*Northwest Bible Church – Dec 12, 2004 – Worship Service – Alan Conner*

**Romans 11:18-22**

*Warning Against Pride*

INTRO

A. PURPOSE #1 – THE SALVATION OF GENTILES (vv. 11-12, 15).

    1) Rhetorical question:
        "They did not stumble so as to fall, did they?" This refers to the nation of Israel as a whole, or generally speaking. Israel’s stumbling over the gospel did not cause the whole nation to fall from grace did it? The clear dogmatic answer is "May it never be." The point is that Israel has not been rejected finally, there is still a future blessing for the Jews.

    2) Israel’s sin results in Gentile salvation.
        v. 11 – "by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles."
        v. 12 – "if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles."
        v. 15 – "if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world."

            a) the "riches" of v. 12 = the salvation in v. 11.

            b) The "reconciliation of the world" does not mean that the whole world and all individuals in it have been reconciled. "Reconciliation" is God’s act of bringing sinners into a peaceful relationship with Himself. He made His enemies His friends through the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:10). This is the objective peace which comes with justification, not the subjective peace the Spirit gives to the saints

    3) The greater blessing to come on the Gentiles.
        a) From the "lesser to the greater" argument (v. 12).
        b) "Life from the dead" (v. 15). What does "life from the dead" this mean?

            (1) A greater spiritual life or quickening of the Gentiles.
                Problem: Rom. 11:25 which says that the ending of the hardening of Israel will be after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. In other words, the fullness of Israel will not take place until the fulness of the Gentiles is over. This means that it is inconceivable that there will be an even greater revival of life and salvation among the Gentiles after Israel’s fulness. The order is first the fulness of the Gentiles, then the fulness of Israel, yet this view reverses the order to first the fulness of Israel, then the fulness of Gentiles. So v. 15 would contradict v. 25.

            (2) The resurrection of the righteous.
                Support: although this is the only time that "life from the dead" occurs in the NT, "from the dead" is found about 47 times and all but two (Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:14) refer to physical resurrection.

    Summary: the rejection of Israel in general has resulted in a great outpouring of blessings upon Gentiles . When the last Jew is saved, when the fulness of Israel comes to pass at the end of the age, then Gentiles will experience the resurrection from the dead.

B. PURPOSE #2 – THE JEALOUSY OF ISRAEL (vv. 11, 13-14).

    1) What kind of jealousy? (v. 11, 14).

    2) The goal of this jealousy (v. 14).
        However, Paul’s hope is that it will result in the salvation of "some."

    3) Paul magnifies his ministry (v. 13). He sees the strategic importance of his ministry not only in bringing incredible blessings of salvation to Gentiles, but to also be a means of provoking Israel to jealousy in hopes that some will be saved.

C. THE FUTURE FULNESS OF ISRAEL (vv. 12, 15).

    What does "fulfillment" (NASB) mean in v. 12? It can be translated: fulness, full measure, completeness, completion, full number. But how does this "fulness" come about?

    1) End time revival among the Jews.
        Support:
            a) rejection vs. acceptance in v. 15.
            b) 11:26.
            c) Other OT prophecies like the resurrection of the dead bones in Ezek. 37. Also Zech. 12:10; 13:1.

Problem: passages that seem to say that Israel as a nation is cut off permanently: Mt. 8:5-12, esp. 1-12; 21:18-19 (cursed fig tree); 21:33-43 (parable of the vineyard); 23:37-39 (house is left desolate); Lk. 13:6-9 – fruitless fig tree cut down if no fruit in next year

    2) The gradual salvation of the remnant through the age.
        Support:
a) the same word " fulness" also occurs in 11:25 where it definitely refers to the gradual salvation of the Gentiles through this age.
b) to limit v.12’s "fulness" to a revival among Israel at the end of history runs counter to Paul’s emphasis on the remnant in 9:6-13, 27; 11:1-7; 14 "some of them".
c) It also runs counter to Paul’s present focus rather than future: 11:1, 5, 13-14, 30-31.

D. THE GRACIOUS PLAN OF GOD IN SALVATION