

What Did Paul Mean by 'Making Israel Envious'?

There are two references in the book of Romans about making Jewish people envious of what we have received as believers and followers of Yeshua/Jesus.

The first explains that the rest of the world has been given the gospel in order to make Israel envious, because most of Israel and especially their leadership did not receive it: "Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather ... salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious" (Rom. 11:11, NIV).

While G-d had every intention of reaching His other children—the other sheep in His family, as Jesus puts it in John 10:16—He never completely broke off His relationship and covenant with His firstborn child, Israel. The apostle Paul makes this clear to us in his statement about them falling beyond recovery. "Not at all," he says concerning this. But salvation has been given to the nations, not only to bring G-d's other children in His family to faith, but also to somehow provoke the firstborn child into the light.

In G-d's eyes, the two go hand in hand, because He will never let go of wanting Israel to return to Him, just like He would never want to let go of us from accepting Him, despite the fact that all of us—both Jew and Gentile alike—have our own free will to accept G-d's plan of salvation for our lives.

As I often state, our Father in heaven is a family man, and He is committed equally to all of the children in His family. Despite Israel's current blindness to the gospel, "They are [still] loved on account of the patriarchs" (Rom. 11:28). The apostle Paul makes very clear to us that this veil over Israel is only temporary and will ultimately be lifted (see Rom.

11:25-26).

We should never take our eyes off His firstborn, as this redemption will actually take place, which I think was truly the heart of all the apostles and definitely the heart of Christ, who actually forgave them on the cross. Was it actually a paradox that the firstborn took the Lamb of G-d outside the city and sacrificed Him in a fulfillment of the Passover story itself, that all of us would be able to find G-d's redemption? Didn't G-d show us a picture of this through the offering of Isaac—what would actually be necessary in order for us to find that redemption?

The second Scripture about envy is an edict to Gentile believers from the apostle Paul about how to position their ministry of the gospel toward the Jewish people. While Paul was the ordained apostle to bring the gospel to the nations—his focus was more upon reaching the world—he still had his priorities straight in always trying to bring Jesus' message of salvation to the Jew first:

"I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11:13-15).

After all, who is ultimately going to reach the Jewish people with the gospel? Will G-d supernaturally touch Israel on His own, like most modern teachings about Israel's redemption leads us to believe? I think not, for has not G-d always chosen man to be His vessel of communication, to pour His love through us to reach a lost and dying world? Are we not now His living temples with His *Ruach Hakodesh*, His Spirit of Holiness dwelling in us? (1 Cor. 3:16).

As Paul states,. "How then can they call on the one they have

not believed in? And how can they believe in the one whom they have heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" (Rom. 10:14-15).



There can be no doubt that G-d has actually chosen His church to reach Israel and indeed to make them envious, as Scripture cannot be clearer. Then how come we seem so separate from this calling?

I actually answer that question in my first two articles for *Charisma Magazine* on *Reconnecting Israel and the Church* and *G-d's Mercy Plan*. In them, you will discover exactly how G-d has laid out His plan of salvation for Israel, and you will better understand how and why, up to this point, we have been so disconnected to this most significant call for Gentile believers. You will also better understand the Father's plan to use His church to reach Israel so His family can be united once and for all, which I believe will ultimately bring about the L-rd's return. I would encourage you to read them both.

We are in a new day and have already entered the time of transition between Jew and Gentile to awaken Israel spiritually and unite the family of G-d (Rom. 11:25-26). Just look around you—the Jewish people are already back in the land in the fulfillment of numerous prophetic Scriptures, and the Messianic awakening has already begun with thousands of Jews, including myself, coming to know Messiah. And this is just the beginning.

This is why, at this time, we must ensure we are not ignorant to the mystery that exists between Israel and the church (see Rom. 11:25-26). We need to focus upon this subject a whole lot more than we are currently doing. I believe this issue is tantamount to both groups, who are intricately linked into the

Father's family plan to show His glory to the earth. I see Israel and our focus on their spiritual restoration as a golden key that unlocks unquenchable kingdom power (Rom. 11:15; Ezek. 37:9-11). I see the church's hands upon that key to unlock it, as its salvific agent ordained by G-d in His final plans to release His mercy to awaken them (Rom. 11:30-32).

I address this subject in its entirety in my new book, *The Ezekiel Generation*, which launches this fall, as well as the many issues we will need to face and address in order for this reconnection to take place, including how to make Jewish people envious of what we have in Christ.

So, what did the apostle Paul mean by making Israel envious? And can the gospel, the way it is currently being presented, make them jealous?

What Did Paul Mean?

Believe it or not, we have already partly answered this question in this article. For are we not His living temples, indwelled by His Holy Spirit, because we have received the new covenant that was given to Israel, mainly before them, because their leaders rejected it? As Jesus foretold, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first" (Matt. 20:16).

If we have accepted the gospel of Jesus into our hearts and have fully surrendered our lives to faith through His Lordship, then as per His promise, both the Father and the Son have set up home within us and we have intimacy with G-d through the Holy Spirit (John 14:23). However, because most of Israel is still to receive the new covenant, they do not yet have personal intimacy and relationship with G-d in the way that He brings the new covenant to us through Messiah. Therefore, G-d has bestowed a mission upon us as new covenant believers—especially Gentiles who have accepted Christ into their lives—to attempt to win the Jews back to faith by

demonstrating the intimate connection of their own personal relationship with the G-d of Israel.

In fact, this is how I was won over to the faith, because after a while the Christian girl who would not let go of my coattails clearly demonstrated the dynamic of her relationship with my G-d. And if I was totally honest with myself, I did not have this type of contact with G-d at that time, even though I was trying to get it, because salvation, along with the personal connection to G-d that it brings, can only come through Christ. She constantly told me that I could not have the Father without the Son and that they were intricately connected.

I truly believe with all my heart that it is this intimacy and personal relationship that the new covenant brings us through Christ, that if properly reflected will draw them to jealousy, which we will discuss in more detail in part 2 of this article coming soon ...

Until then, I leave you with this Scripture from Isaiah:

“Comfort, comfort my people, says your G-d. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for and that she has received from the L-rd double for all her sins” (Is. 40:1-2).

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