

are a rebellious people. They are following their own thoughts instead of the will of the Lord, and this is leading them into a way that is not good. They are observing many of the wicked customs of the heathen nations around them. In spite of their own unrighteousness they feel that they are vastly superior to all others. Verse 5 points out the great fault of spiritual pride which is found among them. They say, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou." If any sin is worse than another in the sight of God it is surely spiritual pride. When people begin to be proud of their own righteousness and to take the attitude of the Pharisee who looked down with scorn upon other people, they are truly in danger of the terrible denunciation with which this verse closes: "These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day."

### **God's Blessing to Israel Not at an End**

After reading verses 2-7, one might be inclined to think that God's entire favor will be turned to the Gentiles and that everything involved in the calling of Israel and in its many past blessings will come to an end. This is the impression which Paul felt might be given by these verses, if taken alone. For this reason, after quoting verses 1 and 2 at the end of Romans 10, he was impelled to declare that God had not cast away His people.

In Romans 11 he continued with a detailed statement of the many glories which have belonged to Israel and of the fact that the nation has always contained a portion which has truly sought the Lord. He described the error of the nation in seeking God's favor through works instead of through the faith that is taught to be primary in both Testaments. In verse 7, he said: "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." He compares God's true people to an olive tree, out of which some of the natural branches are to be broken off, and onto which some branches of a wild olive tree are to be grafted (v. 17). Then he declares that eventually the natural branches will again be grafted into their own olive tree. Thus he shows that the turning of God to the Gentiles is not something that is new and different from His