

have disappeared. Through the ages the Jews have remained a distinct group, scattered here and there, often widely criticized, persecuted, suffering, yet maintaining their identity. They are a beacon on the top of a mountain and an ensign on a hill, something that cannot be overlooked or disregarded, pointing to the fact that God's Word is true, that the prophecies in His Word, both of blessing and of disaster, are sure to be fulfilled, and that the declarations of the Bible about Christ as the Redeemer through whom alone salvation can come, are true.

From a somewhat different angle Paul points out in Romans 11 how the apparent casting off of Israel has a divine purpose. He says in verse 11, "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!"

In the succeeding verses Paul uses the figure of an olive tree to represent the center of God's witness and blessing. He represents Israel, not as cast aside, but as being in part dropped out from the center of this manifestation of God's goodness. He says in verse 17, "if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." Paul shows that the casting aside for a time of some of the natural branches was indeed a punishment for Israel's sin and error. He says in verse 20, "because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear:" Paul declares that God's purpose in the temporary casting aside of Israel is to bring blessing to the world. He says in verse 15: "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the