

THE MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION | ROMANS 11:1-4

- Verse 1 –
 - In light of the fact that God was now dealing with all people, whether Jew or Greek (10:12), the natural question arises, **Hath God cast away his people?**
 - The question has been previously answered in 1 Samuel 12:22 and Jeremiah 31:37, thus Paul's answer is a strong, **God forbid.**
- Verse 2 –
 - This verse, along with 1 Peter 1:2 are the only passages of Scripture which define the identity of the *foreknown*, and in both passages, Israel is in view. Romans 8:29 speaks of the ultimate state of this group.
 - Does this eliminate the existence of *others who are also foreknown*? No, but the assumption of such others would be pure speculation.
 - The archaic word **wot** means *do you know* (in the present tense).
 - Infinitive: *to wit*
 - Past tense: *wist ye?*
 - Other senses: He has *wit*, is *witty* is *at his wits end*
- Verses 2-4 - Paul uses Elijah's status (at his *wit's end*) to remind Elijah that *all is not lost when you appear alone*.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF ISRAEL | ROMANS 11:5-10

- Verse 5 –
 - In election, God had chosen a remnant of Israel for Paul's day. This remnant was saved from the blindness that God put upon the rest of Israel (v. 7). These verses do not teach that God has chosen a remnant for EVERY time, but only for **this present time**.
 - Paul begins to explain in v. 11 that this blindness/stumbling is not a permanent condition for Israel ("God forbid"), and Paul prays that His ministry **might save some of them**, (v. 14), a proof that those who are not part of the elect may be saved, and that election is about God's work with Israel, not about individual salvation.
 - In v. 26 we are taught that Israel **shall be saved** in the future, based on the promised covenant (v. 27) with Israel. But now **as concerning the gospel** (v 28) they are enemies (further testimony that the period of the Gospel of grace is NOT the same as the New Covenant). While they are enemies of the Gospel, their election is sure, **for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance**" (v. 29).
 - So, Israel is certainly elect, but to extrapolate the doctrine of election to individual people of all times is gross irresponsibility.
- Verse 6 - Strangely, Calvinism wants to claim that Israel is not the elect because their works do not show it. Some have a twisted thinking that says, "If you are elect, it is by grace, and your works will show it. If your works do not show it, then God has not been gracious to elect you."
- Verse 7 –
 - **what then...** - What did Israel **seeketh for**? From Romans 9:31 and 10:3 the answer appears to be *righteousness*.
 - **but the election...** - In context with v. 5, this is **the election** from within the nation, not some supposed election of individual Gentiles. Evidence for this is that Paul speaks of **the rest**, and one must ask, "*...of what?*" The remainder of Israel is **the rest** of which Paul speaks. This remainder **were blinded**, or, more literally, *hardened*.

- Verses 8-10 - Paul gives two quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures as evidence that this hardening is within God's plan: Isaiah 29:10 and Psalm 69:22-23.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF GOD'S WORK WITH MANKIND | ROMANS 11:11-15

- Verse 11 –
 - **I say then...** - The pronoun **they** is reference to unbelieving Israel, not the elect remnant. This totally disqualifies an idea that says that God is not dealing with the Jewish nation but only the Jewish remnant. **God forbid** that the nation itself should have **stumbled that they should fall**.
 - **through their fall** - The word **fall** here is παράπτωμα [paraptoma], most often translated *trespass*. It does not contradict with the earlier statement in the verse, where **fall** is πίπτω [pipto], a literal or spiritual fall.
 - **salvation is come** - This is incidental to the argument of the security of Israel, but Paul shows the blessing that God has given, and the current state of affairs. Rather than judgment or separation/hopelessness, God allowed for a time in which **salvation is come unto the Gentiles**.
 - **for to provoke them** - This is the ultimate "it's not about me" wake up call for the church. The church age is not directly for the salvation of the church, but rather **to provoke them** [unsaved Israel] **to jealousy**.
- Verse 12 –
 - Here we have what could be the theme verse of the book of Acts.
 - By the **fall of them...and the diminishing of them** the **Gentiles** have experienced salvation. However, the **fullness** of Israel, which is yet to come, will be so much more (as will be explained in v. 15).
 - The word for fall is the same **fall** which is *sin* or *trespass* in v 11.
- Verse 13 –
 - Strangely, the Gentiles of the church tend to diminish the office which Paul magnified.
 - They want to make all apostolic offices the same, either by making Israel and the Church to be the same thing or making the Church replace Israel.
 - In reality, Israel has one role, the Church has another role, and both are blessed roles. And, it seems, both get jealous of the other!
- Verse 14 - The magnification of Paul's office can **provoke to emulation** the Jews in the flesh, toward salvation.
- Verse 15 –
 - Paul comes back to his first thought: **the casting away** of Israel.
 - He concludes that God has done a gracious **reconciling of the world** because of this casting away, but also that the current *away* condition of Israel is temporary, and the future **receiving of them** will be **life from the dead**.
 - This is probably a prophetic clue, for when Israel is received, the Messiah will return and the resurrection will take place.