

# Romans 11:7-15 - Life from the Dead

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COURSE 



## 11:7 - Israel Has Not Obtained

- **"Israel has not obtained what it seeks"**  
"What it seeks" is *eipzēteō* -- a present-tense compound word made up of *eipi* (upon) and *zēlon* (zeal). They were seeking in an ongoing manner, with *zeal*, but not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2).
- **What did they seek?**  
Paul previously told us they sought *righteousness*, but by works of the law rather than faith (Rom. 9:31).

## 11:8 - As It Is Written

- **"a spirit of stupor"**  
"Stupor" is *katanUxeōs*: "a senseless mental condition of deep sleep." The equivalent Hebrew term, *Tareddemah*, describes the deep sleep which fell on Adam prior to the removal of his rib (Gen. 2:21).
- **What is the source of the stupor?**  
The stupor is the result of judicial hardening initiated by God *in response to* the rejection of truth by those under its influence : Isa. 29:9, 13-14 (NKJV).

## 11:9 - Table Become a Snare

- **"And David says"**  
Paul is quoting Psalm 69, a Messianic psalm which speaks of how Jesus was treated by Israel (cf. Mat. 27:46-48).
- **"Let their table become a snare and a trap... a stumbling block"**  
"Table" is used as a figure of speech, a metonymy, where *table* represents that which is normally placed upon it: food to sustain its eaters. Jesus was to have been their "living water" and "bread of life," but instead became their stumbling block (*skandalon*, 1Cor. 1:22-24; Gal. 5:11).

## 11:10 - Bow Down Their Back

- **"and bow down their back always"**  
This phrase departs from the Massoretic Text of Psalm 69:23 which states, "and make their loins shake continually." The Greek reflects the *Septuagint* (where the verse is found at Psalm 68:24). The difference can be understood in the variety of meanings conveyed by the Hebrew term *matnayim*: "hips," "waist," "back," "body," "side," "loins," "heart," and

others. This phrase may speak of ongoing servitude or possibly the result of blindness-- continually stooping and groping to see a path.

## 11:11 - Have They Fallen?

- **"Certainly not!"**  
Paul uses his standard phrase which *emphatically* denies the possibility which has naturally risen in the listener's mind. NOTE: *if Israel has fallen, never to recover her national status before God, as many Christians today claim, then Paul's use of this same term elsewhere can also be negated!* But this would imply that there *is* unrighteousness with God (Rom. 3:6), that the law *is* made void through faith (Rom. 3:31), that we *should* continue in sin that grace may abound (Rom. 6:1-2), and that Christ *is* a minister of sin (Gal. 2:17) ! The possibility that the nation of Israel has fallen and lost her chosen status is *equally implausible!*
- **"through their fall"**  
"Fall" is *paraptōmati* which can mean *false step* or departure from the right way of living. Here it is singular, probably denoting the specific sin of the rejection and crucifixion of Messiah Jesus.
- **"to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles"**  
Paul returns to his earlier theme (Rom. 10:19). The "foolish nation" (Gentiles, devoid of the knowledge of the Torah) now has a saving relationship with Israel's Messiah which most Jews within Israel have never experienced.

## 11:12 - Riches for the World

- **"their fall... their fullness"**  
These two phrases, *their fall* and *their fullness*, correspond to the two comings of Christ. Paul writes in the interval when the cross is past history and the redemption of Israel is, as in our day, future.
- **"fullness"**  
"Fullness" is *plērōma* : the same word which is used to describe the "*fullness*" of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:25). It describes *that which is brought to a desired end* and can be used of a period of time, when all intended within it has been accomplished (Rom. 11:24; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10).
- **The Fullness is More Glorious!**  
At the second coming of Christ, "The conversion of the Jews will be accompanied by the most glorious consequences for the whole world." (Charles Hodge).

## 11:13 - I Speak to You Gentiles

- **"for I speak to you Gentiles"**  
Although Romans is written to both Jews (Rom. 2:17; 4:1, 12; 7:1; 16:7, 11) and Gentiles (Rom. 1:5, 13; 5:14-16; 11:17-31), Paul wants the Gentiles to pay special attention because they are more likely to misunderstand the status of Israel after the cross. Indeed, *history has amply shown Paul's concern to be accurate!*

## 11:14 - Provoke to Jealousy

- **"by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh"**  
Although Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), he always strove to present the gospel *to the Jew first* (Acts 13:5, 14, 46; 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19). The behavior of believing Gentiles is very important to Paul and will have a direct bearing upon whether Paul's countrymen will be provoked to jealousy.

## 11:15 - Life from the Dead

- **"if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world"**  
"Reconciling" is *katallogE* : "change from enmity to friendship." There was enmity between the Gentiles and Israel (Eph. 2:14-17) and between all unbelievers (the majority of which were Gentiles) and God. When the gospel went forth to the Gentiles, they were reconciled to God.
- **"what will their acceptance be"**  
Literally, *For if the casting away of them [is] the reconciliation of the world, what [is] the acceptance (or reception) if not life from the dead?* The acceptance could be: (1) the acceptance of the Jews by God or (2) the acceptance of Messiah Jesus by the Jews. Based on the purpose of the tribulation--to turn Israel to their Messiah (Deu. 4:30 ; Jer. 30:7 ; Eze. 20:37 ; Dan. 12:1 ; Zec. 13:8-9; Mat. 23:39; Luke 21:24; Rom. 11:25), it seems best to understand this as acceptance on the part of Israel of her Messiah (Mat. 23:39).
- **"life from the dead"**  
Paul was intimately familiar with the Old Testament and could scarcely have used this phrase in a context concerning the restoration of Israel without intending a direct allusion to chapter 37 of Ezekiel. Ezekiel 37 touches on many of the same themes as Romans 11. Ezekiel's passage indicates: (1) Israel's hope seems gone; (2) Israel's "bones" are reassembled *prior to* her spiritual rebirth; (3) Israel is brought back into her land; (4) to be cleansed of sin according to an everlasting covenant (cf. Rom. 11:27).

## Application

1. **Divine Hardening in Judgment** - Those who turn away from the light which God has given risk being divinely hardened in their rejection of God.
2. **Provoking Nonbelieving Jews to Jealousy** - Does our assurance of salvation and our intimacy with the Jewish Messiah exhibit characteristics which would draw an unsaved Jew?
3. **The Blessed Hope and Israel** - The blessed hope of Christ's return can and should include our excitement concerning the blessings *the entire world* will enjoy when Israel accepts her Messiah and the Millennial Kingdom is ushered in.
4. **Don't Judge Spiritual Reality By What Is Seen** - We must not judge by what we see with our eyes concerning Israel. We must never doubt God's ability to bring Israel to a point of spiritual awakening concerning Messiah Jesus at the precise time of *His choosing*.
5. **Jews and Gentiles on Equal Footing** - When history draws to an end, both Jews and Gentiles will be shown as falling short of God and equally in need of His unmerited grace. Gentiles may be more numerous among the "people of God" at present, but this has not always been the case nor may it be in the future. We Gentile believers must not become haughty!