

# Israel's Failure is Not Final - Part 1

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Romans 11:11-24

**Preached on:** Sunday, June 24, 2012

Will you take the infallible record of the Word of God and turn to Romans chapter 11. We continue our verse by verse study of this marvelous epistle and we find ourselves in 11 through 24 this morning. I am going to read this section to you, but we are going to focus primarily on verse 11, but I want you to get the context. I have entitled my discourse to you: Israel's failure is not final. Romans 11 beginning at verse 11.

I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?<sup>1</sup>

These are amazing truths and very important truths. However, many times I have discovered that Christian people know very little about them. In fact, these are the types of things that Christians many times try to brush by. For this reason, many believers are what you might call spiritually malnourished, like a person who lives on junk food. We all know that a steady diet of fast foods and sodas and ice cream will ultimately kill you. You need a balanced diet, right, in order to be healthy. You need to exercise. Well, likewise, we as believers need a balanced diet of the Word of God. We need to know the

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 11:11-24.

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whole counsel of God, not just certain portions and we must exercise our faith in godly living and service.

In fact, the apostle Paul said in Acts 20 verse 27:

“For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”<sup>2</sup>

In fact, this was central in his argument to the church at Ephesus, to the elders. It was important to preach the whole counsel of God so that the elders there could be on guard for themselves and for all the flock to protect them from the savage wolves that would come in among them and not spare the flock, he went on to say. They would speak perverse things, draw away the disciples after them. And we see this all the time in Christian circles. Because Christian people know so little about the Word of God they become easy targets for false teachers.

For this reason he commended them to God and to the word of his grace in verse 32 of Acts 20, which is able to build you up.

So, my friends, we come, again, to a very important passage of Scripture and you must learn this. It is my calling and responsibility to teach it to you. And by it you will grow.

Now for those of you that come on a Sunday morning—and I know there are a few of you—who say, “Oh, on, here we go again. We are in one of these technical difficult passages of Scripture. I will be glad when we are out of all of this old heavy doctrinal stuff.” You know, if that is your attitude, then quite frankly you are like the immature believer that the apostle Paul described in 1 Corinthians 3:1, men of flesh, babes in Christ. The men of flesh are those that have an attitude that pursues self, not God. And it was for this reason that he said that he had to give them milk to drink, not solid food, because they were not yet able to receive it.

So may I say in all kindness that if you do not understand some of the things you hear, mark it and ask me. Do some research. Learn it. That is how you are going to grow. If you don't understand a word, write it down phonetically, ask me later on and get what is called a dictionary and then learn that word. Add it to your vocabulary. I simply cannot dumb down the Word of God for those who are the least educated within our congregation. And there is nothing wrong with being uneducated. You get me around a lot of things and I don't have a clue. But we are here to learn, ok? So I don't want to hear any whining. I want you to be excited about the fact that the Lord wants you to grow so that he can bless you. And so I just simply cannot pander to especially those who are willfully ignorant and lazy. Just look at our public schools and you will see how that works out.

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I have heard believers say, “Well, I just can’t understand a word that he says.” Well, that is probably true. It is probably because you are content with your ignorance, frankly. You are really not concerned about growing in the grace and the knowledge of Christ. All you need to do probably is just look at your time. See how you spend your time. In fact, as a footnote, I did a little research on this. I found that the collective amount of time Americans spend on Facebook every month is more than 100,000 years. The average American spends an average of six hours and 33 minutes on the social network each month. That is two hours per day or per week. An average adult spends four and a half hours a day watching television. That is 30 hours per week. And the average adult in the United States spends two and a half hours per day online, on the internet. That is 18 hours per week. So if you add Facebook, television and the internet, you get 50 hours a week. No wonder you can’t understand anything I have to say.

I am reminded of what Paul said in Ephesians five verse 15.

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.<sup>3</sup>

Now, before we go to the text, I have much to say. That is why we are only going to be able to look at one verse today. Realize that about one third of the Bible is prophetic and most Christians are woefully ignorant when it comes to Bible prophecy. You ask people about various texts in the prophetic literature and you will get all kinds of crazy ideas. In fact, I was talking with some believers recently who were interested in frankly a cultic system called British Israelism. It sounds very impressive, but it is staggering how dangerous that system is. Frankly, it is replacement theology on steroids. It produces a virulent strain of anti-Semitism. They argue that since God abandoned the Jews that the Anglo Saxons are the direct lineal descendants of the 10 so-called lost tribes of Israel and now they ... the Anglo Saxons comprise the 10 lost tribes. And, in fact, many believe—and I ran into this in England, quite a bit—that the British royal family is directly descended from the line of King David.

Well, there is absolutely no historical, biblical support for any of that. And that is why we have to come to the Word of God and pastors must preach the whole counsel of the Word of God verse by verse so that people will understand and not be victims to error.

So let’s turn away our attention from all of the passing pleasures of this world and let’s look to the eternal glorious things of God that speak of his love and his eternal purposes.

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<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 5:15-17.

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Now last week we examined Paul's vehement denial that God is not finished with the Jewish people, that national Israel's failure is not total. He said in verse one:

“God has not rejected His people, has He?”<sup>4</sup>

Now a prima facie or first blush look at Romans nine through 11 readily leads to the conclusion that Paul is not speaking here to mere individuals, but to Israel as a nation. Very important for you to understand this. He is speaking of God's faithfulness to fulfill his unconditional, unilateral, irreversible promises to Abraham and his descendants, a promise of a regenerated nation of Israel in their land, lovingly submissive to their acknowledged Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is arguing that Israel's failure is not total and he proves this by virtue of his own conversion and God's covenantal regard for his chosen people not to reject his people whom he foreknew in verse two. God has always preserved for himself a remnant of Israel, a remnant according to God's gracious choice in verse five.

So this is a sovereign preservation of the nation as a whole for a day of future restoration. In verse 12 he speaks of Israel's ultimate fulfillment. In verse 15 he refers to Israel's resurrection from the dead which is ultimately their salvation. He makes it clear that while God has hardened the hearts of those whose hearts were first hardened against him, whose hearts were hardened against the grace that he offered through Christ, even though that is true, he has not permanently abandoned them as a people. And for this reason I reject the idea that ethnic, national and territorial Israel is somehow all absorbed into the universal Church, thus eliminating their national identity. That is what is called replacement theology or sometimes supercessionism, that the Church has superseded Israel. It has other names like Amillennialism, Postmillennialism. There is variations of all of this.

There are many that believe that the Church now is spiritual Israel, that we are currently living spiritually in the messianic kingdom that was once promised to Israel to be realized literally and physically.

Now if there was ever an opportunity for Paul to renounce unbelieving Israel permanently, it would have been here in Romans 11, just after his arguments in chapter 10 where he so conclusively demonstrated the accountability of the Jews for their rejection of Jesus Christ. Surely if there was going to be such a radical change in God's promises to his chosen people, a change that centered around the permanent extinction of national Judaism and their permanent replacement by the Church, surely he would have affirmed it once and for all in this section of Scripture or at least made it clear somewhere in the New Testament canon. Instead, he does just the opposite. In fact, at the close of

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Romans 11 he commences with another passionate affirmation of Abraham's national descendants, the promise of a regenerated Israel based upon the promises of God to their fathers in verse 28. Verse 29.

“...for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”<sup>5</sup>

For Paul to suggest to unbelieving Israelites in the synagogues that he went into and into the church there even in Rome that God's promise to their fathers did not include the land and the messianic kingdom, that all of those things were now spiritually realized in the Church, that is just contrary to reason, contrary to what he says, especially since he addressed them earlier in chapter nine verse four as being:

“...Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh.”<sup>6</sup>

Now, again, sadly, I believe, as we examined last week, there are many who hold to this position of replacement theology. Certainly a number of the early reformers did: Augustine, Calvin. And while I am convinced this is an unbiblical doctrine that violates the explicit statements of both of the Old and the New Testament that teach and affirm a massive national salvation and restoration of Israel when Christ comes in all of his glory, I would still humbly add that this is not a measure of orthodoxy. It is not something that would cause us to break fellowship. Some very dear friends I have hold to this position.

But before we examine this fascinating portion of Paul's epistle, I want to draw your attention to something that is very fundamental, that is very important for us to grasp as believers as we approach this study in Romans 11. While the text offers much to us with respect to eschatology, in other words, the study of the end times, and it offers much to us with respect to an understanding ecclesiology, the doctrines of the Church, it also speaks strongly to something that is often missed and that is the issues of Christian love and ethics, especially as it relates to Jewish people who are today currently God's beloved enemies.

Paul is going to address the issue of Gentile arrogance in this section, a derisive spirit of superiority, an attitude that obviously existed in the early Church and it still exists today. Some among them, as we are going to discover, believed that they were the new people of God, that somehow they were more deserving than Israel that was no permanently abandoned by the God that once loved them. And sadly history records that this shameful attitude has existed down through the centuries and still exists to this very day. There are many Christian people today who resent Jewish people. There is a strain of anti Judaism

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 11:29.

<sup>6</sup> Romans 9:4-5.

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that exists. And some in some places it leads to even a more virulent known as anti-Semitism. And an honest examination of Church history will reveal that much of this is rooted in replacement theology.

Naturally it is easy to see how an eschatological system that believes that God permanently abandoned the Jews in AD 70 could breed this kind of animosity and this feeling of superiority. My point is simply this. Good doctrine is going to produce good fruit, not bad fruit. And as a student of Church history it is abundantly clear that replacement theology, not always, not with everyone, but certainly it has fueled the fires of anti Judaism in the Church.

I would challenge you to read Barry Horner's excellent work called *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti Judaism Must be Challenged*. Horner leaves no stone unturned in tracing the historical roots of replacement theology and offers compelling exegetical refutations of that system of theology. He said this. Quote, "Augustine and Calvin represent a predominant Catholic and reformed heritage of Jewish Christian relations that span 17 centuries of Church history. An astonishing ignorance abides today concerning the legacy of Christian anti Judaism and works of Church history frequently fail to discuss it. Here we have the record of a conflict fraught with uncomfortable truth, especially with regards to the violation of Christian ethics and how Christians have treated Jews throughout Church history, particularly with regard to the underlying, driving eschatology." He went on to say, "In a real sense, history is the proving ground of revealed truth. Those who neglect this relationship between doctrinal truth and ethics end up conferring on mankind error and its unethical consequences," end quote.

In reading some of the more strident defenders of replacement theology it is obvious that they have an intractable theological aversion to modern Judaism in the state of Israel. If you don't believe this, go to the website for Knox Theological Seminary and read their letter to evangelicals and other interested parties, the people of God, the land of Israel and the impartiality of the gospel. It is under their heading, the Wittenberg Door.

Even non believers who have studied this have observed this kind of aversion to Judaism and to the state of Israel. One prominent Jewish woman, Melanie Philips, a British journalist, author, a social commentator, a graduate in English from Oxford University wrote a book called *Londonistan* where she tries to make sense of the cowering response of the United Kingdom to the modern invasion of Islamic culture in England. While the reaction of mainstream Christianity including many evangelicals, especially the Church of England, is one of a growing attitude of anti Judaism. And in an article that she wrote entitled "Christians Who Hat the Jews" she expresses the shock that ran threw her when she began to understand that at the root of the escalating conflict between Christianity and Israel and its strange sympathy for Muslims and Palestinians is replacement theology.

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Here is what she said. Quote, “It was one of those sickening moments when an illusion is shattered and an ominous reality laid bare. I was among a group of Jews and Christians who met recently to discuss the church’s increasing public hostility to Israel. The Jews were braced for a difficult encounter. After all, many British Jews—of whom I am one—are themselves appalled by the destruction of Palestinian villages, targeted assassinations and other apparent Israeli overreaction to the Middle East conflict. But this debate never took place. For the Christians said that the Church’s hostility had nothing to do with Israel’s behavior towards the Palestinians. This was merely an excuse. The real reason for the growing antipathy according to the Christians at the meeting was the ancient hatred of Jews rooted deep in Christian theology and now on widespread display once again.”

She went on to say, “A doctrine going back to the early Church fathers suppressed after the Holocaust had been revived under the influence of the Middle East conflict. This doctrine is called replacement theology. In essence it says that the Jews have been replaced by the Christians by the Christians in God’s favor and so all God’s promises to the Jews, including the land of Israel have been inherited by Christianity. Some evangelicals might contrast our Christian Zionists who passionately support the state of Israel as the fulfillment of God’s biblical promise to the Jews. But to the majority who have absorbed replacement theology, Zionism is racism and the Jewish state is illegitimate,” end quote.

Beloved, such attitudes within the Church hardly square with the heartfelt love that the apostle Paul had for God’s beloved enemies as he calls them in verse 28. So as we approach this subject, let’s remember the profound importance of rightly dividing the Word of truth, knowing that sound doctrine is going to promote godliness, as Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:3. Sound doctrine rightly understood will produce the same kind of apostolic compassion for the Jews that the apostle Paul had, to the point where he cried out saying that he longed in verse two of chapter nine, he had:

“...great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites.”<sup>7</sup>

In fact, in Acts 28:20 Paul, you may recall, entered into Rome and called the leading men of all the Jews together and he said to them:

“I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Romans 9:2-4.

<sup>8</sup> Acts 20:28.

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And I believe that a proper understanding of God's plan and purposes for Israel as a nation will produce this same heartfelt, sacrificial love for Jewish people, those who remain loved for the sake of God's irrevocable promise made to them through Abraham.

Moreover, I would submit that a proper eschatology will really ignite our hearts and that is one of the passions that I have for each of you, to ignite your heart in anticipation as together we look forward to that glorious day when the Jews shall ultimately inherit all that God has promised them when, according to Zechariah's prophecy in chapter 14 he will:

"... pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn."<sup>9</sup>

When, according to Zechariah 14 verse nine:

"And the LORD will be king over all the earth."<sup>10</sup>

Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that day when the Lord will be king over all the earth?

"...in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one. All the land will be changed into a plain ..."<sup>11</sup>

...it goes on to say. And in verse 11:

"And people will live in it, and there will be no more curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security."<sup>12</sup>

Now, let's return to the text. Since God has hardened their hearts because of their unbelief, as we have learned in verse seven and since he has given them a spirit of stupor in verse eight, it would be easy for some to assume that God has finally abandoned Israel forever, that now the Gentile Church make up a spiritual nation comprised of all races and one that would be one that just includes some token allotment of the Jewish remnant. But, once again, Paul refutes that idea. Even as he made clear in the first 10 verses that Israel's failure is not total, that we looked at last week, he now goes on to argue that Israel's failure is not final in verses 11 through 24. And he is going to develop his argument in three categories. We are going to look at part of the first one today. And the first one will be this, that there is a two fold purpose for Israel's failure. Secondly, we are

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<sup>9</sup> Zechariah 12:10.

<sup>10</sup> Zechariah 14:9.

<sup>11</sup> Zechariah 14:9-10.

<sup>12</sup> Zechariah 14:11.

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going to learn that he rebukes arrogant Gentiles for concerning Israel's failure, verses 16 through 22. And then we are going to see how he describes the glorious prospect reversing Israel's failure in verses 23 through 24.

So here we are today. Israel's failure is not final. It is not permanent. Why? Number one of Paul's argument, it would have to do with the two fold purpose of Israel's failure. We see this in verse 11.

Before we look at it, may I remind you that God does nothing capriciously, nothing whimsically. He has a specific reason for everything including the temporary hardening of the hearts of his people. So Paul asks as rhetorical question in verse 11.

"I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they?"<sup>13</sup>

The term "fall" in the original language means to be permanently destroyed, to be destroyed beyond salvage. That didn't happen to them, did it? And the answer is, of course not. Their stumbling in rejecting their Messiah is not final. They are not facing some irrevocable doom.

I would ask you. Do you really think that the God who foreordained Israel's rejection of himself would then abandon the very plan that he set into motion when they rejected him as he predicted and ordained that they would? That makes absolutely no sense. Do you really think that all of the Old Testament prophecies are to be interpreted, therefore, spiritually, that God didn't really mean what he said, that we throw out the normal meaning of language and now we have to look at some deeper spiritual symbolic meaning to all of those prophetic truths?

Beloved, if that is the case I have no idea what over a third of the Bible teaches. And do you know what? You don't either. You will recall that in Deuteronomy 30 the first six verses God predicted what he had predetermined. He predetermined and therefore predicted that Israel would one day reject him, that they would be banished into foreign nations because of their disobedience, but yet because of his great compassion, he would eventually restore them into their land and he would redeem them unto himself under the new covenant. In verse three of Deuteronomy 30 we read:

"... then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you."<sup>14</sup>

By the way, as a footnote, we are beginning to see some of that even today.

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<sup>13</sup> Romans 11:11.

<sup>14</sup> Deuteronomy 30:3.

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He goes on to say:

If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. And the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.<sup>15</sup>

Of course this promise of future restoration into their land is based upon God's covenantal promises with Abraham that is so often repeated by Moses and the prophets. You will recall in Genesis 15 verse eight God promised Abraham that his descendants would possess the land, quote:

“From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.”<sup>16</sup>

Folks, that is a whole lot more than they have ever possessed and a whole lot more than they possess now.

In Genesis 17:8 God promised Abraham that he would, quote:

“...give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”<sup>17</sup>

And in Exodus 23 verse 30 God, once again, fixes Israel's future boundaries. He says, quote:

“...from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River.”<sup>18</sup>

So God's promises of boundaries to Abraham even preceded the house of Israel and measured far beyond what Israel has ever historically possessed. Moreover, a key element of the fulfillment of the new covenant which, incidentally, was made with Israel in Jeremiah 31, was that Israel would one day be restored to that specific land and would enjoy other forms of physical and spiritual restoration. All of this is consistent with the language of Deuteronomy 30.

Beloved, Israel's ultimate salvation that God ordained and predicted in Deuteronomy 30 was also reaffirmed by Isaiah and Jeremiah Ezekiel and Hosea, Joel, Amos, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Malachi and now Paul. So, of course Israel's failure is not final.

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<sup>15</sup> Deuteronomy 30:4-5.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 15:18.

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 17:8.

<sup>18</sup> Exodus 23:31.

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“I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be!”<sup>19</sup>

Or we could translate it, “Far from it. Of course not.”

In the marvelous mercy and providence of God there are great blessings awaiting the Jews and the Gentiles.

As a footnote for those who believe that the Church is now spiritual Israel, once again, I would humbly argue that it is contrary to reason to conclude that the same God who predetermined both Israel's failure and their spiritual as well as physical restoration would then change his mind and permanently abandon them and replace Israel with the Church, that all his physical promises to them would be renounced and fulfilled spiritually in the Church. Surely, somewhere in Scripture he would have clearly stated such a monumental change. Moreover, if that were true, what Paul is about to explain here in this text with respect to God's purpose in Israel's unbelief, would make absolutely no sense whatsoever.

Paul is going to explain that God has a two fold purpose in Israel's unbelief and their failure. One is to bring salvation to the Gentiles and, two, to bring salvation to the Jews. The Church is to be God's instrument of righteousness in his marvelous plan of redemption, which will climax in the salvation of Israel. Now, again, if the Church is spiritual Israel Paul's entire explanation would beg for relevance.

Now let's look closely at the two fold purpose of Israel's failure which God ordained in eternity past to bring glory unto himself. The first reason is to bring salvation to the Gentiles. Look at verse 11 again. He says:

“But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.”<sup>20</sup>

There it is in one sentence. God is using Israel's failure to bring salvation to the Gentiles. He has got a plan. He has got a purpose. And he uses the Gentiles to cause elect Jews to become envious, to arouse in Israel a yearning to be reconciled to God and to enjoy the blessings that he is pouring out upon the Gentiles. Obviously Israel's failure is not final.

Once again, all of this according to God's sovereign plan. Jesus predicted this in Matthew eight beginning in verse 10. You might recall that context. He is responding to the Roman Centurion that came to him in repentant faith that caused Jesus to absolutely marvel and to say in verse 10:

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<sup>19</sup> Romans 11:11.

<sup>20</sup> Romans 11:11.

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Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>21</sup>

Well, of course, this would have been an absolute shock to the Jews. They were apoplectic with rage when they heard this, because in their minds the Gentiles were nothing more than dogs. And to think that somehow they would be part of the kingdom? That is incomprehensible.

Now as a footnote, this is important for you to understand when you think about the kingdom. If you look at Scripture you will see that there is a thing called the universal kingdom. From all eternity there has existed a universal kingdom or dominion of God whereby he rules over his creation. But, secondly, when you look at Scripture you will see there is also what we would call a mediatorial kingdom where God rules through divinely chosen human representatives who would speak on his behalf and who would represent the people before him. Throughout the Old Testament we witness the divine government upon the earth through a variety of mediators and they would have... they would serve in one of the three functions. They would be a prophet, a priest or a king. And ultimately only the Messiah, only the Lord Jesus Christ will be able to fulfill all three functions when he returns as king and rules in the final mediatorial kingdom on earth, when the King of kings comes upon the earth and inaugurates a perfect theocratic kingdom. He will sit on the throne of David according to Isaiah 9:7, executing, quote, judgment and righteousness in the land, according to Jeremiah 33:15. And all of this will be in fulfillment of a covenant that cannot be abrogated, cannot be transferred according to Jeremiah 33 verses 20 through 21. Very important passage of Scripture for you to know.

And later in the New Testament we see that the initial fulfillment of this covenant was set into motion at the first coming of Jesus who was the promised seed of David who will rule in a future earthly kingdom as the promised Messiah. So many passages speak of this. For example, Daniel 2:44.

“And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.”<sup>22</sup>

Now some will ask, “Well, what about the spiritual kingdom? Isn't there a spiritual kingdom?”

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<sup>21</sup> Mathew 8:10-12.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel 2:44.

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Well, yes, in some ways there is. Luke reveals to us in his gospel as well as in Acts that the kingdom will come in two stages. He speaks about how that it is here both already and yet he says but not yet. You see, the kingdom was already there in a spiritual sense in that God was rebuilding the house of David through his greater Son the Lord Jesus the raised and reigning Jesus and Christ's first advent, when he first came, the Abrahamic, Davidic and new covenants all received an initial partial fulfillment, but obviously there is much more to come.

Now when Jesus came, when the Messiah came the immediate establishment of the kingdom on earth was contingent upon Israel's attitude towards their King, towards their Messiah, because all the divine promises of the covenants pertained to the nation. But they rejected their king. We will not have this man reign over us. And so the earthly messianic kingdom was postponed as God knew that it would. So God shut out most of the Jews for whom the kingdom was intended, although a remnant will one day believe and be restored.

Jesus described this, as well, in Matthew 21 verse 43. He says:

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.”<sup>23</sup>

I believe this refers partially to the Church which Peter described as a holy nation in 1 Peter 2:9, but also this will include a repentant, a regenerated nation of Israel living on a renovated earth with her Messiah which is in harmony with all of the Old Testament prophecies. For she will possess even a rebuilt temple that Ezekiel details in chapter 40 through 48.

By the way, why would God waste so much time giving such profound details about a future temple if, in fact, it wasn't going to be a future temple, if it was just some spiritual analogy of the Church and our relationship to him?

There will be a rebuilt temple one day, one that will be unfathomably more glorious than any other, if you read the descriptions of it. And for the first time Israel will worship with a pure heart in ways that are unlike any former generation of Israel and the Lord himself, imagine this, the Lord himself will be in his temple. No ark of the covenant. The Lord will be there. There will be no veil. The Lord will be there. And we will see him. How I long to see this.

And, folks, whenever we study these great doctrinal truths, you must transport yourself into the day where you will experience the glorious fulfillment of all that God has

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<sup>23</sup> Matthew 21:43.

# Israel's Failure is Not Final - Part 1

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Romans 11:11-24

**Preached on:** Sunday, June 24, 2012

promised the redeemed. Do you realize that we are going to reign with him? 2 Timothy 2:12. In 1 Corinthians 6:2 Paul says:

“Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?”<sup>24</sup>

And we are going to see these things. Oh, child of God, does this not thrill your soul? Think about it. To think that the Son of man graciously shares his dominion with those whom he purchased with his very blood. Absolutely staggering. God has promised that Israel will one day be a glorious nation, that she will be restored to world supremacy. This is so magnificently described in the Old Testament, probably nowhere any better than in Isaiah’s description in chapter 60. If you read that chapter you will see that he describes how they are going to return from their world wide dispersion back to their own land, back to the city of Jerusalem, that the nations which had afflicted them will come and pay homage to them as the chosen people of God, that foreign kings will minister to them, that the wealth of the nations will be devoted to their prosperity and the beautification of the sanctuary of the Lord, that their days of mourning will finally be ended, that violence and destruction will no more invade their borders and that the Lord himself will guarantee their political supremacy.

In verse 12 he says:

“For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, And the nations will be utterly ruined.”<sup>25</sup>

As a footnote, how any one could apply that prophecy to the Church is beyond me. After Isaiah described the tragic sins of Israel in chapter 59, only extreme theological prejudice could possibly see in chapter 60 the glory of the Church. It makes no sense to me. This is why Paul knew that God was not finished with unbelieving Israel.

Isn’t God’s plan of redemption amazing? So many intricate aspects of it. Think about it. He promised Abraham in Genesis 12:3:

“And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”<sup>26</sup>

And, my, aren’t we recipients already of that blessing through Christ that came from his loins?

Through Moses on Sinai he called Israel to be his witness nation to the world, Exodus 19:6, to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. And then through Isaiah he reminded

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<sup>24</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:2.

<sup>25</sup> Isaiah 60:12.

<sup>26</sup> Genesis 12:3.

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them that they were to be, quote, a light of the nations so that God's salvation may reach to the end of the earth, Isaiah 49:6.

Now she failed miserably as his witness nation. She failed in her mission. But we know, for example, during the days of the tribulation, Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week God is going to empower her to be extremely effective as a witness nation because he is going to bring conversion to 144,000 witnesses, 12,000 Jewish males from each tribe to preach the gospel. Then, again, when she is restored to her land by her Messiah when he returns they will be his witness people as he promised they would eventually be. But meanwhile, as we see here in this text, because of their transgression, verse 11, God has invited into the kingdom the despised Gentiles which probably includes virtually every one of us in this worship center.

Paul and Barnabas infuriated the jealous Jews in the city in Antioch in Acts 13 beginning at verse 46. There he said:

“It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For thus the Lord has commanded us, ‘I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU SHOULD BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.’”<sup>27</sup>

But God has a second reason for Israel's failure, not only to bring salvation to the Gentiles, but also, secondly, to bring salvation to the Jews. Notice in verse 11, again, he says:

“...to make them jealous.”<sup>28</sup>

The little phrase to make, grammatically in the original language denotes intent, denotes purpose. God has a reason here. None of this is catching him by surprise. He is not having to change his plans. God did not permanently set his people aside. No, not at all. He had a purpose to bring salvation to the Gentiles so that we could, in turn, make them jealous, make them envious. In other words, he wanted to expose their sin and the horror of its consequences, that they might by the power of his grace repent and be reconciled. And, boy, talk about getting their attention, for him to come along to these filthy, stinking Gentiles and to transform them?

That is why Paul will later say to Gentiles who were proud, “Boy, we can be proud without a cause, right?” In verse 25 he says:

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<sup>27</sup> Acts 13:46-47.

<sup>28</sup> Romans 11:11.

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“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery.”<sup>29</sup>

In other words, this marvelous chain of events that results in Israel’s salvation. I don’t want you to be uninformed of this mystery

“..., lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved.”<sup>30</sup>

And, once again, I would add that only the most severe form of theological bias can twist this text to refer to the Church. Paul looked beyond the benefit to the Gentiles due to Israel’s transgression. He looks beyond all of that and sees a more glorious blessing that will accrue to the benefit of his beloved kinsmen, that is causing his heart to ache, a blessing that will be inaugurated by a redeemed and resurrected Israel. Just read Ezekiel 37 when those bones come to life.

Now in our next gathering I will unpack this for you in great detail, because contained within the next several verses is a marvelous picture of all that God has planned not only for his Church, but also his chosen nation of Israel. But in closing we must ask a very important question. Let me put it to you this way, you specifically, you, my beloved church family. Are Jewish people provoked to envy when they look at your life? Do they look at your life and desire God’s rich blessing because they see in you this transformed life, this life that is given sacrificially to the Savior, that they see in you all of the blessings that they would long for in their life?

I have talked to a number of Jewish who at one time hated Christ, hated Christianity, but because of the witness of the life of certain believers, they were provoked to jealousy and they wanted what that person had and that opened up the door to the gospel. That is God’s intention, dear friends. Not that they might become Gentiles, but that they might enjoy the fullness of being a Jew in loving submission to their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ. I fear that too often when they look at us—as Paul warned—they see arrogance instead of humility. They see contempt rather than love. They see hypocrisy rather than sincerity. They see apathy rather than commitment. So examine yourself this weekend and leave here knowing full well that Israel’s failure is not final.

I close with a quote from Horatius Bonar. He was a great Scottish preacher, a writer, a theologian, a scholar and also a hymn writer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and he emphatically underscored this great truth that Israel’s failure is not final. Here is what he said.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
All other names may pass away,

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<sup>29</sup> Romans 11:25.

<sup>30</sup> Romans 11:25-26.

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But thine, My Israel, shall remain  
In everlasting memory.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
Inscribed upon My palms thou art;  
The name I gave in days of old

Is graven still upon My heart.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
Beloved of thy God art thou,  
His crown for ever on thy head,  
His name for ever on thy brow.

Forgotten! no; that cannot be:  
Sun, moon, and stars may cease to shine,  
But thou shalt be remembered still,  
For thou art His, and He is thine.

Let's pray together.

*Father, we are always humbled when we immerse ourselves in your Word. For in it we see once again how miniscule, how unworthy we are to be a part of so great a plan of redemption. Therefore, Lord, these great truths provoke us once again to humility and to praise. I pray that each of us will examine our lives that we might live in such a way as to provoke to envy all people, especially your beloved enemies the Jews and, Lord, for those that do not know you as Savior, overwhelm them this day with great conviction knowing that the wrath of God is suspended over them unless they repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask all of these things in the precious name of our Savior and for his glorious sake. Amen.*

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