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The Jealousy of the Gentile Believers

11: 11-15

The jealousy of the Gentile believers DIG: How is Isra'el stumbling a *good* thing? Why does Paul persist in using his energy to make his ministry known among people whom he expects to be unreceptive? Is there anything about Gentile Christians that would make non-Messianic Jews jealous of them? In what way is this the Gentile "Great Commission?"

REFLECT: To what extent are you living out these verses? Are you making non-Messianic Jews jealous? If so, how? If not, why? Does your church have an outreach ministry to Jews? How is that going? Again. If not, why not? In what ways would God's grace toward Gentiles break through the walls of presumption which the Jews had built toward God?

The purpose of Gentile salvation is to provoke Jews to jealousy. The very unbelief of Isra'el now is somehow part of God's program to bring Isra'el to national salvation in the future.

Paul's imaginary non-Messianic **Jewish** opponent makes a fifth and final attempt to overturn **his** reasoning. "**In that case**, that is, if, as you claim, **Paul**, it is **Isra'el's** own fault that **they** do not trust in **Yeshua Messiah**, and if, as you claim, this rejection does not signify that **God** has abandoned **His people**, then **I say, isn't it that** the majority of **Jews have stumbled with the result that they have permanently fallen away" (11:11a)?** This is not, as some think, a repetition of the question in **11:1**. There, it was whether **YHVH** had acted to abandon **Isra'el**; here, it is whether **Isra'el's** rejection of **Yeshua** has as its necessary consequence the permanent self-exclusion of **the Jewish people** from the promises of **ADONAI**.

Shocked, **Paul** responds: **Heaven forbid** (Hebrew: *chalilah*, meaning *that's a contradiction, it makes no sense*)! In light of **God's** faithfulness, this is unthinkable that **the Jewish people** might not receive what **God** had promised **them (11:11b)**. That would be bad, but the reality is **quite the contrary, good**, in **four** ways:²⁹⁰

1. It is by means of Isra'el's stumbling that deliverance has come to the Gentiles (11:11c). This is a *good* thing in itself. The passage recalls **9:32-33** and portrays **Isra'el** tripping over a **stone that makes people stumble, Yeshua**, and falling alongside the path of **the Torah** (which has **trust** in **their Messiah** as its **goal** and **fulfilment**), off to the side, where the light of **God's** Sh'khinah glory does not shine (**Psalm 119:105**).

That the deliverance: What **deliverance**? That which had been promised in the TaNaKh to **Isra'el**, nothing less than **salvation** (see the commentary on **Jeremiah**, **to see link click Eo - I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el**) from sin and its consequences, including all the evils of this world. **Has come**, meaning **the deliverance** has begun and will certainly be completed, but not meaning that its full implications (such as world peace) have already happened in history. **To the Gentiles**, the *Goyim*, or **the nations (Matthew 5:47)**. **The deliverance** was meant for **Isra'el (Matthew 10:6, 15:24)**; but as a **nation, she** failed to receive **it**. Individual **Jews** did receive **salvation**, but the majority, including the religious leaders in Jerusalem, did not. This led to its being offered to **the Gentiles**, as the book of **Acts** documents, although **ADONAI** has never stopped **holding out His hands** to **His disobeying and contradicting people (10:21)**.

The traditional non-Messianic **Jewish** counterclaim is that the righteous of all the nations have always had a place in the world to come, and therefore Christianity is essentially unnecessary, although it deserves credit for helping to lead **Gentiles** out of idolatry toward monotheism. However, they believe that it does not lead them to true monotheism because "it teaches that a man is **God**." Moreover, in their view, Christianity is not only unnecessary for Jews but a positive evil, since it leads them away from their more perfect monotheism. It is pointless to speculate how **YHVH** might have brought **Gentiles** that deliverance, had Pharisaic Judaism obeyed the Gospel when it was first offered. What we do know is that **God** did in fact use **Isra'el's** disobedience as a means, causing Messianic Jews, most notably **Paul**, to evangelize **Gentiles** as well as **Jews**, and that many **Gentiles** responded positively.²⁹¹



Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise how great **Your** love is! About **Isra'el** **He** says: **All day long I stretched forth My hands to a disobedient and contrary people (Romans 10:21).** **Your** love for **Isra'el** is so great even though **they disobey**. **You** did not give up for **You** so long for **Isra'el** to obey and to love **You**; but **You** give each one in **Isra'el** a choice to follow **You** or to follow their own desires. No one is made to enter into **Your** Kingdom. **You** entice with your great mercy and awesome love, but each person must decide his destiny for himself.

Moses and **Joshua** both urged **the Israelites** to choose to follow **God** with all **their** hearts. **I call the heavens and the earth to witness about you today, that I have set before you, life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life so that you and your descendants may live, by loving ADONAI your God, listening to His voice, and clinging to Him. For He is your life (Deut. 30:19-20b).** **Joshua** encouraged **the people** to make a wise individual choice on who **they** would worship as **God** - a choice that was not to follow the same gods that others, including **their** fathers, had chosen. **Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve - whether the gods that your fathers worshipped that were beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will worship ADONAI" (Joshua 24:15b-c)!**

Isra'el, being in a national covenant with **God**, meant **God** would bless **Isra'el** with land (**Genesis 15:12-21**). **Abraham**, the Father of **the Jewish nation**, would be blessed with offspring **as many as the stars of the sky (Genesis 15:5)**. **God** so desires to forever be the **God** of each one in **Isra'el**, but the choice is left up to each individual to choose to love and serve **You** as their **God**. **Yes, I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, in order to be your God and your seed's God after you. I will give to you and to your seed after you the land where you are an outsider - the whole land of Canaan - as an everlasting possession, and I will be their God" (Genesis 17:7-8).** Heaven's blessing is offered to all, but given only to those who choose to love and serve **YHVH** as their **Savior** and **Lord (John 5:24)**.

Praise **You** dear Heavenly **Father** for loving all and opening your arms wide to all who will choose to love and to follow you. Praise **You** for being so patient and continuing to work in people's lives to draw them to **Yourself**. Please open the eyes of family and friends so they choose to move beyond mere knowledge about you to a relationship where they choose to love and serve **You** while they are living - for death seals whatever decision they have made. **And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this judgment (Hebrews**

9:27). *You are Awesome beyond words! In Yeshua's holy name and power of resurrection. Amen*

2. This **deliverance** for **Gentiles** is intended to fulfill the prophecy of **Deuteronomy 32:21**, that **God will provoke Isra'el to jealousy (11:11d) over a non-nation**, that is, **a nation void of understanding (11:11)**. It is *good* when **God** fulfills one of **His** prophecies, for it vindicates **God's** name and **His** character. So, on the one hand, the unbelief of **Isra'el** is to promote **Gentile** salvation; which in turn, is to promote **Jewish** salvation. It is no accident that the majority of **Jewish** believers have been led to **the Lord** by **Gentile** believers. As **YHVH** has said: **My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways (Isaiah 55:8)**.²⁹²

To provoke them to jealousy. Is there anything about **Gentile** Christians that would make non-Messianic **Jews** jealous of **them**? Throughout most of the last two thousand years, the Church, much to its great shame, not only has not provoked to **Jews** to **jealousy** but has provoked bitterness and fear; so that **Jewish people**, instead of being drawn to love the Jewish **Messiah Yeshua**, have usually come to hate or ignore **Him**, remaining convinced that their non-Messianic Judaism, or secularism, or agnosticism, is superior to Christianity. The truth is that **Isra'el** has failed to be **a light to the Gentiles** (see the commentary on **Isaiah In - He Made My Mouth like a Sharpened Sword**), and **the Gentiles** have failed to **provoke the Jews** to **jealousy** (see the commentary on **Romans Cy - The Jealousy of the Gentile Believers**). This will only be set right when **the Lord** returns (see the commentary on **Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah**).

If this seems to be a harsh judgment, then let us hear of which non-Messianic **Jews** are expected to be **jealous**. **Jealous** of the "Christians" who trapped **Jews** in **their** synagogues and burned **them** alive (which happened when the Crusaders conquered Jerusalem in 1099, as well as in several European cities)? **Jealous** of the "Christians" who forced **Jews** to hear sermons of conversion against **their** will and expelled from the country **those** who did not respond (which took place for centuries in the Middle Ages and the Inquisition)? **Jealous** of the "Christians" who falsely accuses **Jews** of murdering Christian children in order to use their blood as part **their** Passover Seder? **Jealous** of the cross-carrying "Christian" priests leading murderous mobs in ethnic cleansing? Maybe **jealous** of the "Christians" who remained silent while six million **Jews** perished in the Holocaust? Or perhaps **jealous** of the "Christians" who murdered **them** - including Hitler himself, who was never excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church? Or maybe **jealous** of "Christian" members of the Ku Klux Klan and other white "Christian" supremacy gangs and their hooligan demonstrations? Or possibly **jealous** of "Christians" that support Palestinian

organizations whose terrorist kill and maim **Israeli** Jewish children? Jealous of Greek Orthodox Archbishop Capucci, convicted of gun-running for those same Palestinian terrorist organizations? Which of these “Christians” are **Jews** supposed to be **jealous**? After such a list, it’s probably kinder not to dwell on what these people provoke **Jews** to - but it certainly isn’t **jealousy**.²⁹³

Gentile Christians need to understand that the words **provoke them to jealousy** is a command, just like **to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile (1:16)**. It is no less a command than: **Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)**. But the overwhelming majority of Gentile churches see **provoke them to jealousy** as an option, or a ministry that they don’t see as their calling. Non-Messianic **Jews** ought to be able to look at saved **Gentiles** in the Church and see in them such a wonderful change from their former selves, such holy lives, such dignified, godly, peaceful, honorable, ethical, joyful and humble people, that they become **jealous** and want for themselves also whatever it is that makes these **Gentiles** different and special. The rest of **Chapter 11** expands on this theme, and **Chapters 12-15** are nothing if not a manual on how **to provoke Jews** - and unbelieving **Gentiles** - **to jealousy**.²⁹⁴

3. Isra’el’s eclipse is not permanent, she is only temporarily placed in a position less favored than the Gentiles. Although in itself this may seem bad, in the context of **God’s** long-range plan it is *good*; as will be shown, it is part of how **YHVH** will bring salvation to **the Jewish people**. **Moreover, if their stumbling is bringing riches to the world - that is, if Isra’el’s being placed temporarily in a condition less favored than that of the Gentiles is bringing riches to the latter (11:12a)**. The word **temporarily** is important because **her fullness (11:12b)** will be achieved in **her** national conversion in **11:26** when **all Isra’el will be saved** (see the commentary on **Revelation Ev - The Basis of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**).

The idea of a **temporary eclipse** of Isra’el by **the Gentiles can be found in rabbinic writings also**. In the Talmud the passage: **If you do not listen, I will weep in secret because of your pride (Jeremiah 13:17a)** is examined. **“What is the meaning of the phrase, for the pride? Rabbi Shmu’el ben-Yitzchak said, “For the glory [Hebrew: *gaveh*, literally pride] has been taken away from them and given to the goyim, [Gentiles] of the world (Chagigah 5b).**

Also, in the Talmud, the saying of Rabbi Papa, “When the ox runs and falls, the horse is put in the ox’s stall (Sanhedrin 98b), is explained by the Jewish

commentators, such as Rashi, as referring to Isra'el and the Gentile nations. A midrash on this text explains that the horse is allowed to replace the ox, but when the ox recovers it is hard to remove the horse. Likewise, when the Israelites were eclipsed and the Gentiles were given power. But when Isra'el recovers it will be hard to remove the Gentiles from their position of power without inflicting much suffering.

One difference between **Paul** and **the rabbis** above is that in **Paul's** understanding, it is the spiritual element of **glory** or **power** which has passed to **the Gentiles** from that part of **Isra'el** which has remained **stonelike (11:7 and 25)**; whereas for **the rabbis**, the spiritual **glory** and **power** remain with **Isra'el** even during **the temporary eclipse**.²⁹⁵

4. Isra'el's future full commitment to Yeshua Messiah, which is what Isra'el in its fullness implies, she will bring even greater riches, even greater good, to humanity than their temporary humiliation has brought (11:12b)! Here Gentiles are offered a "selfish" motive for evangelizing Jews: if Jewish spiritual failure has brought riches to the Gentiles, how will Jewish national salvation bring even greater riches to them. YHVH, who created humanity, knows human nature very well and does not shrink from using self-interest to motivate right behavior. There are numerous examples of this in the TaNaKh; two of the best known are the fifth commandment (Deuteronomy 5:16) and the guarantee of the fertility of the Land of Promise if the Israelites would obey His mitzvot (Deuteronomy 11:13-21).

However, to those of you who are Gentiles (11:13a). Paul is writing to the Messianic community in **Rome**, a body of Messianic **Jews** and **Gentile** believers, and **he** calls **the Gentile** believers "**Gentiles**." Thus, he refutes the theology which claims that when a **Gentile** becomes a believer, he is no longer a **Gentile**, but a "**Spiritual Jew**." Similarly, **Galatians 2:13** shows that a **Jewish** believer in **Yeshua** remains a **Jew**. The passages which say that in **Messiah "there is neither Jew nor Gentile" (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11)** refer to equality of the status in the Body of **Messiah**, and not to the obliteration of all distinctions.

I say this. Everything from **11:13** to **11:32** is specifically directed at **Gentile** believers. **Paul** shifts his remarks from one audience to another, as **he** did in **2:17** (see **At - The Religious Jew**). Since **10:14** **he** has been debating an imaginary non-Messianic **Jew** whose first three objections (**10:14-14, 18** and **19**) would not have interested **Gentiles** much, but those last two (**11:1** and **11**) might well provoke in some a prideful antisemitic response, "Yes, indeed, **God** has **abandoned His people the Jews** and replaced them with us

Christians. Yes, indeed, **the Jews have stumbled** so as to **fall away** permanently from ever receiving what **God** has promised, and we Christians will get those blessings instead.” Curiously, much of the Christian Church through the centuries (and not excluding today) has managed to believe this “Replacement Theology” lie of their own invention, instead of what **Paul** says to refute it. The irony of this is dwarfed by the tragedy of what its consequences have been for **the Jews**.

For this very reason it is especially important for both **Jews** and **Gentiles** - Messianic and otherwise - to understand these twenty verses well. They demonstrate to Gentiles that Christianity and antisemitism are absolutely incompatible. More than that, they prove that **YHVH** is not - as some think - “finished with **the Jews**.” More than that, they prove that any Christian teaching that speaks of the Church as the “New Isra’el” (a phrase found nowhere in the B’rit Chadashah but invented by the theologians) which has replaced the “Old Isra’el” (by which they mean **the Jews**) is vastly oversimplified and open to abuse (**Romans 11:23-24; Galatians 6:16**). More than that, these verses demonstrate once again that **Paul himself** was not an anti-Semite and did not teach that all the promises to **Isra’el** have now been given to the Church; instead, **he** had a deep and concerned love for **his own Jewish people**, warned very severely against antisemitism, and confirmed the promises **God** made in the TaNaKh with **His** light-bearing words of hope: **All Isra’el will be saved (11:26a)**.

Since I myself am an emissary sent to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15, 22:17-21, 26:17-20; Galatians 1:16, 2:7-9; Ephesians 3:8), I make a point of letting Jewish people know about the importance of my work. One hears little these days about this principle of evangelism. Most Christians do not have a ministry to **Jewish people**, so they suppose that **they** have no particular responsibility toward **them**. They are rarely encouraged to make their ministry to Gentiles known among **the Jews** as a means of provoking **them** to jealousy the way **Paul** did. **Paul** is very cautious about what **he** hopes to accomplish - **he** has some **hope that somehow he may provoke some of his own people to jealous** of saved **Gentiles, and save some of them also (11:13b-14)**! Actually, **Paul** spent considerable time among **Jews (Acts 13:5)** and in at least one instance, in **Rome**, the very **city** to which this letter was written, **he** seems to have had, a few years later, a notable evangelistic success with **them (Acts 28:24-25)**.²⁹⁶

Why does **Paul** persist in using **his** energy to make **his** ministry known among **the people** whom **he** expects to be unreceptive? **For if [the unbelieving Jews] rejecting Yeshua means reconciliation for the world, what will their accepting Him mean, if not life from the dead (11:15)**! With the national salvation of **Isra’el** the Messianic Kingdom will be established. And the blessings of the Kingdom will not be limited to **the Jews**, **they** will

be available to **the Gentiles** as well. Therefore, if **the Gentiles** have benefited this much from **Jewish** unbelief now, how much more will **they** benefit from **Jewish** belief in the future Messianic Kingdom?²⁹⁷