

Acts 28 – The Great N.T. dispensational divide

Paul in Acts, the Old Testament program, no dispensational change
The diminishing of Israel, Roms.11. Context or confusion.

Without fear of repercussion and repetition, the following are restated being incredibly important and acknowledged across the denominational landscape as such.

Repeating a falsehood incessantly does not make it truth, but it keeps the narrative flowing. Immediate, near and remote contexts must be considered, they guide in meaning. Every text has a context. No verse stands in Isolation.

Without these basic principles in play even when reading the scriptures, errors abound. It could be

Miles Coverdale [1488-1569]

IT WILL GREATLY HELP YOU TO
UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE IF YOU
NOTE - NOT ONLY WHAT IS SPOKEN
AND WRITTEN, BUT OF WHOM AND TO
WHOM, WITH WHAT WORDS, AT WHAT
TIME, WHERE, TO WHAT INTENT, WITH
WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES,
CONSIDERING WHAT GOES BEFORE

suggested that the massive compartmentalization of Christianity is a direct result of some zealous believer grabbing one verse out of context, hoisting a flag and leading others into the ditch of confusion.

We have more denominations than years from Christ so how dare we point the finger at the Jews of whom it is said 3 have 9 opinions, when we make them look like astonishingly astute commentators with our multitudes of conflicting ideologies.

Church hopping is a pointless exercise pursued by many as they try and find one with views that fit their own or make them feel comfortable. We are not here to promote comfort, but diligent workmanship, we are not here to condone conformity based on traditions which could lead to stagnation, but here to promote personal Bible study based up the study principles found within its pages.

The following is a classic example of ignoring the context, both immediate, near and remote.

The diminishing of Israel.

Paul writes about this in his letter to the Romans as follows.

*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?* Rom 11:12.

Unfortunately, some have concluded that Israel was diminishing in the sense of make or become less dispensationally, sliding out of importance into ultimate displacement or dismissal, and a dispensational change was beginning. Context will show this is a flag of misinformation.

From this false understanding, an ideology is manufactured that imagines that Paul the apostle of the Gentiles was introducing the dispensational truths of Ephesians and Colossians during Acts because Israel was diminishing. Sounds reasonable to them, but do Paul and Romans allow this assumption?

We shall examine this by comparing the original words in the context as it is found elsewhere. Then the immediate context moving out to the near and remote contexts to determine if these allow such an idea. Remote contexts will be the scriptures Paul turns to in Romans.

Original words – Roms.11:11-12.

The original word for “diminishing” only occurs twice in the New Testament, both times used by Paul. Please consider the variation in the KJV.

*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?* Rom 11:12.

*Now therefore there is utterly a **fault** among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?* 1Cor 6:7.

As we can see, the KJV uses two different English words for the same original word, diminishing and fault. The original comes from a word meaning to be overcome, 2Pet.2:20, defeat, degradation and hence failure or fault. How then do we understand Roms.11:12 if the same word in 1Cor.6 is translated fault? The context will help, but here is verse 12 as rendered by others.

*Now if the offence of them be the riches of the world and the **diminution** of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more the fulness of them?* Roms.11:12 DRB.

*Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their **fall** means riches for the gentiles, how much more will their full participation mean!* Roms.11:12 ISV.

*And if their trespass means riches for the world and their **loss** means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness mean?* Roms.11:12 LEB.

Diminishing means fault, and fault does not automatically mean dismissal. We can be at fault; diminished in that sense, but we remain who we are. Israel had diminished, were at fault, had failed, but they were an election, loved for the father’s sake, Roms.11:28. We must never forget the wilderness wanderings where many Israelites suffered loss, died in the wilderness, did not live to see the trumpets entry at Jericho, but their loss did not mean God’s purposes for Israel changed.

Using the same Biblical principal of comparing spiritual with spiritual, we look at the words translated “fall” in the immediate context of “diminishing” in Roms.11:11-12.

*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. Now if the **fall** of them be the riches of the world, and the **diminishing** [**fault**] of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?* Rom 11:11-12.

Paul does not contradict himself.

The words stumbling, fall and diminishing are contrasted with Israel’s fulness, Paul is not arguing that Israel was being gradually dismissed, he is looking positively to their fulness. Paul writes Israel had stumbled but not with any fall in view, this Paul emphatically proclaims. Paul does not immediately contradict himself, there are two different words for “fall” in Roms.11:11-12.

*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. Now if the **fall** of them be the riches of the world, and the **diminishing** [**fault**] of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?* Rom 11:11-12.

Only twice is the second word **fall** in Roms.11:11-12, translated fall, everywhere else in the N.T. it is **trespass**, **fault**, or **sin**. Even in Romans it is translated 7 times as **offence** or **trespass** prior to the 2 occurrences of fall in these verses, see Roms.4:25, 5:15-18, :20. It is used by Paul 16 times in his

letters and only twice is it rendered fall in the KJV, only here in Roms.11:11-12. In other words, everywhere else in the N.T. these two words for fall are never translated fall.

Here are the verses offered by others to bring out this difference in the 2 words for fall. Notice they avoid using fall except in the opening of v11.

I ask then, they did not stumble into an irrevocable fall, did they? Absolutely not! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make Israel jealous. Now if their transgression means riches for the world and their defeat [diminishing] means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full restoration bring? Rom 11:11. NET.

And so I ask, "They have not stumbled so as to fall, have they?" Of course not! On the contrary, because of their stumbling, salvation has come to the gentiles to make the Jews jealous. Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their fall [diminishing] means riches for the gentiles, how much more will their full participation mean! Rom 11:11-12. ISV.

I say then, they did not stumble so that they fell, did they? May it never be! But by their trespass, salvation has come to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them to jealousy. And if their trespass means riches for the world and their loss [diminishing] means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness mean? Rom 11:11-12 LEB.

I say then: Have they so stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid! But by their offence salvation is come to the Gentiles, that they may be emulous of them. Now if the offence of them be the riches of the world and the diminution [diminishing] of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more the fulness of them? Rom 11:11-12. DRB.

Do I mean that the people of Israel fell, never to get up again? Certainly not! Their failure made it possible for the Gentiles to be saved, and this will make the people of Israel jealous. But if the rest of the world's people were helped so much by Israel's sin and loss, [diminishing] they will be helped even more by their full return. Rom 11:11. CEV.

Diminishing must be understood by the immediate context. Israel had not stumbled to fall, but by their transgression, fault, or trespass salvation had come to the Gentiles. Diminishing must harmonize with transgression, fault, or trespass. Israel had not stumbled to fall, Paul is emphatic, because of their fall, that is failure, because of their sin or trespass or fault, riches had come to the world. The diminishing of Israel brought riches to the Gentiles. Look at the parallel thoughts here.

*Now if the fall [trespass, fault, failure] of them be the riches of the world,
and the diminishing [loss] of them the riches of the Gentiles;*

how much more their fulness? Rom 11:12.

Israel had not fallen in the sense of being dismissed dispensationally, being slowly set aside, Israel had diminished in the sense of being at fault. Indeed, the salvation of the Gentiles was the very key to Israel receiving mercy, Roms.11:28-32. We Gentiles today are not saved to provoke Israel, to stimulate the Olive tree or to bring mercy on all Israel. Ephesians does not fit in Roms.11.

Working back from diminishing to the verse before, Roms.11:11, we examine the words stumbled and fall as follows.

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. Rom 11:11.

The word for stumbled only appears 5 times in the N.T. In Jas.2:10, 3:2 it is three times offend. In 2Pet.1:10 it is fall. It means to trip, to fail in duty, to fall into sin. If we bring the word offend here, we

might read this.

*I say then, Have they **offended** that they should **fall**?*

This first word **fall** is almost everywhere translated to fall, to fall down, to be felled etc. As we have pointed out, this is not the same original word that twice appears fall in Roms.11:11-12. What we repeat for context clarity is that Paul is emphatic, Israel had not stumbled so as to fall. He does not then contradict himself and say because they fell salvation has come to the Gentiles. Here is an alternative rendering one more time.

*I say then, they did not stumble so that they **fell**, did they? May it never be! But by their **trespass**, salvation has come to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them to jealousy. And if their **trespass** means riches for the world and their **loss** [diminishing] means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness mean? Rom 11:11-12 LEB.*

Original words – Roms.11:15.

Some might think that Roms.11:15 adds weight to their idea that diminishing means gradual dismissal, because it says, "casting away".

*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? Rom 11:15.*

It might appear that Paul is contradicting himself again since he had already written Israel had not been cast away in Roms.11:1-2, but the word for casting away in Roms.11:15 is not the same original word for cast away in Roms.11:1-2. Paul is emphatic, Israel had not been cast away and he adds his own genealogy as evidence of the fact.

*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. **God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.** Rom 11:1-2a*

The word for casting away in Roms.11:1-2 is used in 6 other places as put away, put or thrust from but only twice, here in Roms.11:1-2 is it cast away. Here are some other renderings of Roms.11:1-2.

*So I ask, God has not **rejected** his people, has he? Absolutely not! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God has not **rejected** his people whom he foreknew! Rom 11:1-2a. NET.*

*I say then, Did not God **thrust away** His people? Let it not be! For I also am an Israelite, out of Abraham's seed, of the tribe of Benjamin. "God did not **thrust away** His people" Rom 11:1-2a. LITV.*

*Am I saying that God has **turned his back** on his people? Certainly not! I am one of the people of Israel, and I myself am a descendant of Abraham from the tribe of Benjamin. God did **not turn his back** on his chosen people. Rom 11:1-2a. CEV.*

Now for the occurrence of casting away in Roms.11:15 it is found in Acts where it is translated loss. The original word comes from a word meaning to cast off, rejection, a loss in that sense. When we see casting away in Roms.11:15, we remember the original word is also translated loss by the KJV.

*And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no **loss** of any man's life among you, but of the ship. Act 27:22.*

*And now I exhort you to be cheered, for there will be no **casting away** of soul from among you, only of the ship. Act 27:22. LITV.*

The people on the ship were assured by Paul that no lives would be lost, no lives would be cast away except the ship would be lost, the ship would be cast away. Here are other renderings of Roms.11:15.

For if the loss of them be the reconciliation of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? Rom 11:15. DRB.

Here is our immediate context with the alternative renderings suggested by the KJV and others.

I say then, Have they stumbled [offended] that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall [offence, trespass, failure] salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall [offence, trespass, failure] of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing [fault, failure] of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away [loss] of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. Rom 11:11-16.

The near context of Roms.11:11-12. Diminishing.

We are all aware that chapter and verse breaks are not inspired; these are a much later addition and must therefore be ruled interpretation, or additions for convenience. So, we move out of Roms.11 to discover what Paul had already written to the Romans.

Israel's stumbling and the inclusion of the Gentiles - provocation.

Roms.11:11 is not Paul's first teaching about Israel and her stumbling, her partial blind condition compared to the Gentiles. Here is the same theme back in Roms.9.

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Isa.28:16. Rom 9:30-33.

Here in Roms.9, we have the Gentiles of faith compared to the Jews stumbling according to prophesy. The word stumbled in Roms.9:32 next occurs in Roms.14:21, not Roms.11:11. Paul is quoting Isa.28 and here are some excerpts from Isa.28, none of which hint that Israel was in dismissal.

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. Isa 28:16

In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, Isa 28:5

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. 1Cor.14:21. Isa 28:11.

Israel's stumbling was followed by Israel's glory.

When Paul turns to Isaiah in Roms.9 about Israel's stumbling he is not using Isaiah to suggest Israel's diminishing as in dismissal, for the prophet looks to the day of glory for the residue of Israel, not the church which is his body. Note, Isa.28:11 is quoted by Paul in 1Cor.14:21 where tongues are a sign [to Israel]. Israel's stumbling at that stumbling stone was according to prophesy which also included visions of Israel's glory, not Israel's dismissal.

The inclusion of the Gentiles as provocation was according to prophesy.

This is very important because if we falsely insert the inclusion of the Gentiles in Romans according to the mystery kept hidden in God, we might slip into the error that Israel was diminishing as in a

sliding away dismissal and a gradual change of dispensation was taking place. The object of Gentile provocation is to save some Israelites, not because the nation was being dismissed into oblivion. Some Israelites would suffer the edge of the sword because of the coming judgment, but those deaths did not negate the promise of restoration. Let us see the double provocation and then check the context of the Old Testament Paul uses.

I ask then, they did not stumble into an irrevocable fall, did they? Absolutely not! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make Israel jealous. Rom 11:11.

For I speak to you, the nations; since I am the apostle of the nations, I glorify my ministry; if by any means I may provoke those who are my flesh to jealousy, and might save some of them Rom 11:11,13-14 . NET.

Paul had already written in Roms.10 about provocation in a precise context about the Gentiles who sought the Lord, while Israel did not. Despite Israel's disobedience, the Lord continued to hold out his hands towards them. This passage guides us in understanding, Roms.11:11-12. Roms.10:18-21 must be considered before we diminish Israel into dismissal.

But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. Psa.19:4, [see 19:5].

But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. Moses Deut.32:21.

But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. Isa.65:1.

But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. Isa.65:2. Rom 10:18-21.

These references used by Paul are clarifying, we must not ignore them as guides to the inspired mind of Paul as he wrote diminishing in the following chapter. Roms.10 is what goes before, to ignore Roms.10 when we read Roms.11 is to ignore context.

In the matter of provocation, Paul turns to Moses who in Deut.32, foretold Gentile inclusion to provoke Israel, this is prophesy, not mystery. And in the very same chapter, Moses also called upon the Gentiles included for provocation, to rejoice with his people. Moses did not write Gentile provocation meant Israel's dismissal. When we look at these two verses used by Paul in Romans it is impossible to conclude that Israel was diminishing, and the Gentiles were linked to the church his body of Ephesians and Colossians. We move back and forth between Romans and Moses.

They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. Deu 32:21.

Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. Deu 32:43.

Moses wrote rejoice you nations with his people because God will be merciful to his land and his people, this is precisely Romans from cover to cover. If provocation because of Israel's stumbling brought riches to the Gentiles, then the riches of the Gentiles Paul is writing about in Romans is the riches Moses wrote about when he said rejoice you Gentiles with his people when God is merciful for his land and Israel. The provocation of Israel by the inclusion of the Gentiles is in prophesy which speaks of God being merciful to his land and his people, not a dismissal or change. Let us compare Moses with Paul.

Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. Deu 32:43.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Rom 11:29-32.

Mercy in the prophecy about Gentile inclusion for provocation and mercy in Paul in the same context. Thus, when we read Roms.11:11-14, God's mercy on Israel must come to mind.

I ask then, they did not stumble into an irrevocable fall, did they? Absolutely not! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make Israel jealous. Rom 11:11.

For I speak to you, the nations; since I am the apostle of the nations, I glorify my ministry; if by any means I may provoke those who are my flesh to jealousy, and might save some of them Rom 11:11,13-14 . NET.

The provocation by Gentile inclusion in Roms.11:11 is according to Moses and does not mean dismissal, because in the same prophesy of Moses provocation is followed by mercy to Israel.

Roms.11:11 is provocation, Deut.32:21.

Roms.11:28-32 is mercy, Deut.32:43.

We must not leave Moses before noting that Paul turns again to the very same chapter of Moses when he writes of the hope before both Jew and Gentile at that time. In other words, Paul uses Moses in Roms.10 and again in Roms.15, no change, no dismissal or gradual dismissal.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Rom 15:4.

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: Rom 15:8.

And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. Rom 15:9.

And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. Deut.32:43. Rom 15:10.

All these references are context to understand diminishing. Paul follows the identical progression of Moses. First provocation by the Gentiles, then mercy for God's Land and his people. There is no possible way this progression to the great hope of Romans 15, allows any to think Israel was diminishing towards dispensational dismissal. Here is the conclusion of the Song of Moses, and the hope of Romans.

Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. Deu 32:43. [Roms.11:28-32].

Moses and Paul do not see Gentile inclusion for provocation as any argument for the diminishing of Israel into dispensational postponement or gradual dispensational change. Gentile inclusion for provocation was linked to Israel's glory.

Isaiah is another prophet used by Paul regarding Gentile inclusion in the Roms.10 section we posted above.

But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. Isa.65:1.

But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. Isa.65:2. Rom 10:20-21.

Paul turned to Isa.65 where the comparison between the response of some Gentiles and the lack thereof by his own people is foretold. It should not surprise us that provocation appears in Isa.65 as well as dire warnings for unrepentant Israel. No wonder Paul prayed to save some of them and magnified his office to the Gentiles to provoke them. Please read these Isa.65 excerpts and note that while Israel was rebellious, disobedient and gainsaying, the new heaven and earth, Jerusalem and her people were to become a people and place of rejoicing.

I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; Roms.10:18-21. Isa 65:1-3a.

But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number. Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Isa 65:11-12.

That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. Isa 65:16-19.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD. Isa 65:25.

Paul uses Deut.32 & Isa.65 in Romans regarding Israel's stumbling and Gentile inclusion and having read these prophecies we find Israel's restoration promised, despite their disobedience. With these clear statements of scripture before us, it seems totally contrary to suggest Paul had ignored what he had written from the prophets, to write Israel are diminishing to dismissal or displacement. Indeed, the very prophets he had already used to describe Gentiles seeking and provocation and Israel stumbling were the same prophets used to proclaim the hope set before the Romans in chapter 15.

Let us pause on that last verse quoted from Isa.65 about animals. Those of you who have read the hope of Roms.15 will notice that the Isaiah prophesy regarding animals appears there as well.

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, so that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Rom 15:4.

And again Isaiah says, "There shall be a root of Jesse, and He who shall rise to reign over the nations, in Him shall the nations trust." Isa.11:1, 10.

And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. Rom 15:12-13.

Here are the dots connected. Paul uses Isa.65 in Roms.10:18-21 which is about Israel's stumbling but not to dismissal. Isa.65 which speaks of the animals also speaks of the new earth and heaven which is linked with the New Jerusalem as per Gals.4, Hebrews and Revelations. This is glory for Israel in

Isa.65, not a change in dispensation. Look at the link between Isa.65 in Roms.10 and Isa.11 in Roms.15.

Paul turns to Isa.11 for the hope in Roms.15 and here are the animals again linked by Isaiah to the greater regathering of Israel, not a change in dispensation.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; Isa 11:1-2.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, Isa 11:6-11.

Notice Isa.11 speaks of the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord, but we have already seen that in Habakkuk which Paul used in Roms.1:17. Here are those verses again.

Behold, the soul of him is lifted up, and is not upright; but the just shall live by his faith. Hab 2:4.

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea Hab 2:14.

Please see the article, "[Paul, Habakkuk & Acts](#)" on Acts28 home page.

Why this repetition? Because all of this sets the context of Roms.11 and diminishing. Diminishing is set in references that Paul uses about God's faithfulness, the new Heavens, the new earth, the holy mountain, the animals in harmony. These features are found in Paul's O.T. references from Roms.1 all the consistent way to the near close of the book. In these settings it is contrary to suggest diminishing is Israel sliding away to dismissal, when Paul is confident Israel will be saved and restored just like the prophets he had quoted.

Prior to leaving the inclusion of the animals living in harmony in the prophecies Paul uses, it is interesting to note Adam is a figure of the coming One, Roms.5, which is perfectly relevant to paradise, the new earth and heaven. See Roms.8:18-22. Adam is also featured in 1Cor.15 where the resurrection of Isa.25, and Hos.13 is to the earth. See Hos.2:14-23. Adam was in a garden where the animals lived in harmony; he named them. Adam in Roms.5 also guides our understanding of diminishing in Roms.11. Adam as a figure is wonderfully consistent with God being merciful for his land and people, the new earth and heaven, and the animals in harmony.

As we follow the theme it is very clear that the Holy Spirit moved Paul to write Romans as promise and prophesy which looks to Israel's glory despite their stumbling. Romans is not the transition point because Israel was being diminished as is falsely thought dismissed.

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

But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. Deut.32:21. Roms.10:19.

Provocation in Paul was the provocation of Moses, but Moses and Paul move past provocation to Israel's restoration when God is merciful, and Gentiles for provocation were to be blessed with Israel. Provocation in Moses is followed by the hope of Israel. Provocation in Paul is followed by the hope of Israel, not the church which is his body of Ephesians and Colossians.

They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. Deu 32:21. Roms.10:19.

Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. Deu 32:43

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Rom 11:32

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Deut.32:35. Rom 12:19

Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. Deu 32:43

And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. Rom 15:10.

Provocation in Isaiah who foretold Israel's rejection, also spoke of Israel's glory and Isa.65 is linked to Isa.11 and Roms.9, 10, 11 and 15. This is Paul's theme, Romans to Isaiah and back again, from provocation to glory, this gives no place to suggest diminishing means dismissal.

I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; Isa.65:1-3a

And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me. Isa 65:9-10

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. Isa 65:17-18.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD. Isa 65:25.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. Isa 11:6

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; Isa 11:9-10.

And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. Rom 15:12.

The hope of Romans is Christ reigning over the Gentiles, where the wolf and the lamb dwell together, this is not Ephesians and Colossian.

Returning to Roms.11:12 and the "diminishing" of Israel, we find confident assurances from Paul that Israel had not stumbled to diminish, but that despite their stumbling their full restoration was in his inspired mind. This receiving of them was because Israel was holy, elect and loved for the father's sake, Roms.11:28.

*For if the loss [casting away] of them be the reconciliation of the world,
what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

*For if the firstfruit be holy, so is the lump also: and if the root be holy,
so are the branches.* Rom 11:15-16. DRB.

Notice Paul connects the reception of Israel with something irrefutable, Israel is holy. While they suffered loss, the fact remains, the first fruit, the elect remnant of grace was holy, and if that remnant of Roms.9, and 11, was holy, then so was Israel.

The word lump only occurs twice in Romans, found first in Roms.9:21 from which lump vessels of honor and less honor are formed. The vessels of honor were the remnant, including Jews and Gentiles. That same lump is holy despite the two divisions from it, one of which was to less honor.

Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Hos.2:23. Rom 9:21-26.

Paul turned to Hosea when writing of the remnant of honor, but Hosea was speaking of all Israel and goes on to say these things.

Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel. Hos 1:11,

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God. Hos 2:14-23.

Notice in Hosea, the animals at peace, Israel at peace, Israel betrothed [2Cor.11], corn wine and oil, but most importantly mercy, the great closing theme of Roms.11.

Once and again, when Paul turns to prophesy in Roms.9, the prophet speaks of Israel's restoration and abundance. Diminishing does not mean dismissal in Roms.11 where Paul points to the very prophetic remnant he had written about in chapter 9.

Israel had not stumbled to fall, Paul is emphatic, Israel had indeed stumbled but not to fall, and because of their failure, because of their sin or trespass or fault, salvation had come to the Gentiles with the purpose of making Israel jealous. Israel had not fallen in the sense of being diminished

dispensationally, being slowly set aside. Indeed, the salvation of the Gentiles was the very key to Israel receiving mercy, Roms.11:28-32. We Gentiles today are not saved to provoke Israel, to stimulate the Olive tree or to bring mercy on all Israel.

We find further contextual evidence regarding Israel's diminishing when we check out Paul's references in Roms.3 where he condemns the world. If Paul accused all, including Jews, of being guilty before God, then surely that would add weight to the idea that diminishing means sliding into oblivion, so Roms.3 is worth an examination. It begins like this.

What then? If some [Jews] did not believe, does their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? Absolutely not! Let God be proven true, and every human being shown up as a liar, just as it is written: "so that you will be justified in your words and will prevail when you are judged." Psa.51:4, Rom 3:3-4. NET.

This verse alone disallows any view that diminishing means sliding away. Paul writes that even though some Jews did not believe, this would not negate God's faithfulness. We have already seen the prophets who endorse this faithfulness of God in the face of Israel's lack thereof. Israel was faithless, disobedient but Paul writes in Roms.11 the gifts and calling of God are without repentance or change of mind.

Paul turns to Psa.51 which is David's plea of repentance, to endorse God's veracity. In David's plea he cries for the joy of salvation to be restored concluding with this.

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Psa 51:18.

Paul knew this Psalm better than you and I and under inspiration confirming God's faithfulness, chose a Psalm of David that looked to the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem.

This is not the only significant quote in Roms.3. In Roms.3:11-12, Paul turns to another Psalm which also cries for salvation for Israel out of Zion. Look at the hope of Psa.14.

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Psa.14:2-4, Rom 3:11-12.

Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. Psa 14:7.

Psa.14:7 is so much like Roms.11:26-27 which follows the verse describing the diminishing of Israel. Let us make a parallel.

For if the loss of them be the reconciliation of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? Rom 11:15. DRB.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: Rom 11:26.

If Paul was confident the deliverer will come out of Zion because he held the confidence of the prophets which confidence was the very hope of Romans, then we must disallow the idea that diminishing means the gradual dismissal of Israel and the gradual introduction of our present calling. At Acts 28, Isa.6 was pronounced to let Israel go, but Romans was written before that event.

Paul most certainly had this deliverance for Israel in mind and another reference of his is also significant. Here is Paul in Roms.3, taking a passage from Isa.59.

Their feet swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery in their ways: And the way of peace they have not

known. Rom 3:15-17.

Their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are unprofitable thoughts: wasting and destruction are in their ways. They have not known the way of peace, and there is no judgment in their steps: their paths are become crooked to them, every one that treadeth in them knoweth no peace. Isa 59:7-8.

Isa.59 condemns Israel, and the situation is so bad that the Lord looks and finds no intercessor and takes matters into his own hands. Israel was totally apostate, unfaithful but the Lord was faithful, Isa.59 is Roms.3:1-4a. Here are other segments of Isa.59 which, like Psa.14, turn from Israel's degradation to Israel's glory because the Lord is faithful.

Honesty has disappeared; the one who tries to avoid evil is robbed. The LORD watches and is displeased, for there is no justice. He sees there is no advocate; he is shocked that no one intervenes. So he takes matters into his own hands; his desire for justice drives him on. Isa 59:15-16. NET.

The Lord must act, Israel is debased, and the Lord does not turn away from his justice to those whose deeds were evil, and when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Lord will act.

For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence. So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever. Isa 59:17-21.

In Roms.3 when Paul uses Isa.59 to condemn all guilty under the Law, he uses an Isaiah passage that appears later in Roms.11, the very passage speaking of Israel's diminishing.

For if the loss of them be the reconciliation of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? Rom 11:15. DRB.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: Rom 11:26. Isa.59:20.

Twice in Roms.3, Paul uses O.T. references which speak of salvation coming out of Zion, Psa.14 and Isa.59 the very salvation of which is Roms.11:25-26. But still some think diminishing in Roms.11:12 means dismissal or gradual dismissal.

It will be helpful to consider the frequency of God's mercy on Israel in those prophetic passages we have seen Paul use in Romans. Hosea particularly foretells this on a people who had not received it, Moses wrote of the Lord being merciful to his land and people and the great conclusion of Roms.11 is about mercy. Mercy on the Gentiles who had been saved to provoke, but mercy on Israel who were all shut up or enclosed in unbelief so that God could have mercy on them all.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Rom 11:29

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Rom 11:32

The benediction of Roms.11 is totally consistent with the rest of the letter, and especially with chapter 11. The benediction, Roms.11:33-36 includes another reference from Isaiah.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Rom 11:34. Isa.40:13.

This Isaiah passage confirms the continuance of Paul's theme about Israel from Roms.3 to the hope of Israel at the close of the letter. It is Isaiah who exclaims that the Word of the Lord endures forever, and this is exactly the sentiment of Paul when he writes Roms.3:1-4a that God is faithful. Here is Isaiah and Paul in Romans.

Who has meted out the Spirit of Jehovah, or a man His counsel taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who trained Him and taught Him in the path of justice; and taught Him knowledge, and made known to Him the way of discernment? Isa 40:13-14.

The grass [Israel] withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God [for Israel] shall stand for ever. Isa 40:8.

What then? If some did not believe, does their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? Absolutely not! Rom 3:3-4. NET.

There are many more links we have not shown between prophecy and Romans but there is sufficient to show Romans is promise and prophesy from cover to cover.

Roms.1 opens with justification by faith from Habakkuk who speaks of the earth being full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Roms.15 uses Isa.11 which speaks of the Gentiles blessed with Israel and the earth being filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. But some think diminishing in the middle of this constant theme means Israel's dismissal.

Roms.3 uses prophecies which desire, and which speak of salvation and the deliverer coming out of Zion. This is the glorious expectation of Roms.11, but some think diminishing in the middle of this constant theme means Israel's dismissal.

Roms.5 speaks of Adam a figure of Christ as one in a garden with animals living in harmony. Paul turns to prophecies which speak of the same thing and even refers to creation waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God in Roms.8. But some think diminishing in the middle of this constant theme means Israel's dismissal.

Roms.9 speaks of a remnant preserving Israel and Hosea looks to the day when Israel will be regathered, live in peace, animals in peace, have abundance of corn wine and oil, but some think diminishing in the middle of this constant theme means Israel's dismissal.

Roms.10 quotes Deut.30 and Isa.65 which speaks of mercy on Israel, the new heaven and earth, but some think diminishing in the middle of this constant theme means Israel's dismissal.

Roms.11 states emphatically Israel had not been cast away, that they had not stumbled to fall and despite their provocation of the Lord, despite their contradiction and disobedience, they were holy, shut up in disbelief so the Lord could have mercy on all Israel, all of whom would be saved. But some think diminishing in the middle of this constant theme means Israel's dismissal.

We have examined the near and immediate contexts of Romans, and all contexts will not support the idea that diminishing means dismissing, Israel sliding out of God's purpose. Here are those verses of Roms.11 which speak of Israel's stumbling, failure and fault but consistently proclaim the confident assurance that despite that, God has not changed or begun to change the dispensation.

I say then, Have they stumbled [offended] that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall [offence/trespass] salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall [offence/trespass] of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing [loss] of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away [loss] of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. Rom 11:11-16.

Israel nationally was certainly suffering LOSS or diminishing in that they would suffer greatly at the Lord's coming judgment, individual Israelites would be devoured by the sword, but the nation would continue. In Exodus, the disobedient, unfaithful Israelites did not enter the Kingdom at the Jericho Trumpets but God's purposes for Israel did not change. The same theme is prevalent in Romans, despite some being devoured by the sword, God's purpose for Israel, nationally, would not change, had not changed and had not begun to change. Diminishing does not mean dismissal.

The immediate passage from Roms.11 is full of confident assurance regarding Israel's fulness, Israel's life from the dead and the holy state of the nation. Within these assurances, the word diminishing must be understood as a loss in harmony with stumble, and in harmony with offence, but it in context does not offer the faintest hint that the nation was being dismissed or gradually dismissed.

Here are the highlights we have noted.

Roms.11:1-5.

Israel. Not cast away. Remnant.

Roms.11:11.

Israel. Have they stumbled to fall? Absolutely not! [Roms.11:28-32 mercy on all Israel].

Consequence. Salvation to Gentiles for provocation, then mercy. [Roms.11:13-14].

Roms.11:12.

Israel. Israel's trespass and loss means Gentile riches. [Roms.11:17, root and fatness].

Consequence. Israel's fulness. [compare Roms.11:25-26].

Roms.11:15.

Israel. Cast away [loss Acts 27:22], rejection.

Consequence. Gentile reconciliation. Israel's life from the dead.

Roms.11:16.

Israel. Firstfruit holy. The branches holy.

Consequence. The lump holy. The root holy. Israel is holy. [The word "lump" occurs in Roms.9:21.]

Roms.11:17-27.

Israel. Olive Tree, Root. Holy.

Consequence. Israelites, natural branches and Gentiles, both graft in or out of Olive tree. This is not Ephesians or Colossians.

Consequence. Israelites, natural branches into their own Olive tree.

Israel. Partially blinded, fulness of the Gentiles.

Consequence. The Deliverer coming to Zion, all Israel saved according to prophesy.

Roms.11:28-32.

Israel. Enemies, but beloved. God is faithful, the father's sakes, **gifts and calling unchanged.**

Consequence. Gentile sakes, Israel's unbelief mercy to Gentiles.

Israel. Unbelief.

Consequence. Israel obtains **mercy through Gentile mercy.**

Israel. Shut up all in unbelief.

Consequence. **Mercy on all Israel.**

Roms.11:33-36.

Israel. The benediction is Isa.40, in harmony with Paul's faith in God's faithfulness. Say to the cities of Judah, behold your God.

Who has meted out the Spirit of Jehovah, or a man His counsel taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who trained Him and taught Him in the path of justice; and taught Him knowledge, and made known to Him the way of discernment? Isa 40:13-14.

*The grass [Israel] withereth, the flower fadeth: **but the word of our God [for Israel] shall stand for ever.***
Isa 40:8.

*What then? If some did not believe, **does their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? Absolutely not!*** Rom 3:3-4. NET.

Paul concludes Romans with the assurance that God was going to bruise Satan under their feet shortly, words spoken in the original paradise, and that event looked forward to the Deliverer coming out of Zion, the New Heavens the New earth, Paradise restored, Adam as a figure of Christ in it, and God being merciful to his Land and his people Israel. This is not the context where an introduction of our calling with the heavenly places and all spiritual blessings will sit or fit.

Romans is entirely promise and prophesy from cover to cover.

The diminishing of Israel does not mean the dismissal or gradual dismissal of Israel.

The Lord bless us all, as we search and see.

Brian R Kelson

01-26-2025