

ROMANS Part 104

Chapter 11:12-15

The nations' riches.



Now if their offense is the world's riches and their discomfiture the nations' riches, how much rather that which fills them! 13 Now to you am I saying, to the nations, in as much as, indeed, then, I am the apostle of the nations, I am glorifying my dispensation, 14 if somehow I should be provoking those of my flesh to jealousy and should be saving some of them. 15 For if their casting away is the conciliation of the world, what will the taking back be if not life from among the dead?

GIVING IT UP

The whole idea here is that Israel's casting away is temporary. Paul communicates this via the phrase, "that which fills them."

Think of this as a sacrifice on the part of Israel. Let's pretend for a second that Israel decided to do this on purpose. Let's say that she decided to take a noble course and sacrifice herself for the sake of the other nations. I know this is ridiculous, but see if it's instructive. Israel says, "We know that this is our special call. We know that we are going to rule the Earth. But what about the rest of the nations? The best that they can hope for is to be subservient to us. They will be blessed, but only in our wake. But we'll tell you what. We've discussed this among ourselves and we really feel bad about this situation. We don't think it's fair. Wait until you hear what we've decided to do.

"We have so monopolized God's blessings for so long that we are going to unhand our monopoly for the good of all. We are going to purposely "blow it" with God so that He will look for another channel to express His gifts. Because really, He can't keep blessings to Himself. The way we figure it, if we stymie God, the Giver of all blessings, then He's got to 'cut loose' on other people. If we block this channel, then another channel will be cut. God can't help but go elsewhere. His love and grace is like a raging river. It's in Him. We know Him. He can't hold back, you see. We have been talking among ourselves and we think that this other channel can be nothing other than non-Israelite peoples. We hope it is. Because we know that God has to bless *somebody*. If we're out of the picture, then we are sure that His love will be shed abroad. We know this. This is our plan anyway.

"You may be saying, 'Wow, Israel. How can you be so generous? So gracious?' Well, to tell you the truth, it's a little bit selfish. Can you keep a secret? We're thinking of our forefather Solomon. God told Solomon that he could have anything he wanted, and what did he ask for? Wisdom. He did not ask for any worldly pleasure. Can you believe that? God was so impressed because Solomon asked for the most noble thing and

Solomon said, basically, ‘to heck’ with the rest. Solomon was basically saying, ‘I don’t care about anything else, just wisdom from you, God.’ How about that. God was impressed by this. What did God do in return? He gave Solomon what he asked for, yes—namely wisdom—but He also gave him everything that he didn’t ask for, which was every worldly pleasure! How about that for a bargain? This is the nature of God. We’ve been hanging around God a lot for several years now, so we know what we’re talking about. In fact, we’re in the best position of anyone to know what we’re talking about.



“So I suppose you could say that we are being a bit calculating here by thinking that if we give up our exclusive rights to the Scriptures and to the divine legislation and to the promises—for the sake of others—then perhaps God will see our generosity and reward us with some *really* stupendous blessings, as He did with Solomon. It’s fairly reasonable, right?”

“Many of us are also looking at the example of Messiah. He gave His very life for our sakes. Follow this argument now. He is our Messiah, our leader into the kingdom. He voluntarily gave up not only the glory that He had with God before the world was, but He gave up His very life. What was His reward? God gave Him even more power! God *highly* exalted Him, and graced Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing,

celestial and terrestrial and subterranean. So that set us to thinking, ‘I wonder if we can imitate *this* as well? What if we voluntarily give up *our* glory, as did Christ. Why, the rebound from such a sacrifice ought to ascend higher than the highest mountain.’”

FORCED GENEROSITY

This is just what happened—except for one small detail, of course. Israel did not do this voluntarily. God purposely blinded Israel and temporarily removed her advantages. But follow this closely, because He also purposely blesses her on the other end, just as He blessed Solomon and Christ. Sacrifice equals rewards. What we’re seeing here is a graciousness of God so high that even involuntary sacrifice equals rewards. The taking away is involuntary, but the bringing back (the filling) is also involuntary. It tends to make one think that God is using Israel as a tool to bless everyone in the end. (Good thinking.) By the grace of God, the result is the same as if Israel *had* voluntarily and nobly stepped down for others’ blessing. As soon as we try to say that it is “not fair!” that God hardened Israel, we must quickly add that neither is it fair for God to redeem Israel superlatively once He’s finished bartering her stubbornness for the world’s riches.

OFFENSE AND RICHES

“Their offense,” Paul says, “is the *world’s* riches.” “Their discomfiture,” he says, “is the *nations’* riches.” Why the different wording? Why set offenses against riches for the world, and discomfiture against riches for the nations? Aren’t these all the same things? The differences are subtle. There must be differences, or else Paul would not have made the same general point two different ways. An offense is what Israel does, while discomfiture is what she feels due to her offense. The world (Greek, *kosmos*) is the system of things, irrespective of political boundaries. The nations are the specific folk-stems consisting of real people operating *in* the system. Discomfiture suggests the judgment of personal suffering and subsequent deliverance. It’s more personal than the offense producing it. Israel enjoyed the offense of throwing her weight around and rejecting Christ (it’s always kind of fun to sin), but the discomfiture resulting from it stirs their soul toward regret and repentance. “Offense” and “world,” then, belong on the more impersonal side of Paul’s explanation, while “discomfiture” and “nations” brings the process of sin and salvation close to home. Offense put Israel on the bad side of divine favor,

while the suffering resulting from the offense leads to good. It's productive. It's fine to live in a rich *world*, but even better if the *people* can plunge their fists into the treasure chest.

THE FILLING

Israel doesn't realize, of course, that she's done something terribly wrong. She thinks she's been a genius by rejecting the stupid Nazarene who showed up in Bethlehem back there in the first century and by continuing to look for the real Messiah. This is her offense. Nevertheless, she squirms in discomfort due to the rejection of that Messiah. This is her discomfiture. Simply consider the worldwide persecution of Jews over the last two millennia.

It seems pitiful that such a thing should happen to Israel. It would be worse than merely pitiful if this were the end of the story. I think that in the sentence, "If their offense is the world's riches and their discomfiture the nations' riches, how much rather that which fills them!" the "them" should be italicized—"...how much rather that which fills *them*." The emphasis ought to be on the poor Jews who gave everything (though involuntarily) so that the nations could become rich. The nations get rich, spiritually, in the wake of Israel's failure. But Israel gets re-instated big-time, obviously better than before. It is as though Paul is saying, "If the nations get such riches because of the failure of the Jews, you should see the riches that the Jews will get when finally delivered from the failure."

The nations and the world are spoken of as getting riches, but Israel is spoken of as getting filled. This makes sense to me. One could easily look at the riches of the nations and say that these can't even be compared to the Jews merely administrating the government of a single planet. After all, the riches of the nations includes being snatched away out of the coming indignation (1 Thessalonians 1:10) and being seated at the right hand of God with Christ among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6). What is a "mere" earthly call compared to that? How could Israel be said to be properly and fairly compensated when their offense gives the nations so much? This: Israel is *filled*.

Picture a gallon jug and a shot glass. The jug is obviously bigger than the shot glass, but if both are filled, then both are satisfied to the brink. Neither receptacle experiences lack. Israel doesn't *want* to be seated among the celestials. This was not God's promise to her forefather Abraham. She wants

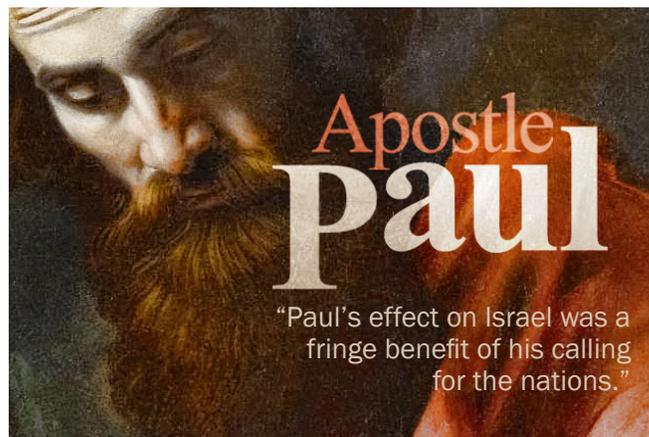


to rule the Earth. Abraham considered the stars only to grasp a dim measure of his descendants; he never wanted a home there. Don't feel bad for Israel. When she feels her filling, happiness will be hers. She will look back to see what it took to feel this way and will not regret a moment of it. She will stare at what has happened with the nations and will not regret a star of their exaltation.

"GLORIFYING MY DISPENSATION"

Now to you am I saying, to the nations, in as much as, indeed, then, I am the apostle of the nations, I am glorifying my dispensation, 14 if somehow I should be provoking those of my flesh to jealousy and should be saving some of them.

Paul's dispensation was nothing less than that of taking the transcendent grace of God to unworthies like Greeks (Ephesians chapter 3), and then telling these people that God would use them to complete the reconciliation of the universe to God (Ephesians 1:9-11). How



in the world could one further glorify a dispensation such as that? Remember from chapter nine that Paul has an unintermittent pain in his heart for his brethren according to flesh (Romans 9:1-3). According as he saw things, Paul had a dual role. His primary role, of course, was to bring the grace of God to the nations and to enlighten all as to the secret administration of the grace of God, as I've been quoting. On top of that, God determined to use Paul's ministry to the nations to incite jealousy in Israel, which in turn would push her toward her own calling. Jesus Christ Himself must have intimated to Paul that this effect on Israel would be a fringe benefit of his calling. Nothing could have made Paul happier. The Inuits use every part of the whale; God

uses every part of His servants. Nothing goes to waste. Paul is happily used up.

When does the jealousy happen for Israel? It happens, in a big way, after the body of Christ is taken from Earth. It is at this time that Israel's eyes are opened on a large scale. This is the New Covenant. I have been saying that the New Covenant is a miracle of God that changes Israel's heart of stone into one of flesh, but now here is how God does that as the rubber meets the road.



I thought before that maybe God would wave a magic wand to change Israel, irrespective of circumstance, but then I remembered that God almost always uses circumstance. From the earthly viewpoint of someone looking in on the action, Israel will understand what has happened with the body of Christ and, via jealousy, will wake up to God's purposes for *them*. Spirit is the cause of the revelation. Thus, spirit works with the circumstance. Spirit causes Israel to understand the circumstance. It requires a grand dose of the spirit of God to make Israelite jealousy so productive. Yes, even jealousy (productive jealousy) for Israel must be spiritually induced. What a sad state of affairs, but so it is.

JEALOUSY TODAY

One can look at this jealousy thing dispensationally, as I have been doing, or one can consider it as something that Paul tried to induce in the Jewish populace of his day. For this, I latch onto Paul's phrase, "That I might save some of them." Think of the remnant. The remnant is saved from the general apostasy, and a remnant of faithful Israelites has existed in every generation since Paul's. Paul told the Jews of his day, "There's something going on with the nations," and no doubt some of the Jews saw it with their own eyes. We know that Paul wants as many of his brethren as possible coming to grasp their calling while he, and they, are alive: "... that I may be saving some of them." These enlightened ones

would have realized that the "eons have been adjusted" (Hebrews 11:3) to accommodate the call to the nations, i.e. "a declaration of God" (Hebrews 1:3). Even in Paul's day, then, some Israelites grasped—thanks to Paul—that their call was now on hold while God exercised un-prophesied glories upon Greeks. This made them want to grasp their own calling more than ever.

THE TAKING BACK

For if their casting away is the conciliation of the world, what will the taking back be if not life from among the dead?

Here now is the third combination of words employed by Paul to describe the singular, un-prophesied event of the nations receiving blessing while Israel suffers beneath a state of national blindness. Let's review:

- 1) Israel's offense is the world's riches
- 2) Israel's discomfiture is the nations' riches

Now comes the new thing:

- 3) Israel's casting away is the conciliation of the world

How many different ways can Paul think of to describe this? It must be because this event is important and multifaceted.

Paul now enters "sovereignty of God" territory. It is not merely that Israel has offended or that Israel is discomfited, but that God has actively cast Israel away. Additionally, it is no longer an indistinct "riches" Paul speaks of, but rather a specific boon resulting from Israel's casting away—"Israel's casting away is *the conciliation of the world*." What is the conciliation of the world? Paul explains it in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19—

Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation.

THE CONCILIATION OF THE WORLD

This is one of the most important passages in Scripture. It means that God is at peace with the world. "The world" here is a figure of speech for the inhabitants *of* the world.

“World” does not mean Earth, but rather “system.” The Greek word is *kosmos*. It’s the arrangement of things. In this system operate beings both terrestrial and celestial. Conciliation means peace. It is one-sided peace, otherwise the word would be “reconciliation.” The system is not at peace with God, but God is at peace with the system and every being in it.

Not a single prophet even whispered of this truth. If a prophet suggested peace at all, it was peace on Earth and good will toward men. It was a small-fry peace resulting from people obeying God, or being shepherded by Israel. Never was the suggestion made that such peace would emerge straight from God’s heart irrespective of human or celestial behavior. Never was the suggestion made that such peace would find its basis in the work of Another—Jesus Christ. When did the conciliation of the world kick in? It happened when Jesus Christ died on the cross. He said, “It is finished!” and then expired. This was the kick-in, though it had not yet been announced.

So much happened on the cross. What Jesus struggled against, no one then knew. Not even His disciples understood. They were still unaware of the basic truth that here was the sacrificial Lamb, the answer to the types in the law for the sins of Israel. Being ignorant of this most rudimentary aspect, how could the disciples have even dimly approached the truth that God was making peace with all creation? Even the brightest in Israel never thought beyond their little tract of real estate.

Who would be told this nearly incredible information of the breadth, the length and the depth of what had happened at Calvary? Only one man: the apostle Paul. When was he allowed to speak it? He could only speak it after Israel had been temporarily cast away. Questions concerning the timing are moot because Israel had already been



cast away before Paul received the message.

God had taken care of everything.

DESOLATED TEMPLE

Many may argue as to when the casting away of Israel occurred. The answer is simple and, I think, obvious. It happened at the death of Christ, when the temple veil was supernaturally torn in two (Matthew 27:51). Jesus had prophesied before His death—

Jerusalem! Jerusalem! who art killing the prophets and pelting with stones those who have been dispatched to her! How many times do I want to assemble your children in the manner a hen is assembling her brood under her wings—and you will not! *Lo! left is your house to you desolate.* For I am saying to you: You may by no means be perceiving Me henceforth, till you should be saying, “Blessed is He Who is coming in the name of the Lord!” (Matthew 23:37-39)

This was to be the end—for the eon—of Israel. Not the complete and final end, but the temporary end. Now it was only a matter of God orchestrating a series of practical demonstrations to prove to Israel, later at the Great White Throne, that she had been given every opportunity to believe, and yet refused. (We know that God hardened Israel’s heart absolutely, but what we’re considering here is Israel’s practical, personal experience; this is what she must go through in order to be ultimately fulfilled; this is the contrast principle.)

The first demonstration was at Pentecost. Three-thousand heard the Circumcision message and believed it. The leadership of Israel, however, refused to listen. They were too hung up on maintaining their own power. This practical demonstration—this testimony—will stand against Israel at the Great White Throne.

Israel also rejected Paul when, on the heels of his Damascus conversion, he went around to the synagogues testifying to his brethren that Jesus was the Messiah. Here was another real-life demonstration of a stiff-necked Israel that will stand against her at the Great White Throne. No Israelite at the Great White Throne will be able to say, “If you had given us another opportunity...” The evidence will be overwhelming. All mouths will be barred. This is necessary to *future* joy for this people. Israel must be delivered of *self*. You know how good this finally feels when it happens.

The final piece of evidence against Israel was a formal trial in Rome where Paul testified for his life. Who was



ACTS 28:28 was not the casting away of Israel.

responsible for his imprisonment in Rome in the first place? The Jews. Who confronted Paul in prison? The Jews. Who utterly rejected him? The Jews. Let's review. The Jews a) rejected the Messiah Himself, b) rejected the twelve spirit-inspired apostles testifying concerning the Messiah, c) rejected Paul as he proved out of the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ, d) rejected Paul again at a legal trial in Rome, where the Jews went on *official record* as having stiff-armed the Lord's greatest apostle, a herald of Christ. Yes, this is the famous Acts 28:28 passage. This event in Rome was *not* the casting away of Israel. The casting away of Israel occurred at the crucifixion of Christ, at the tearing of the veil—a fulfillment of the prophesy of Christ that their house would be left to them desolate. Acts 28:28 was merely a confirmation of something that had already happened. These other things, *including* Acts 28:28, are practical demonstrations that the desolation *had* occurred. These events will serve as a “present-the-evidence” moment for Jews at the Great White Throne judgment of Revela-

tion 20:11-12. These will be exhibits A, B, C, and D. Every Jewish mouth will be barred. In the end, every Jewish soul will be saved. Millions, however, will miss the kingdom. Some will even miss the New Heavens and New Earth and will not be reconciled to God until the consummation of the eons, when death is abolished (1 Corinthians 15:26).

CONCILIATION REVISITED

Who announced this message of the conciliation of the world, through the cross? Paul did, and now we do, for “He places in us the word of the conciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

All of this occurs on the heels of Israel's casting away. Her casting away clears the table for a new revelation to the nations, and not only a new revelation but one of the highest revelations made known to humanity. Strange that hardly anyone believes it. Well, so few people announce it. Well, so few people know it.

What will Israel's taking back be? This: *Life from among the dead*. God loves resurrection, but not even God can resurrect a person or a nation that is not first dead. Israel is dead. She looks dead, she smells dead, she is dead. It's perfect then, isn't it? Death is the perfect and necessary prelude to resurrection. God has done it before. Many times.

In the meantime, let us announce the conciliation of the world. If any Israelites have ears to hear, then let them hear. —MZ

Martin, we cannot give up despite being perplexed. We are not forsaken and we are not the gods of our own destinies. We are in the hands of the Father of the One Who sacrificed His life for us. No matter the current circumstances, they are playing perfectly into our development. So even if you think that everything is falling down and you're moving nowhere, or backwards even, you're actually progressing *so much* that Satan is throwing everything he can at you, to destroy you. This should tell you of Satan's great motive and desire to shut you up. What should be your response? *Do not shut up.*

God is polishing us for our positions among the celestials, and time is short.

I remain your friend with love and confidence from above!