

- Review the major issues of Romans 9 & 10.
 - National Israel has been put in the position by God of being *accursed from Christ*—and therefore they are not receiving the fullness or fulfillment of their program (kingdom), nor any of the things that *pertain* to them.
 - Instead, God has turned to the Gentiles—He has actually changed the status of the Gentiles in His sight, which legally demands that a change in program occur—and God has therefore chosen to begin a new and distinct program or dispensation that He has kept secret from the beginning of creation—and now He is working to accomplish an altogether different plan and purpose that He had in mind.
 - And while you can talk about Romans 9-11 as the 3rd Major Cornerstone to the book of Romans—the truth of the matter is, that Rom. 9-11 is much more than that—(it is about recognizing what God has done in bringing in this new dispensation of grace—and beginning to think ‘dispensationally’ on the whole) - but these 3 chapters have a great deal to do with the perfection of our sonship establishment.
 - And my hope is that you really begin to grasp not only the importance of thinking dispensationally on the whole—but that you have the kind of appreciation you’re supposed to have as an adopted son of your Heavenly Father for how all this information concerning what has happened to Israel and God suspending His program with Israel and bringing in a new and distinct program or dispensation of Gentile grace.
 - And what I’m after here is that you appreciate all this within the context of sonship establishment—because what your Father is doing here isn’t merely teaching you about this great change in programs He’s made—(although it is that)—but more than that, that you appreciate the kind of foundation you’re being given here so that your Father will build upon it something very significant concerning your sonship vocation!
 - And to get that appreciation like you need to have it (and should have it before beginning your sonship education) - you need to be confronted with this dispensational change—and the reality of it—and what has happened to Israel, and what will happen to them in the future—but at the end of all that, you need to be confronted for the first time with ***WHY*** your Father has done all this.

- And the details of why He has done it will all get dealt with later on in the curriculum (in Level II) — but you first get a basic understanding and appreciation for why He's done this at the very end of chapter 11. (:30-36)

- Verses :33-36, especially form that kind of 'doxology' whereby Paul expresses his praise to God—and Paul extols the issue of God's *wisdom*, and the issue of His *knowledge*—and the issue of His *judgments* and so forth.

- And when Paul does that, he's not only responding in an appropriate and glorious way to the marvels of God having turned to us Gentiles (and the marvels of Him being able to show mercy as He's doing today before the outpouring of His wrath in the day of His wrath) — He is doing that, but He's not **only** doing that—He's also laying the groundwork for the next issue that we need to deal with when it comes to this doctrine of the dispensational change God has brought about.

- And once you have a basic grasp for why God has changed the programs—that lays the foundation for getting an advanced understanding and appreciation for **why** He did so — and that leads to what He's really after in answering the question of "Why?" - which is to gain the *subtilty* (or full dimensions) of the genius of God in doing so—and what you will end up with is something fantastic that is directly connected with your sonship life—especially your sonship vocation and your inheritance as your Father's son!

- And you get some more information over in I Corinthians 2, and especially in Eph, Phil, and Col.

- And the upshot of it all is for you to see how that this present dispensation of grace (and the formation of the *new creature of the church, the body of Christ*) perfectly 'dovetails' with God's plan & purpose for Israel —and that the 2 entities that He's created (Israel, the nation of His own creation—and the *new creature of the church, the body of Christ*) are the very means by which He is able to reconcile ALL principalities and powers, might and dominion in the universe—and provide for the dispensation of the fullness of times which sets forth the *manifold wisdom of God!*

- And the truth of the matter is (and I'm not at all trying to minimize the importance of knowing about the 'right division' of God's word), but the truth of the matter is—if all you've got is the **FACT** of the dispensational change God has brought about (great as that is) - the truth is, if that's all you've got, then you really don't have very much (or you don't have near what you should have)!

- In fact—when this whole structure (so to speak) of understanding and appreciating not only what God has done in bringing in this dispensation of grace—and appreciating that it is different and distinct from His program with Israel—and appreciating what both programs are all about—and then you bring in the additional information concerning the **genius** of God in doing what He's done that allows for both entities to be brought together in the *dispensation of the fullness of times*—all that (and the nature of all that) allows for both you and God to have the same knowledge of His wisdom in doing so — that all is so critical and so important because that forms the very basis upon which you (as a Level III son—or *man of understanding*) that forms the basis upon which you will be able to enter into mutual **counsel** (or *wise counsels*) together with God!

- But all that comes **after** this firm foundation is first of all built here in Romans 9-11.

- Therefore the critical nature of what the information does for you as a son (in sonship establishment) - is to make it so that you properly view yourself as who you are in this dispensation of grace—and that's essential to get settled now, before the instruction begins in Romans chapter 12.

- Because a misunderstanding of who we are today is **destructive** to your capacity to understand some things that come along later on.

- And the reason why most Christian folks today don't have any real grasp upon "*the deep things of God*" (I Cor. 2:10) that gets set forth in Eph, Phil, & Col is because their foundation is not properly laid in Rom. 9-11—and they misunderstand who they are today.

- Again—you have to understand that you're **not** a 'spiritual Israelite' today—and you can't be thinking of yourself as someone who is supposed to be assuming or fulfilling Israel's promises & covenants!

- And Rom. 9-11 makes it so that you're not attempting to go back to Israel's program and try to spiritualize the Scriptures and misapply them in that way! (Which is so commonly done today that it's the norm of Christianity!) [But it's in **error** and **out of line** with the will of God!]

- So here in Romans 11—Paul now deals with **Israel's present state**—and then later on in the chapter Paul will show that this present dispensation of Gentile grace has not in any way canceled the completion of God's program with Israel—but Israel's program will be resumed when this dispensation of grace is concluded, **and Israel's fullness is still yet to come.**

- And it's here in ch. 11 that you get the appreciation for all that was put in suspension back there in ch. 9—(that all the things that *pertain* to Israel), that all those things still pertain to them—and God has **not** taken them from Israel and given to us today and has come along and said, Now you do them!

- Nor has God come along and said to us, Now I want you to do them in a 'spiritual' sense! (or something screwy like that)!

- And trying to assume and fulfill the things that pertain to God's program with Israel today is simple disobedience and is dishonoring to the Lord!

- You are part of a distinctly different program—you are a member of a *new creature of the church the body of Christ* that is ONLY being formed in this dispensation of grace—and the doctrine and curriculum that forms your education and edification (as well as your vocation) isn't found in any of Israel's scriptures—but only found in the epistles of the apostle Paul—and that's what you're going to operate upon!

- And that's the kind of comprehension you gain from Rom. 9-11, and especially here in chapter 11.

- SIMPLE OUTLINE OF ROMANS 11.

- Once Romans 9 & 10 has set forth what has happened to Israel and why—chapter 11 will set forth Israel's **present state** and **future fulfillment and fullness** when God resumes dealing with them.

- There are 3 major sections to the chapter—with a couple of sub-sections to it.

1) (:1-10) The description of Israel’s present state.

- And this occurs in 2 parts:

A. (:1-6) - Has God *cast away* Israel? *God forbid*, and why.

B. (:7-10) - Israel is not cast away, but God has *blinded* them.

2) (:11-29) The description of Israel’s future. And it makes plain and clear their fullness yet to come.

- And this occurs in 3 parts:

A. (:11-24) - Does this suspension of God’s program with Israel mean that they have permanently fallen and cannot be restored in the future? *God forbid*, and why.

B. (:25) - Israel’s blindness is only temporary “*until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*” — a warning that let’s you know that this issue of understanding and appreciating God’s dispensational change will be one of the major doctrinal areas of attack, confusion, and misunderstanding that has perilous consequences for us today!

C. (:26-29) - The fullness of God’s program and dealings with Israel is still yet to come—and indeed will come.

3) (:30-36) Paul ends up our sonship establishment by describing how it is that we are to look at things now—how we are to properly look at what God has done in temporarily setting Israel aside and turning to us Gentiles.

- And this occurs in 2 Parts:

A. (:30-32) - How that we are to appreciate God’s *mercy* in what He has done to suspend Israel’s program and fulfill this other purpose He has in mind with us Gentiles.

B. (:33-36) - How we are to appreciate the **genius** of God in what He’s doing.

- Let's now look at the 1st Major section of chapter 11.

1) (:1-10) The description of Israel's present state.

A. (:1-6) Has God *cast away* Israel? God forbid, and why.

I I say then, ... (The *then* in this opening phrase gathers up all of the information that you've covered from Romans 9:1 through 10:21—and it's in view of all that, that this next question comes up—and so you have to bear in mind what you've come to appreciate in all that information in those 2 chapters).

- Once again, this section begins with a question that gets raised—and Paul anticipates this question arising due to everything that he has just said concerning Israel's status of being *accursed from Christ*; and that the reason for that is not because God's word has *taken none effect*, nor is it because God has been *unrighteous* in His dealings with Israel, and it's not because God has been prevented from showing forth His mercy and grace—but it's because Israel (as a nation) has *stumbled over the stumbling stone and rock of offence* (that is, they stumbled over who Jesus of Nazareth was and what His ministry was all about) - and God responded to that issue, and that issue alone.

- God has therefore turned to us Gentiles by means of the Reserve Clause in Ex. 33—and in turning to us in mercy and grace, He has changed the status of the Gentiles in His sight and therefore He has had to legally suspend His program with Israel and begin a new program that He wants to accomplish before returning to the accomplishment of His program with Israel.

- And then, after a full description of why Israel stumbled over Christ and the indictment that they are solely responsible for their own stumbling—in view of all that, Paul anticipates the next question that would naturally arise in a person's thinking (especially in an Israelite's thinking).

- And it's in view of all that, that you have Paul coming along and saying, ***I say then, ...*** — that is, in view of all that, I know that all you're thinking is that, Ok, God has legally suspended His program with Israel and has begun a new and different program with the Gentiles—but I still don't fully understand and appreciate just what He's done with Israel at this present time (especially at the time in which Paul was writing the book of Romans—that is, the time in which you had God bringing His program with Israel to a halt, and at the exact same time, starting this new and different Gentile program.

- And you have to keep in mind that (again) you're not being given everything that God could say on this subject—but you're being told the very things you need to hear and need to appreciate so that you come away from all this with the proper foundation for God suspending His program with Israel and what He done with them during this dispensation of grace—and then (as chapter 11 will conclude), how it is that God will **return** to Israel and **re-start** His program with them in order to **fulfill** all that He set out to do with them.

- And as I said earlier—that's critical for your sonship establishment—it's critical for you to have this foundation so that it can be built upon later on when the issue of what all the genius of God and the wisdom of God is all about in doing all that He's done—in order to bring both programs and both entities (of Israel and the kingdom of heaven on this earth, **and** the entity of this *new creature of the church the body of Christ*) together out in the next dispensation of *the fullness of times!*

- And so, while God is not going to say everything He could say on the subject—He gives you the information you need to have for a foundational understanding and appreciation of His wisdom for doing what He's done—and He gives you some specific terminology that will serve to have you view it all exactly the way He views it (and in the terms He Himself thinks about it all).

- So the thing that need to be addressed now—and the lingering question that has risen in the mind—is one of: Does this mean that God has permanently cast away his people? and will never be able to return to them and to His program with them and fulfill it?

- And that's why you have (:1) saying, ***I say then*** (in view of all of Romans 9 and Romans 10), ***Hath God cast away his people?***

- ***“cast away”*** - Here you have one of those areas where Bible scoffers will come along and say that the KJ is in error (or at least 'difficult to understand') - because you have Paul saying in (:1 and :2) that God has ***not cast away His people***—but in (:15) you've got God saying that He ***has cast away his people*** — well, Which is it? — and they'll say that you've got 2 different Greek words (and you do: ἀπωθέω in :1 & 2, and ἀποβολή in :15 [*casting away*] - and therefore a whole bunch of 'easier to read' translations are offered up.

- But all that criticism is really due to sloppy Bible handling and the inability of being able to read, comprehend, and think according to **context** rather than having to resort to dumbing down the English language and coming up with some kind of ‘easier to read’ version.

- The truth of the matter is—the context tells you that the question being raised here in (:1) is one in which someone would think that—Well, has God **permanently** cast away His people? - that is, the *casting away* concept here in (:1 & 2) is the idea that God is just done with Israel—that He just has no use for Israel any more—either in their present state or in their future (i.e., does Israel have any usefulness to Him in the future?)

- And so Paul brings up the generic issue here: *Hath God cast away his people?* and while, given what has happened to Israel, the response is **God forbid**.

- And as we have often seen, this is the very strong and powerful declaration of God saying, I don’t want you to think that! — (You might have the tendency to think that; that might be the natural conclusion you’d come to; — **or**, someone might tell you that! — But God’s telling you, “Do not think that—I *forbid* you to think that—and to assign what I’ve done with Israel to that issue!”)

- And then Paul goes on to explain that that’s **not** the case at all. (You have that word **For** being used as that English word of logic for setting forth an explanation of the reality of the issue.)

- And Paul begins his explanation and presentation of the truth of the matter in a very interesting way—because before drawing your attention to a matter sitting back in God’s word, he says something peculiar about himself.

*I I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. **For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.***

- Now that’s an interesting way of responding to that question—but if you think about it, that’s actually a very **powerful** response in and of itself!

- Because the idea behind Paul's response is this— If God has *cast away his people*—(now let's stop right there and recognize something important to the context of this response—and that is to simply keep in mind, What is the major issue being considered? ... it's the issue of what has happened to Israel now that this new Gentile program of God's grace has begun? Well the answer to that is that Israel has been put in the position of what? (being *accursed from Christ*) - so **when** did that happen? (It happened when Israel *stumbled* over Him), and when was that? (Their *stumbling* over Him occurred over the period of time of that one year extension of God's forbearance and mercy—that concluded in the murder of Stephen—and it was at that time [just prior to the suspension of their program] that God put them in the position of *accursed from Christ*—are you clear so far?

- Ok—then if God has cast away his people so that He was done with them and they had no more usefulness to Him at all—**then God never could have used the apostle Paul as the apostle for us Gentiles!**

- If that's the case, then God could never have used Paul to reveal to him the ushering in of this dispensation of grace—why? because Paul's an **Israelite!**

- So Paul's first response/declaration to dismiss the idea that God has *cast away His people* is that—If God has *cast away his people*, then how in the world could I be used by God? because I'm an **Israelite**???

- And the truth of the matter is, Israel still has usefulness to Him—and an Israelite still has usefulness to Him!

- He's not fulfilling His plan and purpose with them right now, **but don't get the idea that God's through with them** (or that He's done with them, or finished with them) - and that an Israelite can't be dealt with now (individually) - **or that Israel can't be RESTORED** and be the fulfiller of what God has planned and purposed for them to be!

- And that's the issue in chapter 11—they WILL be restored — God's program with them **will be resumed** and will be **fulfilled**—just as He has promised and sworn to and made covenants in connection with!

- And there's one other issue in Paul's initial response that's to be in your thinking before going back to some passages that clears this up.

- And in the first part of (:2) Paul states something that should be in your thinking—that in and of itself is a very powerful doctrinal issue that is designed to dispel and dismiss this misunderstanding from your mind.

2 *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.* ...

- Now, once again, you've got that *casting away* terminology here in (:2) — and you need to appreciate that it's got this connotation to it that's one of taking something that you've tried to mold and shape and put together—and you've tried to make something out of this thing, and you've tried to do something with it—but it just all falls apart and won't comply to what you're trying to do with it, and so in disgust you just come along and throw the whole thing out on the garbage pile as so much rubbish—and you throw it away and forget about it all together.

- And Paul's 2-part initial remedy (before citing the remedy from God's word) is to say, Look, how could God *cast away his people which he foreknew*?

- And there's something about God *foreknowing* all about Israel that makes it so that this question has nothing to stand on—and you should know that this issue of God's foreknowledge here isn't some kind of theological concept that is just beyond your understanding.

- But you've already encountered this issue in sonship establishment and you should be able to easily handle what Paul's after here.

- Because just as we saw back in those 5 'links' in the 'chain of provision' that God forged for your success as His son (the strength of the curriculum) - you saw that He foreknew you were going to be adopted as His son. (Romans 8:29)

- And as a wise Father (and not a sorry one), He not only knew ahead of time that He was going to have sons to enter into His business with Him—but (being a wise Father) He went to work (and did a great deal of work) to plan out all of the things that would gear the curriculum of sonship education for you to succeed in it—even to the point of writing the curriculum with your failures in mind! (And the sonship curriculum was written with your failures in mind—so that the only way you would fail is to give up & quit on it)!

- Granted, this is not in that particular context—but still the issue is one of God knowing in advance that He was going to utilize a nation of His own creation—and with it, He was going to repossess this earth with them—and He did a great deal of work to think through and provide for the success of His program with them.

- So therefore—God foreknew what His people Israel were going to do—and He’s acted in accordance with that foreknowledge—but what they did didn’t take Him by surprise so that He (out of disgust) said, AAWWW, I’m through with you!

- And Paul says, Think! God knew in advance all about Israel’s failures—nothing they did ever took Him by surprise—and so He never responded in a disgusting-type manner in which they infuriated Him to the point where He was so frustrated that He just couldn’t do with them what He wanted to do.

- And by the way—you find some folks coming along today and talking about it (and teaching as if) that’s exactly what did happen—and that’s the reason God turned to the Gentiles (the church, the body of Christ) - and He’s now shifted all of what He wanted to accomplish with Israel on the back of the body of Christ—and we come along and assume Israel’s program for establishing the kingdom on this earth!

- And that not only shows ignorance of Romans 11—but that shows ignorance of the very character and essence of God!

- And there’s a lot of that that exists among Christians also!

- And now to further dismiss the question—Paul is going to say, Look, think about this for a moment here—and don’t you remember that there’s something sitting back in your scriptures that addresses this very issue?

2 ... *Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias?* (Elijah)

- Paul says, Think about what took place back in Elijah’s day—and you’ll see that we’ve got a similar situation today in what God has done with Israel.

2 ... *how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,*

3 *Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.* — (go to I Kings 19:1-18)

- Now, without being too critical of Elijah here—what Elijah says in I Kings 19, when he makes intercession to God **against** Israel—it’s very clear that what he said was **a foolish thing to say!**

- Here’s a man that was called “*a man of God*” (I Kings 17:18, 24) and was the prophet of the 2nd Course of Punishment—but at this point in I Kings 19, he was a man who **forgot** something about the character and essence of God that made him intercede against Israel like it says he did in chapter 19.

- And that’s an issue with many Christians today who fail to properly recognize what God has done with Israel and what this *new creature of the church the body of Christ* is all about.

- And their failure to recognize some basic things about the character and essence of God (in connection with Israel) makes it so that they say and think some very **erroneous** and **foolish** things—just like Elijah did!

- And let’s be very clear on what we’re talking about here—because if not, you’ll have the tendency to think that this isn’t really any big deal—(and kind of boring) — but this really is a big deal.

- Remember that what Paul is setting forth here all has to do with the issue of **What has happened to Israel?** now that God has turned to the Gentiles in a new dispensation of His grace.

- And more than that—what is Israel’s present state? and how will God **fulfill** what He said to Israel?

- And due to a shallow understanding of God’s program with Israel in Genesis—Malachi, as well as failing to properly handle what is written in the gospel accounts (as a result) — most Christians read what happens in the book of Acts, and then some things Paul says in his epistles — and they have to admit that there is this thing called “*Israel*” - but then there is this thing called “*the body of Christ*”.

- And because most Christian folks just have no proper understanding for what God did to suspend His program with Israel and begin a new and different program with the church, the body of Christ—they make the very same mistake Elijah made concerning the character and essence of God! — They try to rationalize the 2 entities into 1—that is, they connect what God is doing today with the body of Christ with Israel and God’s program for Israel!

- And the result of it is to (at its core), to fail to recognize, understand and appreciate some things about the very **character** and **essence** of God Himself.

- For instance—when you find God making covenants with; making promises to; and saying things to Israel—to **the exclusion of the Gentile nations**—and then you find God doing what He does in Acts and in Paul’s epistles—the assumption is that God just takes those things that pertain to Israel and—because Israel failed so badly, God, instead of fulfilling His promises and covenants with Israel—God is going to fulfill what He started out to do with Israel with either just the body of Christ, or with some kind of a **mixture** of the body of Christ and Israel combined.

- And that erroneous thinking sets you up for all kinds of problems in how you handle your Bible.

- Not the least of which is that you begin to take the seeming **literal** things God says (and the Lord Jesus says) - and you then (since those things are not coming true today literally), you then have to ‘**spiritualize**’ what the Lord has said (in the gospel accounts, for example).

- OR, you have to take what God said (for instance, in the gospel accounts), and you have to think that what He said there (at least in some measure) applies to us today—and that matters a great deal in how you view Israel today—and especially how you handle things the Lord said concerning Israel’s future—(prophecy and prophetic events contained in the gospel accounts)!

- And you end up having to **make/force** history to line up with what was said in the gospel accounts!

- And little do most folks know when they do that—that they are actually calling into question the very character and essence of God! (Because the upshot of that kind of thinking is—God really didn’t mean what He said (impugning His character), but we have to turn to theologians to tell us what God meant—and that always ends up in a total mess!)

- And a great example of that is how Israel itself is view today by most Christians—especially in regard to what the Lord said over in Matthew 24.

- (Mat. 24:32-35)

- And what I'm specifically after here is that issue of how you're supposed to **view** Israel (**and view things**) as God views them—and **not** as popular prophetic writers and theologians view them!

- In other words—you're not supposed to make anything special out of (for example) Israel becoming a nation/state in May of 1948!

- And not only are you **not** to be trying to figure out how long a *generation* is—(that's not even what Christ was using that word for in verse 34) - but if that's what you're doing, then you are not viewing Israel as God views her during this dispensation of grace—and that is that Israel has been set aside whereby God is not dealing with her at all—He doing something entirely different that has nothing to do with Israel as a nation—and if you're trying to make some historical incident match up with Matthew 24 today, you've just fallen into the trap of questioning God's own character and essence—because you're saying that God didn't mean what He said (*He said all this to the remnant!*)—and you're trying to force God to fulfill His program with Israel because (at the core of your thinking) you don't think God either has suspended His program with Israel at all—or you think that God *cast away* His previous plan and purpose with Israel and had to bring in a new entity to carry on as a replacement for that bad ol' disobedient Israel!

- If you don't see that God literally meant what He said **to Israel**—and if you don't see that God has set Israel aside (albeit temporarily) and has begun a totally new and different and distinct program with a *new creature* of the church the body of Christ—then the only thing you're left with is to fall into the very trap described by Paul here in Romans 11—because by laying claim to the promises and covenants and prophetic program of Israel, you have inadvertently made God's character and essence to be worthless!

- So this really is a huge issue!

- The point being, don't make the same mistake Elijah made—and call God's character and essence into question by thinking that things have just gotten so bad that God has just thrown Israel away (*cast them **away permanently***) and therefore what He said He was going to do will have to be altered or amended or whatever!

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

- Elijah thought he was all alone—and that God had *cast away his people*—and since they were seeking his life, Elijah thought that when his life was taken, that would be the **end** of Israel and God’s plan & purpose for them.

- (It was as if Elijah didn’t realize that God *foreknew* what was going on—as if what was taking place was totally unexpected and a total surprise to God—and the whole program was collapsing).

- But God made it plain & clear to Elijah that this was **far** from what was going on—and here, once again, we see God *reserving to himself* (just as He did with the Reserve Clause) - and far from Elijah being alone, God had *reserved to himself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal*.

- God’s great program change didn’t occur because He got ‘blindsided’ (didn’t see it coming) - and Israel became so unfit that in disgust God just trashed them and gave their program to someone else! (And now Israel is *cast away* so that no Israelite has any more usefulness to God). [That would impugn God’s character & essence].

- Now the application of going back and getting the reminder of this parallel situation that occurred with Elijah —

5 Even so then (here’s your application) at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

- The “*present time*” is that time in which the apostle Paul lived and wrote the book of Romans—and just as silly as it was to think that God had *cast away his people* when Paul himself was an Israelite—you need to recognize that at the very time Paul was writing to the Romans, there was a *remnant* of Israel *according to the election of grace*.

- So once again, God has NOT *cast away his people*—don’t think that—and don’t think that He’s not going to deal with them anymore!

- And notice that the existence of this *remnant* is *according to the election of grace*.

- Now don't look at that word *election* and get uptight and think that it's another one of those deeply theological terms that only a Bible Scholar can understand—and don't make the mistake thinking that Paul's trying to teach the 5 points of Calvinism here (as if God sovereignly elected some to salvation and elected some not to salvation)!

- The truth is—you've already encountered this word and this concept before—so it shouldn't throw you now.

- We saw this back in Romans 8:33 in the 3rd Probing Question (the 1st “Who” question that dealt with you, as your own worst enemy). [33 *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*]

- The *election of grace* is actually a very simple matter—and all you have to do is to think: What does our English word *elect* mean—and I mean in its non-context affected meaning? What does the simple word *elect* mean, regardless of what context you're talking about that it could be used in? — What's the lowest common denominator meaning to the English word *elect*?

- The lowest common denominator to what it means when someone is *elected* is: YOU ARE CHOSEN TO FULFILL A PURPOSE!

- Because when you *elect* someone to an office, that's what you do—you choose them to fulfill that office.

- Therefore what you are to recognize in that expression that the remnant existed *according to the election of grace*—is that those individual Israelites that responded positively to the gospel message that was preached to them—that small remnant, **and only that small remnant** were the ones chosen by God to fulfill the purpose and the plan that God has for His program with Israel!

- In other words, it's not all of Israel, but only that remnant that formed the Lord's “*little flock*” or *nation* that were the ones that were going to have the kingdom given to them!

- And you have all those things that *pertain* to Israel going to that remnant—and they were saved by grace through faith—and they will receive all the fullness and fulfillment of God’s glorious program with Israel (to repossess the earth from Satan and have God’s kingdom/residence set up and established on this earth) - all on the basis of *grace*—and that’s why you’ve got all that’s said in (:6) —

- Because that remnant will operate as God’s sons on the basis of grace—and not on the basis of their performance and works—they’ll function on the basis of that New Covenant and they’ll get that kingdom and all its blessings and glory by means of God’s Jehovahness and His grace!

- Therefore on the basis of the simple logic of Paul himself being utilized by God as the apostle to the Gentiles—and on the basis of God *foreknowing* and making plans in advance for Israel’s failures and reserving to Himself a believing remnant (just as He did in Elijah’s day)—don’t ever think that God has *cast away his people* and the things that *pertain* to them and the promises made to them and the covenants that have been made to them—that those things aren’t going to **literally** and **fully** come to pass for them (without any assistance from any new entity [like the church the body of Christ]).

- And the truth of the matter is, (just as Paul will lay out for you in the latter part of chapter 11) - God can and has set Israel aside temporarily (without her promises and covenants being given to someone else to fulfill) - and God can and did turn to do something else in the interim entirely different and distinct from what He was accomplishing with Israel—and God can and will restore Israel’s program and fulfill every detail of it with them!

- So by the time you get to the end of (:6) you have full proof that God has NOT *cast away his people*.

- And that takes you to (:7-10) - and the issue of, Well, if God has *not cast them away*, then what has God done with Israel in this present time? What is Israel’s present state?

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

- This is the issue you need to understand—the *rest were blinded*—God has *blinded* Israel in this present time.

- Now here is one of those places where Bible correctors are going to come along and say that the KJ is in error (or at least misleading) because (they'll say) the word in the "original" Greek (even though they have never seen anything close to the "original" Greek) has the word $\pi\omega\rho\acute{o}\omega$ = to cover with a thick skin, to harden by covering with a callus—and (they'll say) that even the KJ translates the word as "to harden" on 3 occasions—and so the majority of the modern translations will say something like: **the others were hardened**.

- Now what they won't tell you is that $\pi\omega\rho\acute{o}\omega$ **can** be used to talk about someone being blinded—(granted, it isn't its most common usage) - and they won't tell you that the most common word for 'hardened' is $\sigma\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\nu\omega$ (which is what you have in Rom. 9:18 ... *whom he will* (talking about Pharaoh) *he hardeneth*).

- So if they were honest, they would have to admit that you're dealing with a word that is able to carry more meanings than simply 'harden'.

- But the real factor that demands $\pi\omega\rho\acute{o}\omega$ be translated as *blinded* and not 'hardened' is both the **context** surrounding what Paul is stating—plus the fact that just a few verses on down, you have Paul picking up on this issue and when he does he says— *10 Let their eyes be **darkened**, ...*

- In other words, God has *blinded* Israel's eyes at this present time—and that time occurred just prior to God suspending His program with Israel (when Israel was put in the position of being *accursed from Christ*) and just prior to the bringing in this dispensation of Gentile grace—and that is in perfect accordance to what David said back in the 69th Psalm.

- Therefore, what you have here is one of those instances where **the English actually corrects the Greek!**

- So then—in perfect accordance with what Paul stated as the real reason for God putting Israel in the status of being *accursed from Christ*—the issue of them *stumbling over the stumbling stone and rock of offence* (which is, of course, who Jesus of Nazareth was, and what His ministry was all about) - they have not *obtained what which they sought for*—which was the issue of justification by means of their own performance/works under the Law contract.

- ... **but the election hath obtained it, ...** — that is, the remnant that is *according to the election of grace*—those Israelites that responded positively to the gospel they heard about Jesus of Nazareth—they have obtained justification by grace through faith alone.

- ... **and the rest were blinded**—that is, outside of that believing remnant, God has produced a **judicial blindness** upon the remaining nation of Israel—and that’s the condition national Israel is currently in—even to this very day!

- And as Paul points out national Israel (under God’s judicial blindness) are not going to “see” the fulfillment of their program!

- Now it’s not a permanent blindness—(that will be explained as we go on) - but it is a **blindness**.

- And during this time in which God is dealing with us Gentiles, Israel is NOT going to see God working with them!

- And now Paul is going to amplify on that issue of Israel’s judicial blindness — and the major point and the major issue for you and I to understand and appreciate when it comes to what Israel’s present state in this dispensation of grace is—is that **Israel’s present state is one of judicial blindness produced by God Himself!**

8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

- Now here in (:8) is a place where you are supposed to be able to take all that time and information that we went over concerning a short survey of God’s program with Israel—plus what we covered in dealing with the Lord’s earthly ministry in the gospel accounts and how it concluded in the opening chapters of the book of Acts with the 3 honest opportunities given to Israel to respond positively to the ministry and testimony of the Holy Ghost concerning Jesus of Nazareth—that is, in this one verse, you have to bring all that background information to bear upon what God is telling you so that you get the very powerful things He’s giving you to understand—and so that this has the “punch” it’s supposed to have in regard to what Israel’s present state is all about—and so that you don’t make some very stupid and egregious mistakes by failing to rightly divide and properly handle God’s word (and therefore, fail to properly perceive your words of understanding as being the epistles of the apostle Paul).

- Now what Paul is doing here is to describe the present state of Israel today in verse 7 (and then amplify on that issue in verse 8) - and then he's going to describe the ramifications of that judicial blindness upon the nation in verses 9 and 10.

- And this present state of Israel being on of judicial blindness comes out of (or as a result of) God having put them in the position or status of being *accursed from Christ*—just as we saw back in the opening verses of Romans chapter 9.

- And you should appreciate and acknowledge that God did that just **prior** to suspending their program and turning to us Gentiles in this dispensation of the grace of God.

- And remember that when we first looked at that, we came over here in order to appreciate and amplify upon what that issue involved—it involved the issue of this judicial blindness—and it involved the detrimental ramifications of having *stumbled* over Christ—that, just as David described in the 69th Psalm, *their table is made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: their eyes are darkened, that they may not see, and they bow down their back alway.*

- Those are the ramifications of being *accursed from Christ*, and you have to have all that in mind here.

- And the truth is—that's the situation the nation of Israel finds itself in right now—and that's going to continue as long as this dispensation of grace continues on.

- But the main component to look at here at this time is that issue of Israel's judicial blindness—and they don't **see** what God **IS** doing in having turned to us Gentiles (they don't understand or appreciate that, or the genius of Him doing that) - but also, **they don't see Him dealing with them** because He's put their program in abeyance and He's begun an entirely new and distinct program with us Gentiles.

- And remember how we learned about all that in the order and in the terminology that our Father actually gives us to understand and appreciate that—that is, in those expressions: *the hand of the Lord was with them* (back in John the Baptist's day) - but now *the hand of the Lord is with us* Gentiles—the *hand of the Lord* went **from** Israel and went **with** those that were preaching to the Gentiles.

- But again, the main component here is that God has judicially blinded Israel—and they don't see what's going on, nor, especially, God dealing with them—**because He isn't dealing with them!**

- Ok—let's now look at some details here in (:8).

- Notice that verse 7 is one of those rare occasions in your Bible where a verse ends with no punctuation mark of any kind—it just ends—and so you know that therefore verse 8 is the continuation of verse 7—in other words, from the 3rd word of (:7) - the word “*Israel*” down to the last word of (:8) where you have a period—that's all one sentence.

- And in (:8) Paul is going to quote something from God's word—he says in the parenthesis, ***According as it is written***—and Paul is going to refer to 2 particular passages back in God's word where He performed this act of judicially blinding the nation Israel.

- First of all—notice the way God describes this judicial blindness—because it's from this that you first get the proper impression that this is not a permanent blindness, but a temporary one—notice that first expression: ***God hath given them the spirit of slumber.***

- Now as we will see, this comes from a passage out of the prophet Isaiah—but for now, I just want you to appreciate a couple of things about this description—

- Notice that it's a ***spirit of slumber.***

- The small case “s” *spirit* tells you that what's being described here is the operation of their mind—or what is now controlling their mind.

- And the issue of their *spirit* or mind being one of ***slumber*** to what God is doing—is an apt description of the nature of the blindness—because just as when you're asleep you're in a state of unconsciousness, and therefore oblivious to what is going on around you—God has made it so that Israel is blinded—and like one who is asleep, they have a mind that is totally unaware of what is going on around them—and when it comes to their mind being aware of what God is doing today—**they're sound asleep** (deep sleep)!

- The other thing that *slumber* tells you is that, just like a person who is asleep, and therefore unconscious to what is going on around them—at some point that person is going to WAKE UP—in other words, the blindness is only temporary!

- And one day, God will lift this judicial blindness, and Israel will wake up—and it will be just as Paul will describe later on—as if someone came back from the dead! (Even when we talk about someone being in a deep sleep, we say, ‘You were dead to the world!’)

- So God has given Israel *the spirit of slumber*—and we’ll come back to that later on—but for now let’s look at the remainder of the passage—*eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear*.

- Actually, Paul is now quoting Moses—and this passage takes us back to something God said to Israel back in the book of Deuteronomy.

- Deut. 29:1-4 (:4)

- Now when you’re back here in Deut. 29, you’re at that point in which Israel has been led to the land in order to go in & conquer it—but instead of that, they responded negatively to God’s word and God’s command (at Kadesh-Barnea when the 12 spies were sent in back in Numbers 13) - and so God took the nation into the wilderness for 40 years until that entire negative generation died out (except Joshua & Caleb) — and now they’re poised on the east side of the Jordan River—they’re in that army bivouac and ready to be taken in under Joshua—and just before Moses dies, he goes back over the Law a second time with this new (albeit even worse) generation.

- And Deut. 29 is where God has Moses tell the people of Israel that He is going to make this other “additional covenant” (or Palestinian Covenant) of His Jehovahhness and grace. (preparation for the New Cov.)

- And while I know full well that you are aware of all of this—and that we’ve just recently gone over all this—I want you to now take what you’ve learned and make some connections with what Paul says here concerning Israel’s present state of *blindness*.

- And what I'm specifically after here is that you think about what Moses is saying here in Deut. 29—but when you think about it, you have to think about it in connection with that negative response that took place back when Israel was first brought up to the edge of the land to go in and conquer it—(there in the book of Numbers).
- And something happened at that time—a couple of very significant things happened there.
- And when Moses says what he does there in Deut. 29—he's having the children of Israel reflect back upon that time when the spies were sent out and they responded negatively to God's plan and to His word—and if you think about it, Moses is going to declare (in effect) that at that time, Israel did indeed ***stumble***—that is, there was a *stumbling* that occurred in Israel when they refused to go into the land and possess it!
- And Moses says, in effect, that a *stumbling* occurred over the first proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom!
 - And if you pay attention—you'll see that when they were brought up to the land the first time, they heard a proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom (as it was given at that time).
 - And then the spies were sent out and came back to give their negative report.
- And now in view of that *stumbling* that occurred there—and as Moses relates now in Deut. 29:4—God ***blinded*** His nation!
 - In other words—when Israel is put in the state of being ***blinded*** during this present dispensation of grace—that wasn't the **only** time in which that thing occurred!
- And then God swore in His wrath that they wouldn't enter into His rest—and that He wouldn't give them the kingdom at that time.
- And He judicially *blinded* them—and they didn't 'see' those things! And they didn't *hear* that proclamation made to them!
- And He limited (in David) another “day” when that gospel would be proclaimed—(and that was when Christ Himself came to them).

- And Moses tells the children of Israel that (in essence) a *stumbling* has occurred—they *stumbled* over the gospel of the kingdom—and a *blindness* has happened so that they were not going to *see* it—and they were not going to *hear* the good news of it being preached.

- And then, Paul says, when that next “day” arrived, and they *stumbled* again.

- And you have that given to you both in that opening phrase of Romans 11:8 [*God hath given them the spirit of slumber ...*] - and that’s found in Isaiah 29.

- **Isaiah 29:1-12 (:10)** - Here Isaiah is looking at the time in which Israel will be under the 5th CoP—and when that climatic stage of it hits in preparation for the final installment of the Lord’s Day of Wrath—the nation Israel will once again be judicially *blinded* because of their negative response to the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom—and another *stumbling* will occur—and because of that, another judicial *blindness* will be brought upon them by God.

- And so you have the 2nd *stumbling* of the nation Israel during that 4th installment of the 5th CoP—as well as the 1 year extension of forbearance and mercy—and when Israel *stumbled* over the testimony of the Holy Ghost concerning Jesus of Nazareth (the very gospel of the kingdom that was preached to them) - Israel’s *stumbling* then becomes the backdrop for God suspending His program with them and bringing in this dispensation of Gentile grace—and what God did then (when He saved and raised up the Apostle Paul in Acts 9) is that He (for a 2nd time) *blinded* His nation again for the duration of the dispensation of grace.

- And just like they did when they *stumbled* the 1st time (God said, **You’re not going to *hear* the gospel of the kingdom –and you’re not going to *see* the signs of the kingdom**) — then when that next day arrived, and they *stumbled* again when the gospel of the kingdom was proclaimed on that ‘limited day’ — then God brought the dispensation of grace in—and He says, Just like they did back in Moses’ day and I *blinded* them there—that’s what I’ve done now that they *stumbled* again!

- ***the rest were blinded*** according to what happened in Moses’ day!

- Now—pay close attention to what I’ve just said—(and what God is saying) — and that is that during the entirety of this present dispensation of Gentile grace in which we live, God makes it plain and clear to Israel that they are **NOT** going to see the signs of the kingdom (for its duration) - and they’re **NOT** going to hear the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom (for its duration)!!!

- And what I’m after in saying that—is that there’s some real powerful issues involved in all this for us today as we live and function in this present dispensation of grace—

- Because if you really understand and appreciate all that is being said to you here in Romans 11—there’s a very powerful issue of you understanding that **God does not want you preaching the gospel of the kingdom today!**

- And you get a real powerful appreciation for the only gospel God does want preached today is that “*gospel of Christ*” that has nothing whatsoever to do with any kingdom of God/ Heaven attached to it!

- And then there’s the powerful issue of God not performing any of the signs of the kingdom today—nor are you to be looking for them or praying for them or interpreting any historical events as being signs of the coming kingdom or telling anyone that we are to expect them!

- But then there’s going to be another time—there’s going to be another ‘limited day’ out in the final installment of the 5th CoP!

- And this judicial *blindness* God has brought upon Israel as they exist today—it’s not the fact that Moses in Deut. 29 prophesied about their present state in this dispensation of grace (nor is David prophesying about what God would do here today) — but the issue is that Paul says what is going on with Israel’s present state in this dispensation of grace is in perfect accordance to those 2 issues of Israel *stumbling* and then being judicially *blinded* by God.

- And that **is** Israel’s present state: judicially *blinded*, and experiencing the consequences of that *blindness*.

- And that takes us to the section of God’s word where Paul wants to set forth **the consequences of Israel’s judicial blindness—Psalm 69:22ff.**

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

- In the 69th Psalm, David prophesied about how God said He would respond to apostate Israel in view of their rejection of Christ (or in view of their *stumbling over the stumblingstone and rock of offence*).

- And that Psalm not only describes how God would respond to their rejection of Christ when they *stumbled* the 2nd time—but it primarily describes how God would respond in that final, ‘limited day’ - in the day of the Lord’s wrath.

- And what Paul is doing is taking that issue of the consequences of Israel’s rejection of Christ that will be applied out in the day of the Lord’s wrath—and Paul is coming along and saying that the very same thing (the very same consequences) are going to be what Israel will experience now in this dispensation of grace and for it’s duration.

- And Paul describes the ramifications of being a part of that apostate nation—and that those ramifications are being experienced by them right now.

- And the major component of it all—is the issue of them being **blinded** and not seeing—not seeing the reality of what God is doing today—and not seeing God dealing with them according to their program—(they won’t see the signs of the kingdom, nor are they going to hear the gospel of the kingdom for the duration of the dispensation of grace).

- see Psalm 69:13-25 (:22-23)

- Come back to Romans 11:9 — ***Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:***

- Israel’s *table* is the place for food—and denotes the place of expected pleasure, joy, and prosperity—and represents their ‘standard of living’ (so to speak).

- And the vain, religious, apostate element of Israel (led by the Pharisees) had developed a system of extortion and gain based upon greed, theft, lying, and abuse of the ‘sheep’ (Israel) that they were charged with protecting and providing for.

- And these ‘blessings’ (or as David put it, “*welfare*”) from their own hands and their own evil works and ungodliness—far from being the kind of benefit God designed for them to experience under His J-ness & grace—instead are going to end up sinking them deeper and deeper into apostasy - and what they think will end up working out to their *welfare* or blessing, will actually become a **curse** to them! (God’s wrath)

- And (:9) goes on to say— ***Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:***

- And as a *recompence unto them*—the return on their investment (so to speak) is that the consequences of their ungodliness and rebelliousness and apostasy will all end up returning to them in even greater judgment, ruin & wrath.

- Their ungodly designs—instead of freeing them and blessing them and making for a high standard of living—will end up *snaring* them and *trapping* them—and instead of being holy & righteous in God’s sight, they’ll *stumble* and fall—all as a consequence of being part of that apostate nation.

- (:10) goes on to say— ***Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see*** (that’s the major issue of Israel’s present state—one of judicial blindness, just as was stated back in [:7]), ***and bow down their back alway.***

- The issue of *bowing down their back* (just as the Greek word [sugkampto] suggests) - is the issue of someone who is made subject to hard labor and indicates someone whose back is bowed down as a slave or captive when they are made to bear a heavy yoke—or as David described that same thing back in the 69th Psalm, so heavy will be the consequences of their apostasy that, just as a captive under a heavy load, their legs are going to *shake* under the weight of it!

- And notice the flawless accuracy of your KJ Bible—you have that word “*alway*” - which does NOT mean the same thing as “always”!!! — *alway* is a contracting of 3 English words—[all-the-way] - and it is used when God has in mind a particular time-element involved—and if you pay attention to the context, you’ll find a beginning and an ending—and *alway* is telling you that this is going to be the condition **all the way** to the end of the particular time in view!

- In fact, if you have “always” at the end of (:10), that’s flatly untrue!!! — that would mean that this condition or state of Israel’s *blindness* is going to be **permanent**, and that **IS** an error!

- But *alway* tells you that this is NOT a permanent condition at all, but it has a particular time-element in view, and it will have a definite **end** to it—in other words, the state of Israel’s national judicial blindness is only **temporary!**

- So in the first 10 verses of Romans 11—Paul sets forth a description of Israel’s present state—and it’s not that God has gotten so fed up with all Israelites that He has permanently cast them away—*God forbid* you think that—but the major issue is that as a nation, God has *blinded* Israel due to their *stumbling* over Christ—and for the duration of this dispensation of Gentile grace, Israel will not see the signs of the kingdom, nor will they hear the gospel of the kingdom—they won’t see God working with them or dealing with them at all!

- Simply put, Israel’s present state is one of judicial blindness, and experiencing the consequences of that judicial blindness.

- Now at this point—we move into the **2nd Major Section of Romans 11.**

- Romans 11:11-29—Once Israel’s present state has been properly understood and appreciated—the next thing the mind sets itself to thinking about is: What, then, is Israel’s future? Does this mean that Israel can’t be restored in the future to where it was before?

- And we’ll say some things about the breakdown of this 19 verse section of the chapter—but for now, we’re going to have to take note of some critical terminology and come to understand and appreciate God’s use of it—because it will aid you in how to more properly handle your Bible, as well as allow you to view Israel and yourself (in this dispensation of grace) the way your Father views you and Israel, and allow for you to think about Israel as your Father thinks about it.

- Now what I’m specifically after here is to get an appreciation for some proper terminology that God uses to describe what has happened to Israel—and what I’m after here are **4 terms** that are clustered together in Romans 11:11 and 12.

11 I say then, Have they **stumbled** that they should **fall**?
 God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come
 unto the Gentile, for to provoke them to jealousy.
 12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and
 the **diminishing** of them the riches of the Gentiles; how
 much more their **fulness**?

- The 4 terms we need to appreciate here are:

1) *Stumbled*; 2) *Fall*; 3) *Diminishing*; and 4) *Fulness*

- Those are the 4 terms you need to understand and appreciate about what's happened to Israel.

- Everything that's being taught here in Romans 9, 10, & 11, about what God has done with Israel in connection with this dispensation of Gentile grace being brought in **is summarized under those 4 terms!**

1) Israel **stumbled** (and we're talking about the *stumbling* that is in direct connection with Israel's present state) - therefore **they stumbled in the opening chapters of the book of Acts.**

- Oftentimes most Bible teachers will say that Israel *stumbled* at the Cross of Christ (at Calvary) - but that really was NOT when they *stumbled*.

- In fact, you really have to pay attention to some other terms that God uses (and have an appreciation for them) before you ever get to the issue of Israel *stumbling*.

- Go back to Romans 9:32-33

- In connection with this let's look at a couple of passages in Isaiah.

- Isaiah 8:14-15

- Isaiah 28:16

- Now when you take these 2 passages—(along with what Isaiah says in the 29th chapter) - and you pay attention to the order in which these events takes place—you will come to understand and appreciate that when it comes to the issue of Israel *stumbling at that stumblingstone and rock of offence*—that that's something that takes place **following the crucifixion!**

- Look at that verse in Isaiah 28:16 again—

*16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a **tried** stone, a **precious corner stone**, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*

- Notice the 2 phrases: *a **tried** stone, a **precious** corner stone.*

- First you have the issue of a **tried** stone—and my understanding is that when you look at the Lord Jesus Christ's earthly ministry—especially during the 3 1/2 years of His earthly ministry—that's the time in which the Lord was set forth to Israel as the *tried stone* described here in Isaiah 28:16.

- And then in connection with the Cross-work of the Lord (fulfilling Isaiah 53) - it was at that time that the *precious corner stone* or the **preciousness** of the Lord's earthly work was established.

- And only when that was **completed**—it's following that, that another passage in God's word concerning Christ as the *corner stone* comes into play—and that passage is in Psalm 118:22 (repeated in Mat. 21:42; Mar. 12:10; Luk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; & I Pet. 2:7).

22 The stone which the builders refused (or rejected) is become the head stone of the corner.

- And following the completion of the Lord's earthly ministry where He was the *tried stone*; and after the Lord's cross-work where He was the *precious corner stone* (the **preciousness** of all His work on earth) - it's following all of that, that He becomes **the head stone of the corner**.

- God didn't pick up the *stone* until the *builders* **rejected** it—but they rejected a *tried stone* first; and then a *precious stone*.

- Then God the Father picked up the *tried stone* & the *precious stone* (following their rejection of it) - and then He **laid** it down in Zion as **the foundation stone** (*the head stone of the corner*)!

- And so Israel *stumbled* over it only **AFTER** the Father *laid* it down as the *corner stone* in Zion—in fact, until that *stone* had been *laid* down, **Israel couldn't have stumbled over it!**

- (And that's what's going on in the opening chapters of the book of Acts—that's when Israel *stumbled*).

- By the way—that's a very powerful testimony of the fact that God's program with Israel was NOT suspended at the Cross—and the opening chapters of the book of Acts have NOTHING to do with this dispensation of Gentile grace!

- Israel couldn't *stumble* until AFTER the cross—until the *stone was laid down*—and until AFTER its *tried-ness* and its *preciousness* was set forth!

- (And that's what Peter, James and John did in those opening 7 chapters of the book of Acts—they set forth all about that *foundation stone*, the *stone* that *became the head of the corner*!)

- So Israel **stumbled** after the Cross and during the opening 7 chapters of the book of Acts.

- Then Israel **fell** when the dispensation of Gentile grace was brought in—when the Lord unexpectedly came back to the earth and raised up Saul of Tarsus as the brand new apostle of the Gentiles (the apostle Paul) — and Israel **fell** from her position of exaltedness over the Gentiles—and God put Jew and Gentile on the exact same level.

- And then, thirdly, the **diminishing** of Israel took place in the opening part of this dispensation of grace (the opening days and years of it) - and it was over by the time you get to **Acts 28** (Paul still being alive).

- By the way—the book of Acts records the *stumbling*, *fall*, and *diminishing* of the nation Israel—that's why it stops in the 28th chapter of Acts after Paul makes his 3rd pronouncement of the judicial response of God to Israel in view of their *stumbling* over the Messiah.

- Finally, Israel's **fulness** is yet to come—when this dispensation of grace is concluded (as Paul will be dealing with in the remainder of Romans 11 [down through :29]).

- So you've got Israel's *stumble*, *fall*, *diminishing*, and *fulness*—and those are the 4 terms God uses and that He thinks about in regard to what has happened to Israel—(and everything in Romans 9-11 gets spoken about in connection with those 4 terms).

- Now with all that proper terminology in our thinking—let’s now begin to survey this **2nd Major Section of Romans chapter 11.**

2) Romans 11:11-29—The description of Israel’s FUTURE—and setting forth the plain and clear truth that Israel’s *fulness* is yet to come.

- And this large section has 3 parts to it:

A. (:11-24) - Does this suspension of God’s program with Israel mean that they have permanently *fallen* and cannot be **restored** in the future? *God forbid*, and why.

B. (:25) - Israel’s blindness is only temporary “*until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*” — A warning that let’s you know that this issue of understanding and appreciating God’s dispensational change will be one of the major doctrinal areas of attack, confusion, and misunderstanding that has perilous consequences for us today!

C. (:26-29) - The *fulness* of God’s program and dealings with Israel is still yet to come—and will, indeed, come.

- So now beginning in (:11) Paul brings up another question that addresses the issue of—Well, has Israel *stumbled* so that they have *fallen* and can’t get back up again? or When God brought in this dispensation of Gentile grace made it so Israel has permanently fallen and cannot be **restored** in the future?

11 I say then, (Just like we had in [:1], the apostle Paul has covered some territory in connection with presenting the true reality of what Israel’s present state is during this dispensation of grace—and those things are now indisputable [i.e., that God hasn’t cast Israel away as if He couldn’t utilize an Israelite any more—and far from them being *cast away* permanently, God has temporarily brought about a judicial *blindness* upon the nation—and now in view of all that ...) **have they stumbled** (at least you now recognize that the reason for God putting Israel in that position of being *accursed from Christ* is due to them stumbling over Christ) **that they should fall** (and the sense of Israel *falling* here is that of *falling* so that their program just can’t go on any longer—in other words, have they *fallen* to the degree that God can’t restore them to their former position)?

- Has Israel been put in a position so that God is going to have to alter His program with them and not be able to fulfill it in the way He originally had planned and purposed to do?

- (:11) goes on to say— **God forbid:** (Don't think that! *God forbid* you to think that—and don't let anybody tell you that that's the situation!

- And that's a common teaching today—that God is done with Israel and the literal nation with its literal promises and its literal covenants and its literal kingdom is no more—it's only to be thought of as a spiritual 'in-the-heart' type reigning.

- And this very verse (even the first part of it [up to the colon]) just **vaporizes** that foolish, erroneous, contrary, false doctrine to **smithereens!**

- And God tells you, I **forbid** you to think that—here's what I **do** want you to think ...

- (By the way, when people do think that, they're ignoring God's **forbidding** of them!)

- (:11) goes on— **but rather** (here's what you need to think—and understand that this is what's taken place) ... **through their fall** (and you should now appreciate the accuracy of this term *fall*—that Israel's *fall* took place after God had laid down that *tried and precious stone in Zion* and Israel *stumbled* over it (over Christ) during that 1 yr. of forbearance and mercy between Pentecost and the stoning of Stephen—and then Israel *fell* at the time in which God saved Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and raised him up as the brand new apostle Paul (the apostle of the Gentiles) - and their *fall* historically took place when God brought in this dispensation of Gentile grace—and Israel *fell* in the sense of her position of exaltedness over the Gentiles so that now, God has put Jew and Gentile on the exact same level).

- And now the issue is, Has Israel *stumbled* and *fallen* into this position of no more being God's exalted nation and having been brought down to the same level of the Gentile nations—have they *fallen* so bad (or so permanently) that they can't ever be restored to their original exalted position?

- Are they forever to be only a 2nd class nation? never to be restored and have the things God has promised & covenanted to them?

- And Paul says, **God forbid: but rather through their fall** (yes, they did indeed *fall* into that 2nd class nation status; I'm not saying they didn't) **but through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles,**

- And *salvation coming unto the Gentiles* is (once again) what this dispensation of grace is all about.

- But be careful—this isn't saying that a Gentile could not be saved back in God's program with Israel—and (and this is a common misunderstanding among some folks who try to say that the defining characteristic of the dispensation of grace is that God is now saving Gentiles—and they'll quote this verse to prove it).

- And if all you do is lift this one verse out of Romans, you could prove that—but in order to do that, you have to **completely disregard** what Paul has set forth in the first 5 chapters of Romans—and one of the things you learned there was that Paul's gospel (*the gospel of Christ*) that is to be preached today is that eternal life (salvation/justification) can be yours (as a Gentile) **in spite of Israel**, and **outside** of the **agency** of Israel—and is yours simply by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ's all-sufficient, substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection—by grace, through faith alone—with no issue of Israel or Israel's kingdom in view at all!

- And having all that in view (keeping everything in its context) - all Paul has to say here is that *through Israel's fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles*—and with a proper understanding and appreciation for the context of Romans, you'd never make that goofy mistake.

- But notice the very powerful final phrase of (:11) - *but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy.*

- Now while we often point out the fact that this Biblical issue of Israel being *provoked to jealousy* because of *salvation coming unto the Gentiles* (without their involvement and without their kingdom in view) - and that far from the common thinking and teaching among Christians today (that we should be jealous of Israel—and become “Messianic” Christians) — we rightly point out the fact that in God's view, every Jew should be trying to be more like the Gentiles today! (Not the other way around!!!)

- But what's often missed is the power or 'punch' that this phrase has that causes you to recognize that God isn't yet done with Israel!

- And what I mean by the power or ‘punch’ of this phrase is that—the impact of that statement (*for to provoke them to jealousy*) is: If they can’t be restored to the position of exaltation they once had whereby God can bring about their *fulness*—then God *provoking them to jealousy* is FOOLISH!

- Think about it—the very idea that God is *provoking* them at all—let alone *provoking them to jealousy* is indicative of the fact that He’s not done with them yet—it’s indicative of the fact that He’s going to give them their *fulness*!

- And to be a little more accurate—you could say that while an individual Jew should want to **emulate** a Gentile today (and not the other way around) - but Israel **as a nation** should be *provoked* to jealously desire to be put back into the exalted position they once held among all the nations on the earth!

- And therefore (again), if they can’t be put back to that exalted position as a nation, then God provoking them to that once-held position is FOOLISH. (very powerful proof that their *fulness* is yet to come!)

- That takes us to (:12).

12 Now if the fall of them (Israel’s temporary *fall* from her exalted position over all other nations on earth into a position whereby Jew and Gentile are now on the exact same level—which occurred at the time in which God raised up Paul and brought in this dispensation of grace that He kept a secret from the beginning of all creation) **be the riches of the world** (and it is—all you have to do is think of how the whole world is now being dealt with by God in view of Israel’s *fall*) **and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles** (as Israel *diminished* throughout the opening months and years of this dispensation of grace having been brought in and “the gospel of God’s grace” has been preached to us Gentiles today and believed on by us Gentiles—the Gentiles get *richer* and *richer*—in other words, we learn more and more of God’s *riches* of His mercy and His grace unto us)

- Now I want to pause right here and just underscore some things in connection with what Paul says here—that are most commonly overlooked—and that have some very powerful things to say as to how we are to both view God’s word and how God operates/works today.

- And this is one of those places where we don't want to let pass an opportunity to get ourselves thinking dispensationally 'on the whole' as the adopted sons/daughters we are—and as members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ.

- When you look at those first 2 phrases of (:12) - [*Now if the fall of them (Israel) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles;*] — that's a major dispensational issue that has enormous ramifications—however, (sadly), most Christian folks and most of the teachers of the Bible today fail to realize this and in fact, unwittingly think and teach that the gospel they preach today and the way God works today **is the way it's always been!**

- But that's flatly **wrong!** — And that leads to enormous false doctrine, corrupted doctrinal teaching, and mishandling of God's word!

- In other words, the **riches of the world** was not being experienced until Israel's *fall*—and the **riches of the Gentiles** wasn't being experienced until the *diminishing* of Israel. (a specific kind of **riches** different from that which

- Redeem / Ransom issue. the world will know in Israel's program)

- Luke 1:64-80 (redeem)

- Ransom - Isa. 35:10

- Isa. 51:10

- Jer. 31:11

- Mat. 20:28

- I Tim. 2:6

- Little do most Christians and Bible teachers know that the very gospel message they preach—(that is, **if** it is the gospel of the grace of God [or the gospel of Christ] as committed to the apostle Paul that they preach—and not a perversion of the gospel) - little do they know how much they should thank God for being in a dispensation whereby through Israel's *fall* and *diminishing* the Gentiles and the whole world are now experiencing God's **riches!**

- And you need to pause here to have that concept of proper dispensational orientation effectually grip your heart—because this begins generating some godly, sonship thinking that will be able to be properly expressed later on in the chapter when Paul focuses upon and magnifies God's **mercy!**

- So we have —

11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

*12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; (now, if that's the case [and it is]) **how much more their fulness?***

- That is, if God's *riches* have come to the world as a consequence of Israel's *fall*, and God's *riches* have come to the Gentiles as a consequence of their *diminishing*—well, great as that is, and merciful as that all is—that still leaves one half of the contention between God and Satan unsettled—and there are 'riches' [if you will] that have yet to be realized by the world and by the Gentile nations of the world that all have their fulfillment in God's program with Israel.

- So therefore, if all that grandeur and greatness of God's *riches* being experienced in the world and among the Gentiles—and all that is a consequence of Israel's *fall* & *diminishing*—and God is *provoking them to jealousy* (indicating that their fulness is yet to come) - **then how much more great and grand and rich will it be like when their fulness DOES come!**

- And then God is able to reconcile both the heavenly realm and the earthly realm back to Himself—which sets the stage for Him to begin the next dispensation of the *fulness of times!*
(*times* [Pl.])

- Now while there are far more issues contained here than what we've gone over—the major reason why Paul is saying all of this the way he does—is that it's designed to **banish from your thinking for good, the idea that Israel can't be restored or won't be restored!**

- And the issue is, if you think that Israel can't be restored, or won't be restored: then you are thinking foolishly!

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

- Here is only the 2nd time in Romans that Paul has talked about himself as an *apostle*—but (as Paul is so often criticized by many Biblical scholars), Paul, more than any other writer of Scripture, talks about himself prolifically. And most never understand why.

- Now I want to pause here, once again, and just underscore the significance of Paul's statement (that occurs right in the core section that deals with our sonship establishment in the issue of being able to think dispensationally on the whole).

- And what I'm specifically after here is something that we state from time to time—but for us, has been more of something that we may have only come to assume to be true—and that issue is: the distinctiveness of Paul's apostleship and message—and by default, the distinctiveness of this dispensation of the grace of God.

- All of us have, by now, come to understand and appreciate God's word by "*rightly dividing the word of truth*" - the 'right division' being to make a distinction between the 13 letters/epistles of the apostle Paul and the rest of the Bible (Gen-Mal & Heb-Rev).

- And we've all come to experience the joy and enjoyment our Bible has now that so many seeming confusing and contradictory verses now make perfect sense because we recognize the difference between God's program with Israel and His program and dealings with the new creature of the church, the body of Christ.

- And we've come to recognize that so much Bible confusion gets dispelled when we're not trying to apply promises, instructions, and doctrines (that God gave to Israel) to us today because we mistakenly think that they somehow belong to us today—nor do we try to force those things upon ourselves by 'spiritualizing' prophecies and teachings God gave to Israel and not to us today.

- "Rightly dividing the word of truth" in accordance with the great dispensational change God has made frees us from perplexity, consternation, and contradiction.

- But as most of you know—it seems that whenever we talk to others about all these things (especially about Paul's special apostleship), it's usually met with a great deal of resistance—or even opposition!

- But when it comes to Paul and his unique apostleship—it's not that we make 'a big deal' out of it—but the truth of the matter is God Himself makes a big deal out of it because He designed it that way!

- Oftentimes folks will strongly object to making a big deal out of Paul and rightly dividing the word of truth by arrogant criticism:

... criticism like: You all just make way too much out of Paul—or All you ever talk about is Paul, Paul, Paul—or You exalt Paul above Jesus Himself—or little catchy phrases like, You can follow Paul if you want, but I'm following Jesus! (WWJD?) [usually with a lot of emotion attached!]

- But the truth is, we do NOT exalt Paul above the Lord, nor do we follow Paul as a man!

- And yet, we DO *magnify his office* just as Paul himself did—and because that's exactly what God expects you to do!!!

- God deliberately makes a big deal out of the apostleship He gave to Paul—because it's designed to be a manifest token of the reality of the great dispensational change that He made when He raised up Paul to be His apostle of the Gentiles.

- And as you read through Paul's epistles, he does oftentimes *glory* and talk a lot about himself—(the Corinthian epistles being a prime example) - and in fact, Paul talks about himself and his ministry more than any other New Testament writer.

- In fact, several hundred times he draws attention to himself either by name or by personal pronouns.

- But remember that Paul is a writer of Scripture—and does so under the guidance of God the Holy Ghost—and when he does this, he does NOT do so out of arrogance or egotism! (as some suggest!)

- (In fact, there are some pastors and Bible teachers that actually attack Paul!)

- The truth is—Paul does this based upon not only what he says here in Rom. 11:13—but as he will later on lay the foundation for even more talking about his apostleship—notice what he says over in Romans 15:17.

- Paul does *glory* a lot *through Jesus Christ*—in fact, he has whereof that he *may glory through Jesus Christ in those things that pertain to God.*

- Therefore Paul has a God-ordained reason not only for why he could *glory*, but also for why he should *glory!*

- Actually, it's God Himself who has the apostle Paul talk about himself as much as he does—but clearly, it's not done to impress you with or *magnify* Paul, **the man!**

- In fact, if you pay attention—whenever Paul talks about himself as a man, he always runs himself down and says some terrible things about his own flesh—but when he talks about himself as the apostle of the Gentiles, it's an entirely different matter!

- Paul's *glorying* of himself is only in connection with his *office* as the apostle of the Gentiles—and by magnifying the office of his apostleship God is having him draw attention to the dispensational change that He has made in turning to the Gentiles.

- Truth is—you should already appreciate Paul's uniqueness as the apostle of the Gentiles from Romans 1:1—but here, the issue is to *magnify his office* as a distinct **marker** that clearly indicates that an entirely new, different, and distinct program is now in effect!

- And Paul's apostleship, message, and ministry IS new and different — it marks a great change from what was going on before—it's clearly different from what is recorded in the gospel accounts as well as different from the continuation of Israel's program administered by Peter and the 12 apostles as set forth in the opening chapters of the book of Acts!

- God has ushered in a great dispensational change to the praise of His glory and His grace—and He has *magnified* the *office* of the apostle Paul in order to draw attention to that change.

- Notice a few of the places where Paul specifically talks about himself and his ministry and shows that he deliberately does so to draw attention to the dispensational change issue:

- Gal. 1:11-12
- Col. 1:25-29
- I Tim. 1:15-17

- Paul, drawing attention to himself has a 2-fold purpose:

- 1) He shows that he, himself, clearly understood the distinctiveness of his own apostleship and message;

2) Paul knew that the very means by which God would draw attention to the dispensational change that He made was through *magnifying the office* of his special apostleship!

- Therefore Paul had reason not only whereby he **could** *glory through Jesus Christ*, (and do so without any ungodly ego or bragging rights) — but also Paul had reason whereby he **should** *glory in his office!*

- And so he did—and so should we—because it's the divinely deigned means of marking out the dispensation of the grace of God that's now in effect!

- So, once again we have— *13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:*

- So Paul recognizes that God is not done with Israel by any means—and that their *fulness* is yet to come—and he uses that very issue of their *fulness* being yet to come as he deals with those Israelites at the time he was ministering to them—and that's why he says in (:14) ...

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

- And for us today—it's not the Jew/Israelite that we should *emulate* (or strive to behave like; or reproduce the actions of), but it's the Gentile that the Jew should be *provoked to emulate*.

- And now in (:15) Paul is going to ask us a questions that's designed to get us to fully realize that Israel's *fulness* is yet to come.

15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

- Here we have a seeming contradiction—didn't Paul just say back in (:2) that *God hath not cast away his people?* - and now he says that God has *cast them away*. (What's the deal?)

- And in the declining stage of the English language this is a seeming contradiction—but that's not the fault of how it's written here (because it's flawlessly perfect just the way it stands written) - but rather it's the fault of those who can only think about words and phrases in only one way—which is a sign of the decline of English!

- And the truth is—*cast away* can have more than one meaning to it!

- And in (:1 & 2) *cast away* has the meaning of being permanently thrown away and forever discarded because you tried to do something with it, but you can't get it to work and in disgust you toss it in the trash.

- But here the sense of *cast away* in (:15) is one of simply laying it aside, temporarily—because you're not going to deal with it now; you're going to deal with something else—but then you're going to go **back** to it later on.

- See an example of the Bible using this very expression in this very sense: Mark 10:46-50 (:50)

- Bartimaeus didn't disgustingly throw away his garment like trash and he was done with it, never to pick it up again—no, he *cast it away* in the sense that he didn't need it to go to the Lord—but he was going to come **back** to it because he was going to need it for the rest of the night (and for cold weather and such). [Note that it was also a sign of respect when he did that.]

- But that's *casting away* in a temporary sense—where you're going to go do something else now—but later on, you're going to come back to it and pick it up—and that's the issue here in Romans 11:15.

- And in (:15) paying attention to the terminology gives you an appreciation for Israel's future *fulness* — and just like blind Bartimaeus, God has *cast Israel away* **for the moment**—but what's critical in (:15) is that phrase: ***what shall the receiving of them be*** - because that means that God will one day **return** to His program with Israel and *receive* them as that remnant nation.

- So, *If the casting away of them* (of Israel) ***be the reconciling of the world***—and that's talking about God temporarily setting Israel aside and has determined not to deal with her now—and with Jew and Gentile being on the same exact level, He's dealing with the world as a whole with no difference between Jew and Gentile—that's the sense of *the reconciling of the world*—it's not that this verse is proof that our program deals with the world (or kingdom of Heaven) - and you should know that!

- Then we have that very powerful statement: ***what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?***

- And the big issue here is the *receiving of them*—that’s the point—God has only *cast away* Israel temporarily—but He’s going to go back to their program and He’s going to pick back up with it—and He’s going to ***receive them***—which means that their *fulness* is yet to come—they will be *received*, and they will get the *fulness* of God’s dealings with them just as was promised and covenanted and set forth in their Scriptures!

- And when that happens—it’s going to be as grand and as marvelous as a dead person being resurrected—(*life from the dead*) - and all those things that *pertain* to Israel will be realized to their fullest!

- Now we have another sub-section of this larger, Major Section of Romans 11:11-29—we have a sub-section here beginning in (:16) and running down through (:24).

- Romans 11:16-24—Paul sets forth the fact that the **restoration** of the nation Israel has been provided for already—and it’s an **easy** thing for God to do!

- Let’s just follow the sense and sequence of all that’s been set forth concerning What Has Happened To Israel and give a ‘recap’ of the information from chapter 9 ...

- Israel has been put in the position of being *accursed from Christ* at the end of their 1-year extension of forbearance and mercy—and therefore at this present time, they are not having fulfilled any of the things that *pertain* to them—and one of the major issues in this present dispensation of Gentile grace is that God is not working with or dealing with Israel and He is not fulfilling His program with them.

- And the reason for the nation being put in the position of being *accursed from Christ* is not because God’s word *had none effect*, nor is it because God is being *unrighteous* in doing this (as though His integrity has been compromised by not fulfilling what He promised and covenanted to do with Israel) - and it’s not because His *will is being resisted* as if He’s being prevented from going ahead and fulfilling His program with Israel—but it’s for another reason entirely.

- The thing that God responded to when He put Israel in the position of being *accursed from Christ* is the issue of their national *stumbling over the stumblingstone and rock of offence* (they *stumbled* over who Jesus of Nazareth was as testified to by the Holy Ghost in the opening chapters of the book of Acts).
- Chapter 10 then set forth the details of why Israel *stumbled* over Christ and continues to do so—and it ends up proving that Israel is alone responsible for their own *stumbling*.
- That then clears the decks for presenting the reality of Israel's present state and how that God will be able to return to them, restore them to their once-held exalted-nation status over all other nations, and fulfill every promise and covenant He made to them and give them their *fulness* as He concludes His program with them, just as He always said He would.
- And the first 10 verses of chapter 11 described Israel's present state as a nation—as being judicially *blinded* and receiving the consequences of that judicial *blindness*.
- Now in verses 11-29 Paul turns his attention to setting forth the clear and plain truth that Israel has not *fallen* permanently and that God will, indeed, return to His program with Israel and He will restore them and give them their *fulness* after this present dispensation of grace comes to a close.
- In verses 11-15 Paul begins to dismiss the notion that Israel has *fallen* permanently—and points us to the mercy of God in bringing His riches to the world and to the Gentiles through Israel's *fall*.
 - In (:13) Paul draws attention to his *office* as the apostle of the Gentiles—and sets forth his unique apostleship as a major marker for which this dispensation of grace can be distinguished from God's program with Israel.
 - And in (:15) Paul sets forth the reality that Israel will be *received* by God once again—and the resuming of their program will be as if a dead man came back to life! (A Glorious future, indeed!)

- And now Paul is going to describe in a very basic and general way the mechanics whereby God will **return** to His program with Israel; will **restore** them to their once-held exalted status; and that the means to do it have already been provided for—and in fact, it’s an **easy** thing for God to do.

- {And this begins in (:16) and runs down through (:24)}.

- (read :16-24)

16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

- Now, in order to really appreciate what Paul’s saying here—and to see the reality of it, and the naturalness of it—you’ve really got to have an appreciation of the Law Contract.

- (Especially in connection with all the terminology Paul uses here: *firstfruit* and *lump*; *root* and *branches*.)

- And you can go back and study out some of those details on your own—but just for instance, back in the Law Contract, you find some things said there regarding Israel’s feasts & offerings—the “*wave*” offering and the “*heave*” offering and the offerings made for the provision of the Priests and Levites who ministered and served in the temple.

- But the issue that Paul is directing your attention to here is that, sitting back in the Law Contract are some things that God has said in connection with Israel’s feasts & offerings, regarding *firstfruits* and *lumps*; *roots* and *branches*.

- And in connection with those feasts and offerings contained in the Law Contract—God made it plain and clear that if the *firstfruit* was **acceptable** (that is, **holy**), then the thing from which it came (that is, the *lump*) is also just as acceptable and just as holy!

- In other words—(it’s very simple)— for example, in connection with Israel entering the land to begin the conquest, you have a particular *heave* offering to be given to the LORD as a reminder of His Jehovahness and grace in contrast to their own failure to comply with the Law contract—(Num. 15:17-21) - and the offering up of a *cake of the first* (or firstfruit) *of their dough* (the lump) was to be acceptable (or set apart as *holy*) unto the LORD.

- Now what Paul does here in (:16) is really simple—but genius—because what you have in (:16) is really the simple and overall issue of the mechanics God has already put in place to provide for restoring Israel to the position she once held when God was working/dealing with them in their program.

- Paul takes a very common and easily recognized issue sitting back in Israel's Scriptures—but one that has an “overlooked element” to it (so to speak) - that wasn't really an issue before God suspended their program and brought in a new dispensation of grace—but an issue He incorporated into Israel's program (and the feasts & offerings of the Law Contract of Israel's program) - and now that God has revealed “*the mystery of Christ*” to the apostle Paul (magnifying his office) — latent in those things are some issues that can now be pointed to in which lies the mechanical solution to how God can *restore* Israel once He has *cast them away* (when they *stumbled* and *fell*).

- I'm not saying that this is strictly a *mystery* issue—because it's not—the issue we're after had a lot of meaning and application to Israel under their program—but there is a *mystery* aspect to it that comes into play here.

- And the simple issue that gets set up in our thinking in (:16) is: **if the product is holy—then the thing that produced it is also just as holy!** (And that's the simple matter that's going to allow for God to restore Israel.)

- Let's take up the first simple truth: ***For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy:***

- God put some features into the Law Contract whereby He made it clear to Israel that He set up, within their feasts & offerings, a system in which He would accept some things as *holy* unto Himself as a teaching aid/memorial of certain doctrinal issues.

- And on certain occasions, an offering of a *cake* from the first of their *dough* (or the *firstfruit* of the *lump*) was offered to God—and God accepted it as *holy*.

- But they were to understand and appreciate that the only reason that the *firstfruit* was considered by God to be *holy* was because the *lump* (dough) from which it came was *holy*. (Simple, right?)

- And again, it's not the works/performance of their own hands, but what God Himself provided by His J-ness that made it *holy* in the first place.
- And so the truth of the matter is (the "if" = 1st CC) *if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy*:
- Now for the 2nd part of (:16) — ***and if the root be holy, so are the branches.***
- And this follows the very same, simple logic—if (and they are) the *branches* of the tree are *holy*, then that's only because the very *root* of the tree from which they sprang is *holy*, too!
 - Same principle as before: If the product is *holy*—then the thing that produced it is also just as *holy*.
- And there's a great deal to this issue of the *root* and the *branches* in Israel's program that can be studied out for yourself as well.
 - And as (:17) will bear out—the tree here is the *Olive Tree*.
 - And you can go to a passage like Jer. 11:16 and find out that Israel is referred to there as a *green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit*.
 - And this massive doctrine can be traced from the OT on through the Lord's ministry in the gospel accounts.
- But without getting bogged down and over-complicated—the major issue is, that just as with the *firstfruit* and the *lump*—if the *branches* of the tree are acceptable to God as *holy*, that's only because the ***root*** of the tree that produced those fruit-bearing *branches* is *holy* as well!
- And that simple matter is enormously profound to the issue at hand (of God being easily able to return to His program with Israel and restore them to their former position—prior to them being *accursed from Christ*.)
- And the very powerful thing that (:16) does—is to generate in your thinking that the issue isn't the *natural branches* (or even the tree) - but the major issue is the ***root*** that produces the tree—which means that God is free to do some things with the natural tree (or even **another** tree), as long as they come from the same acceptable/*holy root*!

- And what's supposed to be generated in your thinking by the 'set-up' (so to speak) of (:16) is that the provision has already been made for God to restore Israel—and the provision isn't found in the *branches*—it's found in the root!

- In other words—God doesn't have to look at the *firstfruit* and look at the *branches* as having become unholy (which they **did** become) and because of that, it's as if He can't bring them back—or can't utilize them—but the issue is: HE CAN!

- As long as that *lump* or that *root* remains *holy*, God can bring back the holy *firstfruit* and the holy *branches!*

- And that's the point Paul is after here!

- Latent in the *root* of that tree, the provision for restoration has already been made—IT'S THERE!

- And not only that—but restoration is easily done!

- It's natural for God to restore them (Israel)!

- And Paul goes on to illustrate that very issue—he takes that *root/branches* concept and illustrates it.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

- Now let's stop for a moment and address a common misunderstanding that comes out of these verses — and that is that Paul is NOT talking about individual Gentile salvation or justification (again—that's all been dealt with in the first 5 chapters of Romans).

- Paul is not reverting back to any kind of doctrinal teaching here concerning individual salvation or justification.

- Look down to (:21-22 [read]) — that's not talking about the individual salvation or justification of any individual Gentile—the doctrine here is NOT about your justification by grace through faith—or any kind of an issue concerning **eternal security**—that's all been settled!

- The doctrine here is all about God being able to restore Israel into the position she used to be in—and to no longer have the Gentiles in the position that they are presently in.

- And what Paul is going to show is the fact that us Gentiles are now being favorably & specially treated by God right now—but that's not a permanent situation (and we need to understand & appreciate that) — and we need to **not** be 'high-minded' as if God is done with Israel and we're better than Israel—and that God has rejected them and given us their program/plan/purpose—and all that kind of business!

- But Paul is simply describing how that God is both willing and able to restore Israel and resume and fulfill His program with them—even though He has suspended their program and has turned to another plan & purpose that He wants to accomplish with us Gentiles.

- And Paul illustrates that with the issue of the Olive Tree.

- And he says— *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, wert grafted in among them*

- And you have 2 olive trees in view here:

1) - One is considered a *wild olive tree*—which he applies to the general issue of the Gentiles;

2) - And one that is 'not wild' — but one that has been cultivated—one that's in a special position—it's been fenced in and **specially cared for** by an husbandman.

- And this is to illustrate what Israel was like—in connection with God's special dealings with them, they were like a cultivated olive tree.

- And the natural position of the Gentiles were like that *wild olive tree*—wild and left alone—*aliens from the commonwealth* of the cultivated olive tree—*without hope and without God in the world.*

- Wild Olive Tree = the Uncircumcision;
- Cultivated Olive Tree = the Circumcision

- And before God suspended His program with Israel—(when His *hand was with them* [with Israel]) - that how things **were!**

- And so what Paul is saying is—It’s like what God has done in bringing this dispensation of His grace in is that, He hasn’t gone out (so to speak) and abandoned Israel and just dealt with the Gentiles out there all on their own.

- (In fact, that couldn’t happen—because if you think about it—remember that the *holiness* of the cultivated olive tree [or the *holiness* of the *branches/fruit* of the olive tree] was NOT because of the tree at all—but because of the **ROOT** of the olive tree!

- And so what God has done is—He’s come along and taken the *wild olive tree* of the Gentiles and grafted them into the cultivated olive tree—**the place of special treatment!**

- Now keep in mind that we’re **NOT** dealing with individual salvation or justification—we’re dealing with the basic mechanics of how it is that God can restore Israel to her once-held exalted position amongst the nations of the earth.

- And in Paul’s illustration—there’s only **ONE PLACE** of **special treatment**—and that is where God’s Jehovahhness and His grace are—and where the provision of God’s Jehovahhness and His grace is to be found.

- And in the illustration—that place of specialized treatment is found in the cultivated and specially cared for Olive Tree—and more than that, it’s found in the very **root** of that cultivated Olive Tree.

- Therefore that cultivated Olive Tree (the one where the *branches* will be *holy* to God) - that cultivated Olive Tree is raised upon a *holy root* (or root-system).

- And to illustrate how it is that God has already provided for restoring Israel to her exalted position—

- God has this cultivated, cared-for Olive Tree with a *holy root*.

- When God suspended His program with Israel and turned to us Gentiles—God **didn’t** come along and **abandon** the cultivated Olive Tree and go out and deal with the Gentiles (the Wild Olive Tree) **out in the wild!**

- No—instead (and because the *holiness/acceptableness* issue lies in the *root* of the Cultivated Olive Tree) instead, God came along and *broke off the branches* (of national Israel—who has *stumbled* and *fallen*) and God *cast* those branches *away*.

- And then He's come along and taken the general issue of the Gentiles (and the status of the Gentiles)—and *grafted* them into the **one place** of special treatment.

- And that's what this dispensation of Gentile grace is like.

- And the important thing that this illustration illustrates is that **God hasn't abandoned the Cultivated Olive Tree** (He hasn't abandoned His program with Israel) - and left the Cultivated Olive Tree—and gone out into the Wild and said, "I'm done with them!" (with that Cultivated Olive Tree), and then starts treating the Gentiles specially **out in the Wild** (as if He's done ever dealing with Israel any more)!

- But what He's done is—He's 'pruned' the nation of Israel off (so to speak) of the Cultivated Olive Tree—and is **not** specially treating them now as if He's looking for the fruit to come from them (as His program had been calling for as He was dealing with them) — and now He's *grafted* the Gentiles (in general) as that *Wild Olive Tree* into the Cultivated Olive Tree (the only place of His special treatment) — and we're now in the position of being specially treated by God.

- Now with all that in mind—there's supposed to arise in your mind some serious soberness of thinking that comes out of all this.

- And really—(following the sense & sequence of the information) - for the first time, your heart should be gripped with the **enormous privilege** of being, not only in this dispensation of the grace of God—but your heart should be gripped with the tremendous **mercy** of God in doing what He's done—and with the deep appreciation for not just God's program with you, but for God's dealings with both programs: His program with Israel to repossess the earth; *and* His program with us, the new creature of the church, the body of Christ to repossess the heavenly realm!

- So Paul cautions you as he does in (:18)

18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

- *Boast not against the branches.*—Notice that these 5 words form the final phrase of the sentence that began in (:17).

- (Kind of an unusual break, don't you think?)

- Well, by setting this final phrase of the sentence off in (:18) as the KJ Translators did—it puts the emphasis upon you **NOT boasting against the branches**—and the way you're given the information is to come along and say, Ok, after you get the importance and effectual working of the greater part of the sentence (in :17) - I say all that to say this ... — and the “this” [*boast not against the branches*] is the thrust or ‘bulls-eye’ of what I’m driving at with all this information about *branches* and the *root* and the *fatness* of the *olive tree* illustration.

- And this issue can get easily glossed over and missed here due to being overshadowed by the Cultivated Olive Tree illustration.

- But my understanding is that this is one of the **major** issues our Father is driving at—and I say that because of the amount of information He dedicates to it after he concludes the illustration with *boast not against the branches*. (Actually, all the information that forms the remainder of (:18) and on down through (:25) goes back to this phrase and warning to: *boast not against the branches*!

- So therefore after the effectual working of the Olive Tree illustration has taken place (from :17), our Father now gives us a healthy amount of caution, warning, and proper doctrinal thinking concerning how you are to **think dispensationally** as His son.

- And when you see a warning like you do here—and one that leads to an even greater warning down in (:25) - at this stage in your sonship orientation & sonship establishment, what is one of the great warnings you be come hyper-sensitive to in the exhortation section back there in the book of Proverbs?

- TO NOT BE A **FOOL** IN YOUR FATHER'S EYES!
(And that's exactly what you **will** be if you don't have a proper dispensational mind-set right now—that is, before the actual sonship education [instruction] gets underway!)

- And that's one of the reasons why this issue of dispensational thinking has to be dealt with as the final issue in sonship establishment—because if you're not thinking properly in connection with God's 2 programs, then any further education or instruction is POINTLESS & WORTHLESS!
- Why? Because everything you're going to be educated in and taught as your Father's son has to do with entering into doing business with Him—and His business with you has NOTHING to do with His business with Israel (or Israel's program for this earth)!!!
- If this doctrine doesn't get properly and effectually established in your heart at this point—turn out the lights and go home—the education is over even before it's begun!
- That's just how critical all this information is!
- And that takes this doctrine out of the arena of being just so much Bible data—or a history lesson—or Bible story time—and it should produce a deep appreciation for just how wise your Father is to include such a large amount of information to finishing your sonship establishment as Romans 9-11!
- And Christians today who have no dispensational understanding or appreciation (and I mean a proper understanding [Acts 9, NOT Acts 2]) really are **FOOLS** in their Father's eyes!
- And knowingly or unknowingly, any Christian today who reads themselves into Israel's program—or makes themselves out to be assumers of Israel's program or spiritual Israelites or whatever—are fools and actually dishonor God by their lives! (even though all indicators tell them otherwise!)
- And so the warning: ***Boast not against the branches***—in other words, don't look at Israel like you have the tendency to look at her; as if God has thrown them away—gotten fed up—and has now taken Gentiles and made them to be the **helpers** or **assumers** of Israel's program—as if, in order to get this kingdom set up on the earth, God has put the Gentiles in the mix, in order to get *His will done on earth as it is in heaven!* — *God forbid* that you think that!!!

18 *Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.*

- This is a technique of English grammar that sets forth a warning or error, and then recalls to the mind the information designed to correct the erroneous thinking.

- It's like saying, If you do *boast against the branches* (thinking God is done with Israel and has gone out in search for a replacement and come up with you Gentiles—and now the Gentiles are better/greater than Israel—and God couldn't accomplish what He wanted to do with Israel, so He's going to accomplish it with us Gentiles—and things along those lines) — If you *boast against the branches*, just remember, **you** don't bear the *root*, but the **root** bears YOU!

- There's nothing that God was attracted to in you (twice-dead) Gentiles—nor was there anything naturally attractive about Israel—the real issue is God Himself and what **He's** done (in other words, the thing to be suitably impressed with is the **root** from which all *holy* and acceptable things in God's sight comes from!)

- And again—this should cause you to appreciate some things about the general course of this world (and to be suitable **unimpressed** with it, since it had such a negative influence on both the Gentiles and upon Israel) — and you should have a growing appreciation for the **mercy** of God in doing what He's done — and be suitably **impressed** with it!

- And the truth of the matter is—while you are not Israel, and Israel is not you—both Israel and us Gentiles are both beneficiaries of the same **ROOT!** (So there's no room for *boasting* here!)

- And Roman 4 did a lot to get some things generated in your thinking so that you can see your benefits from the *root*.

19 *Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.*

20 *Well* (you're right—that's good—that's exactly what you're supposed to think); *because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:*

- Now this is where folks have the tendency to make a mess out of this passage—because they assume that God’s talking about individual salvation and individual justification—(or rather, individual **loss** of salvation) or something along those lines.

- No—the issue is what has become of Israel as a nation in God turning to us Gentiles in this dispensation of grace.

- And the issue is, (as you well know by now) - that Israel (as a nation) has been put in the position of being *accursed from Christ* and they have *stumbled* and *fallen* and been judicially *blinded* and, as a nation, temporarily *cast away*— and the reason for that is just as chapter 10 set forth [especially :2-3] - or as Paul say it here: ***because of unbelief they were broken off.***

- And so in light of that correct & proper understanding—***Be not highminded*** (you are now in a position of being specialy treated by God—but now don’t have an arrogant spirit about it, but this calls for some sober thinking), ***but fear:***

- And those last 2 little words (*but fear*) — indicates to you that you’re supposed to recognize **that God is able to change this whole thing!**

- Because since the cultivated field and the Cultivated Olive Tree and the *root* and the *fatness* are all still there—God is able to *break off the graff*—put the Gentiles back out in the Wild—and go back to dealing with Israel, just like He had been all along!

- And not only **can** He do it—but that’s what He **will** do!
(And in :21 and ff, He describes that He can do it).

- So at the end of (:20) - after your thinking has been checked out (so to speak), and you’re thinking properly about what God has done in putting Israel’s program in suspension and turning to us Gentiles in a new and altogether different program—once your thinking properly about what God has done and why He’s done it the way He has— (:20) ends with *Be not highminded, but fear:* (Why?) - (:21) ...

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

- You have **For**, the particle of further explanation/amplification— plus **if** (1st CC) - it’s a fact that God didn’t spare the *natural branches* (national Israel) - and He’s able to change this whole thing back!

- Which means that God not only can, but He **will** change this all back the way it was before—and the Gentiles will be put back in the position of NOT being specially treated by God (as they once were)!

- And really, you have to have a pretty good understanding and appreciation for just how **horrible** of a position the Gentiles were in, in order to get the real ‘punch’ out of what’s being said here.

- And I’m not sure that you do have that appreciation—for being Twice Dead Gentiles (*dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh*); Gentiles who were the legal possession of Satan, the Adversary himself (we were actually held under the *power of darkness* as Satan’s legal possession and we had to be *delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son*); and God wasn’t dealing with us or working with us and — God had given us **up & over** to Satan whereby we were *aliens from the commonweal of Israel, without Christ, and without God in the world!*

- And the warning to be **not highminded, but fear** is so much more critical today to get this appreciation—because it’s much more difficult to get this over to you today—because you (nor your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-great, etc.,) have never experienced what it was like when the Gentiles were *without God in the world* and were *without hope* under the legal possession of the Adversary!

- (Perhaps a lot more should be done in this area, but we’ll let that go for now.)

- So we have 20 ... *Be not highminded, but fear:*
21 *For if God spared not the natural branches,*
take heed lest he also spare not thee.

- And this is a stark warning that this position we Gentiles find ourselves in (in this program change God has made) - this place of being specially treated by God—*take heed lest he also spare not thee* — in other words, **this thing is NOT going to last forever!**

- And that’s why you don’t *boast against the branches*—that why you don’t get *highminded*—and that’s why you’re to have a godly *fear* and respect for what God is doing today!

- And that's a huge issue—because the truth of the matter is, most Christians do **NOT** have any **respect** for what God is doing today!!!

- And again—it's absolutely critical to remember that we're NOT dealing with individual salvation or individual eternal security of one's salvation — which means that the issue of God *not sparing thee* has **nothing whatsoever to do with losing your salvation**—it has to do with recognizing that God has planned to bring this newfound Gentile status to a close one day, and go back to the way things were before He brought in this change in programs!

22 *Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God:*

- Now at this point, you and I are being told how we should now *Behold* all this—in other words, you're now supposed to take all the information you've been presented and by that information that both corrected your thinking and then told you what to think—you're now supposed *behold* or view this the way your Father views it—and this *behold* tells you that you have the capacity now to view some things properly and godly (if you will) - that is, you can now think about some things in connection with what God has done in suspending His program with Israel and bringing in a new and unknown program that has Him turning to the Gentiles in grace and accomplishing another program that He has in mind to accomplish. **(and this is to be your viewpoint from now on!)**

- And what you're now supposed to be able to *behold* is some things about God's **goodness** and God's **severity**.

- And don't let that term **goodness** just pass by you—thinking that all it's saying is that God is 'good' - (God is great, God is good, let us thank Him for our food—type stuff) — but you have to be able to understand and appreciate (especially from the work we did in surveying God's Program with Israel) and remember that when Israel put themselves in the position of meriting the 5 Courses of Punishment, that they reached a point in which God could no longer be *good* to them—and we looked at a bunch of passages where, when that remnant finally did (and will again) respond properly and positively to the Lord (to Jesus of Nazareth), and God can once again be *good* to them. (Palestinian Covenant—Deut. 30:1-10 [5])

- see, for example, Jeremiah 31:1-14.

- This isn't talking about *goodness* or *severity* in just any old way—or just in some general way as describing the attributes of God—but this is talking about *goodness* and *severity* in a particular & specific context.

- And just like it was with the nation Israel—God's *goodness* was withheld to us Gentiles because of our negative and improper response to God—and because of us being given *up & over* to Satan, the Adversary as unfit for God to utilize or deal with or work with—but now as God has grafted us into the Cultivated Olive Tree and enjoying its *root* and *fatness*—God can now do *good* to us, which He could not do before!

- And though this is very basic and very general, your Father expects you to have all that in mind as you *behold* His *goodness* in providing all along a way in which He could turn to us Gentiles and utilize us for this most secret program He had in mind to accomplish: the repossession of the heavenly places by *liberating the creature from its bondage of corruption* when God places us as His sons in the positions of intelligentsia in the *creature*.

- And that stark contrast between what we were in God's sight as we existed as the *uncircumcision*; as Gentiles; before God brought in this dispensation of grace—to how we now stand in His sight—that's designed to make a big **impact** upon our thinking at this point.

- Now let's turn to the term *severity* and see the excellency of the word *severity* here—because there is a shade of meaning to *severity* that makes it the most excellent choice of words when God describes what He's done to Israel—His *severity* has fallen on them.

- You can define *severity* as = a strict, stern, rigorous treatment or discipline or punishment (or the like) - but *severity* carries a shade of meaning that's perfectly suited to the context in view here—and it is this: **severity threatens heavy consequences** to those who do not comply to certain things.

- Therefore, in the way in which we are to *behold* what God has done to Israel—*severity* has fallen on them—and that calls to our thinking everything that has been set forth about why they have *stumbled* and *fallen*—and especially their suffering the consequences of their state of being *accursed from Christ*—and our Father takes all that He’s told us about the issue of what has happened to Israel and now says that we’re supposed to *behold* them (or view them) during this present dispensation of grace that we’re in—as those to whom the *severity* of God has fallen—in other words, Israel is now (and for the entire duration of this dispensation of grace, as long as it is in effect), Israel is presently suffering the consequences of their non-compliance to the Law contract, and even more specifically, their non-compliance to the work and witness and testimony of the Holy Ghost that took place during their 1-year of forbearance and mercy extended to them between Pentecost and the stoning of Stephen!

- So there’s an awful lot that goes into those 2 expressions: *Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God:*

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: *on them which fell, severity* (that’s Israel as a nation); *but toward thee, goodness* (that’s the general issue of the Gentiles), *if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

- That phrase—*if thou continue in his goodness*—that has nothing to do with individual justification/salvation, nor does it have anything to do with the possible loss of your eternal life—that phrase is simply a statement that describes what God is doing in this dispensation of grace: He’s being *good* to the Gentiles—He’s able to now do us *good*!

- And we experience His *goodness* to us—(having changed the status of the Gentiles in His sight, and specially treating us as *grafted* into that cultivated *olive tree*) —as long as this dispensation continues on — but the point is, **it’s not going to continue on forever**—the window of Gentile opportunity as it exists today is going to come to an end!

- Then we have— *otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*—which simply means, God will cut off the graft and put the Gentiles as the *wild olive tree* back out in the wild, and left alone. (Our former status.)

- (And now then there won't be a dispensation of Gentile grace in effect—and God will return to His program with Israel).

- And in (:23-24) God sets forth that that is exactly what He's going to do.

23 And they (the nation Israel) **also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.**

- And we know from what's sitting out in the prophets that Israel as a nation will NOT *abide still in unbelief*, but due to the witness of the remnant and the events surrounding the Lord's return at the end of the Lord's Day of Wrath—Israel as a nation will turn back to God and will be saved—and Israel will once again be no longer *accursed from Christ*, but will again be placed in the position of being **speciallly treated by God**—and all promises and covenants God made to them will be fulfilled and they will receive their *fulness*.

- Let's look at a passage that underscores the fact that Israel will not *abide still in unbelief*—Zech. 12:9-10; 13:8-9

- And then in (:24) God describes the fact that He's able to graff them back in to the cultivated olive tree (the place of special treatment).

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

- Paul says, what I want you to see here is the simplicity of God being able to get back to dealing with Israel—don't get the idea that God is done with them!

- And (:24) brings to a head the fact that God is not only **able** to get back to dealing with them again—but you have that “*much more*” type of logic (‘a-fortiori’ logic = all the more, or with far stronger reason)—in other words, if He could do the **one** [i.e., grafting in the wild olive tree (which is the more difficult thing to do)], then it stands to greater reason that God could do the **other** [i.e., grafting the natural branches back into their own olive tree] (which is the much easier thing for Him to do)!

- So therefore not only is God **able** to go back to dealing with Israel and their program—not only is God able to restore them to their once-held exalted nation status (in the place of being specially treated by Him) — it’s a **simple** thing for Him to do (after all, they’re the *natural branches*) — but not only is He **able** to do it, and it’s a **simple** thing for Him to do—it’s **easily** done!

- And really in (:25-29), Paul tells us that God **will** do just that!

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

- By now this is a familiar passage to us—and to all those who ‘rightly divide the word of truth’ and honestly handle God’s word.

- But as I so often point out—this is another one of those “I would not have you ignorant, brethren” type statements that is made by the apostle Paul throughout his epistles.

- There are 6 of them—the 1st which has already occurred in Romans 1:13 *Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren,* — and there the issue surrounded Paul’s authority as an apostle and the gospel & godly edification he was sent to preach to the Gentiles;

- and now here in Rom. 11:25 we encounter the 2nd ‘I would not have you ignorant’ type warning.

- And my understanding is that all 6 of these similarly worded warnings have a 2-fold danger connected with them.

- At certain points in the epistles of the apostle Paul, there are certain doctrines that get presented that have this kind of warning attached to them because those doctrines are not only vital and critical to a son’s success with his sonship education—but these doctrinal areas are easily fraught with danger of being mishandled, misunderstood, and misapplied.

1) That can take place on the part of one’s own dishonest handling of God’s word (and that oftentimes does take place);

2) But the 2nd kind of danger connected to these 6 issues is that, by the critical and vital nature of them, they have been singled out (so to speak) as special or “pet” doctrines of attack by the Satanic Policy of Evil—they are Satan’s “pet” doctrines to attack and cause confusion, misunderstanding, and corrupted doctrine.

- And so vital are these doctrines for the *new creature of the church, the body of Christ*—that confusion or misunderstanding in these areas have perilous consequences!

- So Paul says, ***For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, ...***

- And for the very first time in all of Paul’s letters—we have the word ***mystery***—which, here in this context, puts a single-word name or title to all that we have had taught to us by our Father in connection with the change in programs He has made (for this period of time in which He has suspended His program with Israel and turned to dealing with us Gentiles in the place of special treatment) - now we have something to call it.

- And now we can legitimately call this present time in which we live: the ***mystery***—because it was something that God never spoke about anywhere in His word until He told it to the apostle Paul—He kept it a secret!

- And as the apostle of the Gentiles, and magnifying his office of apostle, Paul strongly warns us to not be ***ignorant of this mystery*** — that is, not only are you to be knowledgeable of it, and acknowledge the reality of it by means of honestly handling God’s word—but you are not to ever ‘ignore’ the mystery by being dishonest with yourself as you deal with God’s word.

- In other words, where the mystery would pinch you (so to speak) in some pet area in which you would rather prefer to operate in Israel’s program, you pick and choose your way through God’s word and simply **ignore** what the mystery means as to which portions of the Bible you **imagine** would be a better fit to your own personal likes!

- And that's the way many Christians treat God's word today. (Especially those who at least acknowledge dispensations, albeit a Pentecost (Acts 2) beginning of the so-called 'church age.'

- In fact, the context here in (:25) fits quite well into the issue of those who 'ignore' the *mystery* and yet try to make some kind of distinction between "Well, that was in 'Bible days, but God doesn't do that any more!'" ??? — and unless you just completely disregard the Bible as anything but an unreliable collection of spiritual stories about religious philosophy — if you're going to try to live by the Bible at all, then you are going to be forced to make some kind of distinction about what God once did, and what He's doing today.

- (Unless you're Fred Phelps)

- And usually, most folks just come along and say, Well, that was the Old Testament, but now we're living by the New Testament—but there are some real problems with that, too, if you care to look, which most don't!

- But what I'm after here is that the context of (:25) fits well into the issue of those who ignore the *mystery*, yet try to make some kind of distinction between what God once did and what He now doing— (i.e., Acts 2 dispensationalists) — and when that's the case, you can't believe how much 'picking and choosing' goes on among the Pastors and Bible teachers in the churches today!!!

- (Even in the gospels, they'll say, Well, some things are in, other things are out!)

- And I say that this fits the context here because of the next phrase of (:25) *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits;*

- Being *ignorant of this mystery* (or ignoring the *mystery*) is symptomatic of someone who is *wise in their own conceits*— and that's the problem—that is, being *highminded* and thinking erroneously about what God's doing in this dispensation of Gentile grace—thinking erroneously about what He's done in casting Israel away and turning to us Gentiles—and what that means in connection with Israel and their future!

- And so Paul says, I don't want you to be *wise in your own conceits*. And if you're *conceited*, you naturally think more highly of yourself than you ought to.

- In fact, *conceit* is an egotistical, selfish opinion—it's a species of **pride** and vanity.

- A man full of *conceit* overrates his own capacity!

- And when you go to discriminate between the difference of *pride* vs. *conceit*—as George Crabb puts it: *a man is said to be proud of that which he really has—but a man is said to be conceited of that which he really has **not!** — a man may be proud to an excess, of merits which he actually possesses; but when he is conceited his merits are all in his own conceits! — the latter (conceited) is obviously founded on falsehood altogether.*

- (That's a nice way of saying that a *conceited* person is a 'legend in his own mind.')

- Now the way this comes into play with the issue of being *ignorant of this mystery* is that you do so to your own peril—and the peril is being *wise in your own conceits*—that is, you THINK you really have something that you DON'T! — and therefore, instead of operating upon sound doctrine and God's word 'rightly divided' - you're only operating upon your own imagination and personal preferences!

- see I Timothy 1:7 *Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*

- *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; — (now here's what you need to understand) — **that blindness IN PART is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.***

- Paul says, That *blindness* that I told you about (back in :7), is only **in part**—that is, it's only temporary—*until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*—and that *blindness* of national Israel will continue on throughout the entirety of this *mystery* dispensation of Gentile grace—and will end when this dispensation comes to a close at the event we commonly call the rapture.

- And just as that illustration of the Olive Tree showed—with the Wild Olive Tree (of the Gentiles) being grafted into the Cultivated Olive Tree, and then God coming along and breaking off the graft and grafting back in the *natural branches* (national Israel) - this *blindness* is only temporary (*until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*) - and then God will return to His program with Israel—the Gentiles will be put back out in their “wild olive” state— and God will fulfill His program with Israel in every detail and will give them their *fulness*.

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: — again, this is NOT talking about individual Israelites—it’s talking about Israel **as a nation**.

- And in view of the fact that God is going to resume and fulfill His program with Israel, ***all Israel shall be saved***— and everything that was spoken about in connection with their salvation package—through all of the prophets since the world began, plus all that was spoken about by the Messiah (during Jesus’ earthly ministry) — all that *fulness*, they’re going to have!

- That complete salvation package—including the remaining mandates of the Davidic Covenant will be theirs.

... as it is written, (Isaiah 59:20-21—God has written it down, and He cannot lie!) ***There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:***

27 For this is my covenant unto them (God not only wrote it down, but He made an oath-bound covenant or contract to them), ***when I shall take away their sins***. (and He took away their sins at the Cross, and He promised to do some things in connection with that, that they haven’t got yet, but they’ll get it when this dispensation of grace is concluded)

- (see Isa. 59:20-21)

- The Redeemer mandate was fulfilled at the Cross—and the next thing Israel will need (and God’s J-ness will do for them that they can’t do for themselves) is that they will need a Deliverer—and that’s the very next mandate to get fulfilled.

- Then they will need an Avenger, a King, and a Blesser—and that’s all yet to come—and they will have it!

28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes:

(that's the reality of the issue right now during this dispensation of Gentile grace) **but as touching the election** (for what God has planned and purposed with them from the beginning with Abraham), **they are beloved for the FATHERS' (Plural) sakes (Plural)** - (He made those promises and covenants to their fathers back in time past—**and they're still beloved**—God still values and esteems them in connection with those covenants He made with them!).

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

(Those are the *gifts and calling* TO ISRAEL—resident in what was set forth to the *fathers*—God says they are *without repentance*—in other words, God has not changed His mind about them!)

- Therefore, you and I today in this dispensation of Gentile grace are NOT the **assumers** of Israel's promises & covenants (and *gifts and calling*) in any manner or form — and we are NOT the **fulfillers** of Israel's promises, covenants, or *gifts and calling* in any manner or form — ISRAEL IS!

- And Israel will get them when this dispensation of grace ends—**and not before!**

- And that takes us to (:30-36) — How are we, therefore, to look at things as we bring to a conclusion this 3rd Cornerstone of our godly edification? - these final 7 verses describe how we are to view what God has done in temporarily setting Israel aside and turning to us Gentiles (and we are to view it just as our Father does) in this final aspect of our sonship establishment. —

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God (back when the Gentiles were *given up* and *given over* to the Adversary back at the tower of Babel and on through God's program with Israel [i.e., *times past* Plural]), **yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:** (and *mercy* is exactly what you have now *obtained* when the nation of Israel *stumbled over the stumblingstone and rock of offence*—and God, therefore, suspended His program with Israel and brought in *this mystery* dispensation of His grace—you obtained mercy! - and that word *mercy* is going to be used 4 times in :30-32)

- And you are to have some (at least an appropriate and sufficient enough understanding and appreciation of how you once stood as a Gentile—and appreciate the great contrast of that to you now having *obtained mercy* when you didn't deserve it!

- And you should now be able to latch on to just how grand and fantastic it is in this dispensation of Gentile grace to have *obtained mercy*—and by means of what has been covered in Romans 9-11, your Father is looking for the heart of your inner man to be suitably impressed with His great *mercy*!

31 *Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*

- Israel has now not believed (in that they have *stumbled, fallen*, and been *diminished*—they have lost their exalted-nation status, and God has interrupted their program and turned to us Gentiles in grace) - and through us Gentiles *obtaining mercy*, Israelites can both *obtain individual mercy* by responding positively to the gospel of Christ).

32 *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*

- By the time you get to the end of Acts 28, God has given up the nation Israel and scattered them over all the earth—and that’s where we find them today.

- And what you’ve got now is a world of individual lost sinners (both Jews and Gentiles) - to whom God offers *mercy* and salvation by grace through faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for their sins.

- And in view of these 3 verses you’re to understand and appreciate **the marvelous mercy of God**—that very issue that was set forth back in chapter 9 (the Reserve Clause—*Exodus 33:19 I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*) — and you’ve got to appreciate that’s what’s being marvelously and powerfully put on display in this dispensation of grace — to **your benefit AND to Israel’s!**

- And then we have this magnificent ‘doxology’ or praising/extolling of the apostle Paul in view of all that God has done in His genius to suspend His program with Israel—and before fulfilling it, accomplish this other plan, program, and purpose He had in mind—and in putting Israel in the position of being *accursed from Christ*, change the status of the Gentiles in His sight, and bring in this mystery dispensation of Gentile grace—then return to His program with Israel and fulfill it—thus being the one & only “Most High God.”

- And when you have a doxology like this—there has been produced within the heart of apostle Paul something of God that is so impressive and so magnificent that it elicits an emotional (albeit **intelligent**) outburst or response of extolling and acclaiming (almost celebrating) the virtues of God in doing what He has done!

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

- Once again, this dispensation of grace was a *mystery* in ages and generations past—not made known—God kept it a secret—revealing it first to the apostle Paul—and as it says, it was *unsearchable* (you couldn't search it out in any of the Scriptures, the prophets, or anywhere in either the OT or in the gospel accounts, or in the opening chapters of the book of Acts —and it was *past finding out* (even *unsearchable* and *past finding out* for Satan himself)!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

- Oftentimes this kind of a doxology isn't appreciated for what it's really all about—it's a doxology of praise to the **genius** of God in what He's doing.

- And Paul understands that this is the beginning of a realm of doctrine that—when you understand and appreciate this dispensation of grace that's been brought in, and the reality of it, and what it all means—you're getting the 'first-things-first' issues about a realm of doctrine that will later on be called *the manifold wisdom of God!*

- And you're going to learn—on out in Level II of your sonship education about God's genius—and such things as His *treasures of wisdom and knowledge* in this thing called *the mystery of Christ*.

- And Paul sets forth a doxology of praise here for all that—because he understands what it all leads to as a son and in your sonship education—and as your sonship education goes on out in Level II, he describes the WHY of this dispensation of grace so you can appreciate such things as why it's been kept a secret.

- And when I say that Paul understands what all this **leads to**—that’s a sonship issue.

- Notice there in (:34) - this is the first time you get the word **counsellor** popping up—it will come up in a similar way later on in I Corinthians 2:16 (where you get the addition of *But we have the mind of Christ*) — but for now, you just get the issue of *who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?*

- With the completion of your sonship orientation and sonship establishment—you’re now in a position to begin your sonship education in earnest—and laying out ahead of you is not only a gaining of the magnificent genius of God and the *deep things of God*—but from gaining an appreciation for the curriculum of sonship education from the Table of Contents back in Proverbs—you know that the goal of the whole thing is to one day become that *man of understanding* who has *attained unto wise counsels*.

- And Paul, in his doxology, appreciates that, from all that has now been formed in you as a son—and all that now lies before you in your sonship education—all of that is going to provide for you, as your Father’s son, to become that **mutual counselor together with God!**

- (That God says He’s **never once** taken anybody into before!)

- And these are all things that are yet to come—when this foundation of what this dispensation of grace is, gets built upon in the further advanced Levels of sonship edification.

- And as Paul contemplates what has been achieved from Romans 1:1 up to this point—and as he thinks about what it’s all going to lead to—he can’t help but put his praise down in writing—because, the truth is, so powerful is all that should be effectually working in your inner man—that YOU should be doing something along these lines yourself!

- **You** should be able to say, along with the apostle Paul the very things he says here—and for the very reasons he says them! (intelligent sonship thinking)

36 *For of him* (our Father is the great source of sonship edification in this dispensation of Gentile grace and the plan & purpose for what it will achieve in the fight & war with Satan, the Adversary), *and through him* (He is the One who has done all of the mighty work to forge our sonship education as designed for His business in repossessing the heavenly places in this dispensation of grace), *and to him* (He is the object and end-all for His business goals with us as His sons—He will be proven to be the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth—all because of His genius in keeping a secret concerning the repossession of the heavenly places back to Himself), *are all things* (all things in heaven and in earth will be His, and this dispensation of grace and what God is going to do with us as His sons, paves the way for Satan and his Plan of Evil to be totally destroyed, and God our Father to be the Most High God without challenge): *to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*