



Our RICHES, Their REJECTION

I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? ... Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfilment be? Romans 11:1,12

Study 14a: IS ISRAEL'S REJECTION of the GOSPEL FINAL? (10:18-21)

10:18-21 What glimmer of hope does Paul find (again in Deuteronomy) for unbelieving Israel? (cf. 15:8,10; Deut. 32:36,43)

For centuries people have been puzzled by the nation of Israel. The Roman government recognized the Jewish religion, but it still called the nation *secta nefaria*-- "a nefarious sect." The great historian Arnold Toynbee classified Israel as "a fossil civilization" and did not know what to do with it. For some reason, the nation did not fit into his historical theories. -- **W.W. Wiersbe**, *op.cit.*, p. 124

The quotation points firmly to the fact that the last word is not with Israel's disobedience but with God's mercy and patience. **C.E.B. Cranfield**, *Romans*, vol.2 p.541

Their guilt could not be defined more clearly and sharply and nothing clearer and more comforting could be said about him whom their guilt concerns and who has made them the object of his mercy -- who has not abandoned them for what they are, because his mercy is greater than their guilt and than all human guilt. **Karl Barth**, *Shorter ... Romans*, p.134

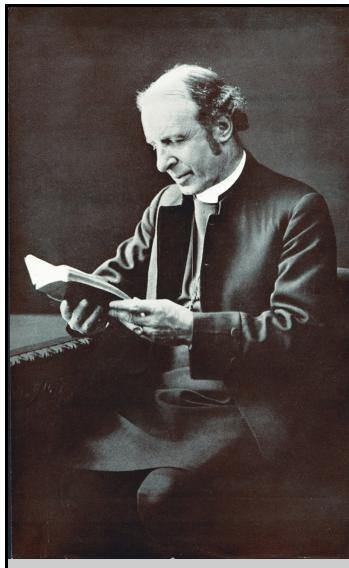
Study 14b: GOD'S REJECTION of ISRAEL -- FINAL or FUNCTIONAL? (11:1-5)

11:1 Where does Paul find assurance of God's faithfulness to Israel, despite her rejection of the gospel?

A "disobedient and gainsaying people" Israel might be, but God had no more written them off now than in earlier days when they rejected His Word through Moses and the prophets. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate" is a principle not set aside in their case. -- **F.F. Bruce**, *op.cit.*, p. 211

In 1 Timothy 1:16 he stated that God saved him "that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." -- **W.W. Wiersbe**, *op.cit.*, p. 125

In support of his emphatic denial of the possibility that God has cast off His people Israel Paul cites the fact of his own Jewishness (God would hardly have chosen a Jew to be His special apostle to the Gentiles, had He cast off His people, the Jews) ... the very fact that it is a remnant according to the election of grace and therefore not a remnant standing by its own deserving, makes its existence full of promise for the rest of the nation, a pledge of God's continuing interest in those ... who have indeed been hardened by a divine hardening ... -- **C. Cranfield**, *op.cit.*, p.543



HANDLEY MOULE
Is any one of us
REALLY free?

11:2-5 Though Elijah can see nothing worth saving in Israel, what does Yahweh see? (note the principle of v.16, and the significant His people whom He foreknew, v.2, and I have kept ..., v.4; cf. Ps.130:1-8; Num. 23:20,21)

A King may be rejected by his subjects, but he does not reject them. ... In this present Christian age God foreknows individuals in every nation, but Israel is the only nation he ever foreknew. He elected it as a whole to obtain the salvation in Christ when the appointed time for the blessing shall come (Matt. xxiii. 39). This constitutes Israel's "advantage" and makes it to be "much every way," -- **J.M. Stifler**, *op.cit.*, p. 195

In their case, then, he both passes as it were through national election to individual election, as a permanent spiritual mystery; and he shews that he means by this an election not only to opportunity but to holiness. The Lord's "leaving them for Himself" lay behind their not bowing their knees to Baal. Each resolute confessor was individually enabled, by a sovereign and special grace. He was a true human personality, freely acting, freely choosing not to yield in that terrible storm. But behind his freedom was the higher freedom of the Will of God, saving him from himself that he might be free to confess and suffer. -- **H.C.G. Moule**, *op.cit.*, p. 288

Study 14c: Does this PRESENT DARKNESS PRESAGE a DARK FUTURE? (11:6-12)

11:6-10 Is God's judicial hardening of Israel unfair -- an example of arbitrary sovereignty so despised by anti-Calvinists? (cf. Acts 2:23; 3:17,18; 4:27,28)

The existence of a remnant, whose faithfulness was their own meritorious achievement, would have had no particularly hopeful significance for the unfaithful majority. But, precisely because this remnant was preserved in accordance with the election of grace and not on the basis of works, its existence was a pledge of God's

continuing interest in, and care for, the nation, a sign of God's faithfulness to His election of Israel as a whole ... It is to be noted that the context of this verse in Deuteronomy is a gracious one, speaking of God's goodness to His people, while in Isaiah 29 one does not have to read on for very many verses from the reference to 'the spirit of deep sleep' before one comes to statements strongly suggesting that the divine hardening is not God's last word for His rebellious people. And moreover Paul no doubt means these OT passages to be understood in the light of the OT as a whole. **C.E.B. Cranfield**,

11:11-12 Has God's purpose been foiled by Israel's failure, or fulfilled? (James 1:17; Heb. 6:17,18)

The passive here [v.7] is not be explained away into meaning 'they hardened themselves' -- a misinterpretation which can easily lead to a hard and unbrotherly attitude to the Jews on the part of Christians ... A further point may also be made, namely, that vv.11ff will show that the hardening of the others itself belongs to salvation-history, in

that it leads to the salvation of the Gentiles, which in its turn is to make these others jealous. **C.E.B. Cranfield** *op.cit.*, p.549

It is important to understand that the Old Testament promises to the Gentiles were linked to Israel's "rise" -- her entering into her kingdom. Prophecies like Isaiah 11 and Isaiah 60 make it clear that the Gentiles will share in Israel's kingdom. But Israel did not "rise"; *she fell!* What would God then do with the Gentiles? God introduced a new factor -- the Church -- in which believing Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ (Eph. 2:11-22). -- **W.W. Wiersbe**, *op.cit.*, p. 128

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QUESTION for the anti-Calvin club (including Jws):

Is a God who can be surprised really God?

(John 6:5,6)

The stumbling of the Jews was not attended with the result of their utter and final ruin, but was the occasion of facilitating the progress of the Gospel among the Gentiles. It was, therefore, not designed to lead to the former but to the latter result. **From this very design it is probable that they shall be finally restored**, because the natural effect of the conversion of the Gentiles is to provoke the emulation of the Jews ... The Jews, even those who were the professors of Christianity, were, in the first place, very slow to allow the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles; and in the second, they appear almost uniformly to have desired to clog the gospel with the ceremonial observances of the law. This was one of the greatest hindrances to the progress of the cause of Christ during the apostolic age, and would, in all human probability, have been a thousand-fold greater, had the Jews, as a nation, embraced the Christian faith. **Charles Hodge**, *Romans* pp.361-62



Has God cast off His people?

[on 11:1] For the form of the question compare 10:18 and 19 ... and 11:11. Common to all these four questions are [*lego*, I say] and [*me*, not], introducing a question expecting a negative answer, and the use of a verb in the aorist tense. This similarity of form underlines the connexion between 11:1 and the preceding verses, a connection which is indicated by the [*oun*, therefore]. The fact that it has just been confirmed that Israel did hear and did know, and is therefore without any excuse, raises the question whether the conclusion to be drawn from Israel's stubborn disobedience is that God has cast away His people, excluded them from His plan of salvation. But the terms in which the question is expressed presuppose the negative answer it must receive, for they are clearly reminiscent of OT passages which declare categorically that God will not cast off His people: 1 Sam. 12:22 ... Ps. 94:14 ... The question is thus tantamount to asking, 'Has God broken His explicit promise not to cast off His people?' So we may say that the first ground of the [*me genoito*, God forbid, KJV, by no means, NIV] which follows is the one which, though unexpressed, is implicit in the language used, namely, that Holy Scripture testifies that God will not cast off His people. **C.E.B. Cranfield**, *op.cit.*, p.543

