser to the greater, (cp. v. 12), Paul pronounces that if God's rejection of Israel meant reconciliation for the world, how much more will God's reception of Israel, means resurrection for the world (including Jews & Gentiles).

If Christ formed a relationship with the world because of Israel's rejection of Him, how much more will Christ be married (via resurrection and rapture) to those redeemed of the world when Israel is received by Him in the Last Day.

God's reception of Israel and the Resurrection are linked because they evidently will happen at the same time.

V. 16

If that which came first was holy, so is that which comes later.

Evidently the "first fruit" and "root" refer tot he saved O.T. saints (ex. the Patriarchs).

NOTE: The root refers to O.T. Israel in verse 17b.

Firstfruits given to God were always an indication of a harvest to follow.

The point is this: If the first lump of dough was set apart by God, so will the lump be in the end. If the root had holiness with God, so will the off-shooting, regrafted branches.

II. HUMILITY because of the WORK of God (v. 17-20)

(Don't think you were really something superior for God to save ("graft") you)

V. 17

"Olive tree branches " = Israel (Jews)

"Wild olive tree branches" = Gentiles

NOTE: God did not cut off all Israelites, but "some" of them.

Israel is called an olive tree planted by God (Jer. 11:16-17).

David describes the blessing of being "like a green olive tree in the house of God" (Ps. 52:8); children are a blessing to a man who fears God and depicted "like olive plants round about thy table" (Ps. 128:3).

To be likened to an olive tree was considered a tremendous blessing. Israel as a whole forfeited such a blessing.

"Partakest" = to be a co-sharer; participant together with someone else - Paul is describing Jew and Gentile partaking together in the root of God's covenant promises.

"Fatness" = nourishing richness.

V. 18

"Boast not" = don't be arrogant toward the branches (Jews). Don't look down upon them as if you were superior.

If you are being arrogant, remember this, you are not supporting the root, but the root is supporting you! A branch does not provide water and foot for the tree, rather the root does!

What we have comes from God (vine and branches - John 15:1ff).

V. 19
The statement reflects some Gentile pride

V. 20
God does not arbitrarily sever ties with a people.

If He rejects you, it is because you have rejected Him. God rejected Israel because of her unbelief.

"Thou standest by faith" - perfect tense = you have stood and remain standing by faith (faith is a gift from God - so we can't boast about having it).

"Be not high-minded" - Don't set your mind (thoughts) on how high you think you are.

"Pride cometh before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall"

III. FEAR because of the WARNING of God (v. 20b-22)

V. 21

NOTE: God is not bringing into question the believers' eternal security - He is speaking of Gentiles as a whole (Gentiledom) being possibly cut off from the life-giving tree.

If God could cast away Jews (the natural branch), Gentiles (the wild uncultivated branch) had better especially look out.

"It is worth noting that, according to Bible prophecy, the professing Gentile church will be "cut off" because of apostasy. I Tim. 4 and II Tim. 3, along with II Th. 2 all indicate that (multitudes in) the professing church in the Last Days will depart from the faith" (Wiersbe p. 552).

V. 22

Two contrasting characteristics of God are mentioned:

1) Goodness (kindness)
2) Severity (sternness)

We need a balanced understanding of God's love and justice. Must believe in both God's graciousness and His righteousness.

"Severity" = the word comes from a verb meaning "to cut right off, to cut short" and emphasizes a rigor which does not bend (Godet, cited by Reinecker, p. 373).

A mark of a true believer is that he will continue in God's goodness (a true believer will endure to the end [Mt. 24:13], and will continue in Christ's Word [John], because God is faithful [Phil. 1:6])

To be "cut off" is serious! (Jn. 15:2)

IV. FAITH in the WONDER-WORKING POWER of God (v. 23-24)

V. 23

"They" = unbelieving Israel

Belief is the key to grafting.

"For God is able (Powerful enough -) to graft them in again."

Never forget that "God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20)

V. 24

The Bible teaches in numerous places that in the last days God will turn back to Israel and regenerate multitudes of Jews from the inside-out (Ezek. 36:22-27, 29-38).

The point is: If God is powerful enough to graft a wild olive branch into a cultivated olive tree, how much easier will it be for Him to re-graft a formerly cultivated branch into its own olive tree? The latter is easy compared to the former.

For God to save a Gentile, He must cut a wild branch out of heathenism (in many cases, polytheism), while to save a Jew, at least there exists the common ground of monotheism.

For God to save a Gentile, He generally must save someone who is ignorant of God's Word, while to save a Jew is to bring to Himself someone who at least has a foundational knowledge of creation, the fall of man, the Law, the sacrificial system, etc.

This is why Paul's custom was to go to preach at the synagogues in Acts (he had common ground).

Don't question the power and wisdom of God (Rom. 11:33-34). Just believe it!