

“Did They Stumble That They Might Fall?”

In verses 11-16 of Romans eleven the apostle asks, then answers three questions. The first: *“Did they stumble that they might fall”* (Rom. 11:11)? *“... if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness”* (Rom. 11:12)? *“... if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall be the receiving of them be but life from the dead”* (Rom. 11:25)? These questions all rise from the fact that Israel (as a whole) obtained not what they sought for (Rom. 11:7). The apostle has argued quite convincingly that while the vast majority of Israel was lost, a remnant had been saved. Those who were lost had closed their ears and eyes to the gospel.

Upon the conclusion that the major part of Israel was rejected rests the three questions in this section of our study. The first *“Did they stumble that they might fall?”* is answered emphatically -- NO. They stumbled, God knew they would and caused His prophets to predict it. He knew they would stumble at His plan for effecting His promise to Abraham: *“In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”* Did God deliberately plan His Son’s death to make Israel stumble, knowing that Israel would rebel at that plan? Ridiculous. God planned the death of His Son because there was no other way redemption could be wrought. Think ye not that if there had been some other way, He would have ignored His Son’s earnest plea, *“If it be possible let this cup pass from me”* (Matt. 26:39)?

There were consequences to Israel’s rejection of the gospel. *“... by their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy”* (Rom. 11:11). Bear in mind that salvation would be offered to Gentiles whether Israel accepted the gospel or not. That was God’s promise to Abraham and it could not be overthrown. Yet Jews were to first hear the gospel, then Gentiles. The sooner Israel rejected the Savior, the sooner the gospel was proclaimed to the Gentiles. Yet, Israel should have been moved to jealousy to accept what first they rejected when multitudes of Gentiles were rushing to accept it. *“Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?”* (Rom. 11:12). The gospel Israel rejected was the riches of Gentiles, and as more and more Jews turned their back on the gospel (their fullness) more and more energies and efforts were turned to Greeks.

The apostle then adds: *“If the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?”* (Rom. 11:15). The *“casting away”* of Israel was the consequence of Israel’s rejection of the gospel. Gentiles (as has been observed) would have been recon-

ciled whether Israel was cast away or not, but the gospel being preached and their reconciliation to God was hastened by the energies focused on Gentiles when Israel's wholesale rejection of the Word. But, if the gospel preached to the Gentiles and received by them brought about their reconciliation then were Israel to accept the gospel they rejected and thus received by God as the result of his reception of it, such would result in resurrection from the dead and riches to them just as it had been riches to Gentiles. Next: "Paul's Parable Of The Olive Tree."

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