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Sermon Notes

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God's Purpose in the Stumbling of Israel, Part 2

Romans 11:11-16

Introduction:

I. Review: Israel's Stumbling Over Christ

- A. Paul's Anguish: "My Kinsmen Are Accursed"
- B. Paul's Deepest Concern: Has God's Word Failed?
- C. Paul's First Answer: Not All Israel Are Israel
- D. Paul's Second Answer: Israel Stumbled Over the Stumbling Stone
- E. Paul's Third Answer: Salvation Is by Grace for All... But Israel Rejected
- F. Paul's Fourth Answer: God's Sovereign Plan in Election and Rejection

II. Paul's Question: Have They Stumbled In Order to Fall?

- A. What Does the Future Hold for the Nation?
- B. Did Israel Stumble In Order to Fall?
- C. May It Never Be!

Matthew Henry:

The apostle proposes here a plausible objection, which might be urged against the divine conduct in casting off the Jewish nation ([v. 1](#)): "*Hath God cast away his people?* Is the rejection total and final? Are they all abandoned to wrath and ruin, and that eternal? Is the extent of the sentence so large as to be without reserve, or the continuance of it so long as to be without repeal? Will he have no more a peculiar people to himself?" In opposition to this, he shows that there was **a great deal of goodness and mercy** expressed along with this seeming severity, particularly he insists upon three things:-- 1. That, though some of the Jews were cast off, yet they were not all so. 2. That, though the body of the Jews were cast off, yet the Gentiles were taken in. And, 3. That, though the Jews were cast off at present, yet in God's due time they should be taken into his church again.

III. God Has a Purpose in Israel's Stumbling

- A. Astonishing Thought: God Has a Purpose in Israel's Transgression
- B. Purpose Language in Romans 11
- C. God Ordains Sin for Good Purposes: Two Clear Examples
 - 1. Joseph and His Sinful Brothers
 - 2. Jesus and His Sinful Countrymen

The God who hates all evil and cannot even look upon it yet ordains evil for His own glory and the joy of His chosen people

God ordained the hardening of the Jews against Christ to accomplish His good purposes

Now, what were those good purposes?

IV. God's Purpose for Gentiles

- A. Salvation Through Israel's Transgression
 - 1. Stated over and over again

Romans 11:11-15 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! ¹³ 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?

- 2. Grafted into a Jewish olive tree
 - a. Israel portrayed like an olive tree
 - b. Jewish branches were broken off to make room for the Gentiles to be grafted in
 - c. That image is none other than salvation... receiving life-giving sap flowing from a Jewish root system
- 3. "Until the full number of the Gentiles has come in"

Romans 11:25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

“Until the full number of the Gentiles **has come in**”... come in to what?

Come in to the Kingdom of Christ! Come in to salvation? Come in to the New Heavens and the New Earth! Come in to forgiveness? Come in out of the wrath to come!

Summary: God’s purpose FOR GENTILES in Israel’s hardening is their SALVATION through Jesus Christ

B. Deep Question: Why Did Israel Have to Sin for Gentiles to be Saved?

- 1) **No crucifixion: If the Jews had believed in Christ, He would never have been crucified in the first place**
- 2) **No evangelism: Even if Christ had been crucified, the Jews would never have carried the gospel to the Gentiles**

V. God’s Purpose for Jews

A. Salvation Through the Gentiles

1. The Layers of Purpose in Romans 11:11

Romans 11:11 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.

2. God’s purpose FOR THE JEWS in the salvation of Gentiles is salvation

3. God intends SALVATION for Jews

- a. Certainly for individual Jews, like Paul... that has always been the case, but that is not what Paul has in mind here
- b. He’s talking about the Jews as a people, as a nation, as a corporate entity
- c. God intends that the salvation of Gentiles will result in the end in a national turning to Christ, a national salvation for Jews
- d. Look at the hopeful words he uses

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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?

4. Paul speaks of the “fullness” of the Jews, and of their acceptance
 - a. This is referring to their relationship with God through Christ
 - b. This is referring ultimately to salvation for a whole generation of Jews, in which the elect Israel and the physical Israel will become one and the same
 - c. BUT HOW WILL THIS OCCUR?

B. Salvation Through Jealousy

Romans 11:11 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.

1. Paul magnifies his ministry for a purpose

Romans 11:13-14 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.

- a. “magnify” = make much of it, glorify it, exalt it
 - b. Literally, to exalt the fact that God has called him as apostle to the Gentiles
 - c. Paul does not in any way try to hide his ministry to the Gentiles from the Jews... rather, HE GLORIFIES IT
2. Paul’s goal: to make Jews jealous
 - a. Notice Paul is not glorifying himself
 - b. Paul constantly downplays what he is, apart from the grace of God
 - c. No, his goal is not for arrogance sake
 - d. His goal is to make his fellow Jews jealous
 3. Salvation through jealousy
 4. How so?

a. Case study #1: Pisidian Antioch

Acts 13:38-48 ***"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: ⁴¹ "Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you." ⁴² As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. ⁴³ When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. ⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.***

Paul exalted his ministry to the Gentiles to make the Jews jealous... which Luke already told us they were, when they saw the great crowds and the huge response

Paul openly told them he was turning to the Gentiles

b. Case Study #2: Paul in Corinth

Acts 18:6-8 ***But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. ⁸ Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.***

c. Case Study #3: Paul and the Jewish leaders in Rome

- i) Three days after arriving under house arrest in Rome, Paul called for the Jewish leaders
- ii) He wanted to present the gospel to them
- iii) However, after he did, the Jews were divided... some believed, but some murmured against Paul

Acts 28:24-28 Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. ²⁵ They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: ²⁶ "'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." ²⁷ For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' ²⁸ "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

Summary: Paul was in the regular habit of glorifying his ministry to the Gentiles in front of his own people, the Jews... he didn't hide it but openly said he would go to them. In so doing, he was seeking to arouse them to jealousy and save some of them

C. God's Jealousy and Israel's: Deuteronomy 32 Fulfilled

1. Amazing, the parallel between God's jealousy of Israel and Israel's jealousy of God
2. God predicted this whole jealousy theme way back in the Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32:

Deuteronomy 32:16-21 They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. ¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons, which are not God-- gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear. ¹⁸ You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth. ¹⁹ The LORD saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters. ²⁰ "I will hide my face from them," he said, "and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful. ²¹ They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.

3. In effect, God was saying: the Jews turned away from God to the pagan gods of the Gentiles... in so doing they made God jealous
4. Therefore, God turned away from Israel and used the Gentiles
 - a. First, by raising them up militarily and blessing their attacks against the Jews
 - i) The "times of the Gentiles" Jesus referred to was the time in which the Jews would be a subject people in their own Promised Land
 - ii) God raised up the Assyrians, then the Babylonians, then the Persians, then the Greeks, then the Romans... on and on, the Gentiles blessed and the Jews cursed in their own land

- b. Second, by raising up Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles and having him be astoundingly successful in drawing great numbers of Gentiles to saving faith in Christ

The Jews made God jealous by turning to Gentile gods and embracing them as their own in his place

SO God made the Jews jealous by turning away from the Jews and blessing the Gentiles, first militarily, then spiritually with the gospel of Jesus Christ

BUT The Jews provoking of God to jealousy resulted in eternal condemnation for Jews

God provoking the Jews to jealousy results ultimately in the salvation of the Jewish nation at the end of the world!!

GOD REDEEMS THE JEALOUSY and uses it to bless His own people

D. The Ultimate End: Life From the Dead

1. Paul looks ahead to the end of the world and sees things only a prophet can see
2. Paul uses a logical argument, from the lesser to the greater... in two different verses

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!

Romans 11:15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

3. The logic is this: if the sin and defeat of the Jews resulted in something so glorious as the worldwide blessing of Gentiles with salvation through Jesus Christ, how incredibly glorious will it be when at last the Jews as a nation ALSO turn to Christ and embrace Him
4. If God can do something so glorious with something so wretched as the unbelief of the Jews, how magnificent will it be when God takes away their spirit of stupor, when God takes away the blindness from their eyes and the deafness from their ears... when at last God takes out their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh to embrace Christ

Illus. GRAND FINALE of the fireworks... the turning of the Jews to embrace Christ

5. What is the final blessing for the world? What is the final blessing for both Jew and Gentile alike? **LIFE FROM THE DEAD**
6. This means, the final resurrection... when the end of the world will come, when the final enemy of death is defeated

7. This is the final act in redemptive history, when God at last turns Israel away from sin and to Himself through Christ
8. Then, the final enemy, death, will be defeated forever
9. Some commentators (Lloyd-Jones) reject that this means the resurrection... but the question is, what will be left of redemptive history? For the Jews as a nation will not turn to Christ until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in

Romans 11:25-27 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

VI. God's Purpose for His Own Glory

A. God Has Done All This For His Own Glory

1. This magnificent and complex salvation plan has one main goal: the glory of God
2. God's absolute sovereignty over the salvation process for both Jew and Gentile alike means that every mouth will be silenced and the whole world constrained to give Him the glory alone

B. Salvation by Grace Alone

1. We can see from this that salvation is by grace alone
2. No human being deserved to be saved
3. Neither Jew nor Gentile can make any claim whatsoever on God
4. The entire human race is humbled by the WAY God went about saving us

C. "In Order that He Might Have Mercy"

1. Some of the most vital verses in this whole chapter is

Romans 11:30-32 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. ³² For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

2. God has orchestrated human history in such a way that our wretched sinfulness has flowed out individually in one act of rebellion after another

3. God has also orchestrated human history so that every nation on earth, all the Gentile people AND the Jews themselves can look at the wickedness of their history and realize they have nothing to boast about and were saved merely by the grace and mercy of God
4. GOD HAS BOUND both Jew and Gentile alike to sin, so that both Jew and Gentile alike can be saved only by mercy

Vs. 32 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

- a. Gentiles have the most filthy and wretched history of sin... of sexual perversion and vile idolatry, of greed and avarice and empire-building ambition... so we have nothing to boast about
- b. Jews have the most filthy and wretched history of sin... of consistently resisting the Holy Spirit, of rejecting all the prophets, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself... and of 2000 years of violent objection to the gospel; so they also have nothing to boast about
- c. God has marvelously silenced the whole human race by this unfathomable plan of salvation

Romans 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

VII. Application

- A. Don't Despise the Jews... Rather Make them Jealous of Our Spiritual Blessings
 1. "Make them jealous" simply by speaking of how wonderful it is to be a Christian
 2. Celebrate the goodness of God in forgiving your sins
 3. Celebrate the grace of God in adopting you into the family of God
 4. How? Perhaps begin praying that God would give you some Jewish friends, neighbors and co-workers that you can evangelize
 5. Perhaps go to the synagogue to meet with the rabbi and get to know how he thinks
 6. Seek out opportunities to share God's grace with Jewish people

B. Be Totally Confident that God Has Power to Use Sin for His Glory

C. Thank God for Your Salvation