

The Israel of God Part 6 of 8 – Romans 11, Part 2

sermonaudio.com

The True Israel of God

By Rev. James. C. Gallagher

Bible Text: Romans 11
Preached on: Sunday, November 4, 2007

Clayville Assembly
7 Plainfield Pike
Foster, RI 02825

Website: www.clayvilleassembly.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/clayvilleassembly

When the dispensationalists, pre-trib rapture folks, when they're battered and bruised and their back is against the wall because we teach the gospel that is in Christ, that we are his people in Christ, not the Jews in their unbelief. There is no one that is the apple of God's eye that is outside of Christ. That is basic fundamental Christian doctrine. Without faith, it's impossible to please him. But when their back's against the wall, because we teach these truths and they feel threatened, they have their secret weapon and their secret weapon, at least in their minds, is Romans 11. And back in the day, when I thought that Christian Zionism was demanded of us in scripture, I had Romans 11 in my arsenal, too. It was my nuclear warhead that I could take out at a moment's notice and, "Has God cast away his people? God forbid," and that would resolve the issue.

Now, the last time around in this series, we talked about the first half of Romans chapter 11 and we got up to about verse 20, so we want to, today, deal with the second half of Romans 11. And if I could just, if a dispensational or a Christian Zionist minister would come to me and say, "Well, let's go through Romans 11," I would love to do that. Verse by verse, all of the verses, phrase by phrase, all of the phrases. And that somehow they've gotten into a frame of mind thinking this teaches Zionism. It doesn't teach that. It teaches the gospel and what we will focus on today, because it's the emphasis particularly of the second half of the chapter, but really it's the emphasis of the whole chapter, is the mystery of the gospel. Romans 11 is another revelation of the mystery of the gospel and so we'll see that.

Now, before we pick up at verse 20, let us just refresh our minds of the high points of what preceded verse 20. Yes, I think we have to say, in my opinion, that verse 7 is the key to putting your mind in the proper frame in order to be able to interpret and to exegete the whole text. If you lose in your thinking the principle of verse 7, you'll go off course, and you'll be thinking logically, but because you've lost a cornerstone principle, you can go off in the wrong direction. And in verse 7, the Apostle Paul writes, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." The nation of Israel, Israel as a whole, have not obtained that which Israel was looking for. Well, what would Israel have been looking for? Obviously, the fulfillment of the promises given to the fathers, i.e. Abraham, "I'll bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee," that they would multiply and fill the earth. And also the promise given to David, that covenant of Messiah

given to David, that David's seed would sit on David's throne and reign, not for a thousand years, but reign according to 2 Samuel 7 forever, the kingdom of God on earth and they his people. They longed for these things. They didn't receive it.

They didn't receive it because of unbelief is what Romans 11 is saying. The nation as a whole turned from Christ, they denied him, and thus it is that, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for," however, little qualification, "the election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded." Now, I don't think there's anyone that tries to interpret that by saying the election of the Jews and the rest of the Gentiles. That isn't even jive. You can't make that fit in the context at all and I've never heard even dispensationalists claim that. Usually, you just try and avoid verse 7 is the best you can do. See, there's two groups of Jews that are being described in this chapter, and verse 7 makes it plain. As a whole, the nation rejected Christ, and they did not receive the promises, however, the election, that elect remnant within the nation that descended from Abraham, they did receive the promises. There was an elect remnant because God would not cast away his people, which he foreknew. That's why the Apostle Paul said in verse one, he asked the question, "Has God cast away his people?" And Paul's answer was, "No, God forbid." And then he went on to explain that the remnant within the nation was not cast away and that's proven by virtue of their faith and he pointed to himself, and he pointed to Elijah, 7,000 who have not bowed their knee to the image of Baal. In the course of the whole nation, that's not too many, but it is a remnant. And God made a promise to Abraham, and he would be faithful to keep that promise to Abraham and that promise is fulfilled in those that continued in the faith of Abraham, which means by the time you get to Jesus Christ, it means you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. That right there, that descendant from Abraham, that physical descendant from Abraham, that circumcised male, that sister in Israel that believed that gospel doctrine is doing what David would have done, doing what Moses would have done, doing what Abraham would have done. And they've proven that God has not cast away his people, which he foreknew and that they were elect and foreknown of God before the foundation of the world is revealed by their faith in Christ.

So that's one kind of Jew, the elect, but he's only a little remnant. There's another kind of Jew that's described in the last part of verse 7, and he's just called, and they're referred to as "the rest." So within the nation of Israel that did reject Christ as a whole, however, there's two groups of Jews, the election and the rest. Which by the way, if you just think about that, the fact that there's two groups of Jews, and one of them are described as the election, and then you have another group, that means that other group is not part of the election. That means they haven't been chosen of God. That means they're not God's chosen people. We're being told that. And the reason that we can be sure that they're not is because they don't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Election is ultimately revealed through faith. Abraham was justified by faith. Is it going to be any different for his children? Is God now going to shift it over from faith to Abraham, but by works after that? Or faith to Abraham, but by bloodline and genealogy after that? No. And so two groups of Jews, the election and those that are not elect and they're described as the rest, and the rest, they didn't get the promises made to Abraham. They didn't receive Messiah. They didn't understand that Christ sits on the throne of David. They've been blinded. And

verses 8, 9, 10 describe that judicial blindness that God imposed on them because of their rebellion against the truth.

In verse 5 we have that distinction likewise underscored, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." The elect are the remnant, the rest who are unbelievers have been blinded. As long as you remember that principle, see, we have it driven into our Christian culture today the Jews are God's chosen people, the Jews are God's chosen people, the Jews are God's chosen people, the Jews are God's chosen people, and it doesn't matter what they believe according to the current thinking. But it does matter. There's the elect who walk in faith, and then there's those who do not walk in faith that are not the elect that have been blinded, and as Romans 11 points out, they're cast out.

In verse 15, we read, "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?" So when Paul asked the question, "Has God cast away his people," in verse 1, his answer is, "No," but he's only referring to the elect within Israel. They haven't been cast away because they continue in the faith. Obviously, the others who did not believe, they have been cast away. Paul says so. Unless Paul, verse 15, contradicts his conclusion in verses 1 and 2? It doesn't. It jives with it, it doesn't contradict it. And the ones that have been cast away, they're not cast away because they're Jews, they're cast away because God gave them the covenant, God gave them Moses and the prophets and Abraham and David and Isaiah and Jeremiah, and finally he sent them his Son and they killed him, and then the Lord judged them. But amongst that nation there was a remnant that believed, the true sons of Abraham by faith and through them, through them, the covenant continues to be fulfilled that God made with Abraham.

And so in verse 16, "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches." If the root, and what is the root of this covenant? Well, Abraham, the promise given to Abraham, which is also described as the gospel, but if the root is holy, if Abraham was holy, and he was so by virtue of righteousness, that is by faith, he was by faith, if the root is holy, so are the branches. See, that's why Jesus could say to the Jews, "You boast that you're the seed of Abraham, but you're not the seed of Abraham, because you don't do the works of Abraham." If the root is holy, so are the branches. If the root is Abraham, he was a man of faith, then the true sons of Abraham will be children of faith as well. And if someone says, "Well, I think the root is Christ," that's not going to change anything. You can't be the children of Christ and not walk in faith. It's not going to change anything.

Now, verse 17, "And if some of the branches be broken off," see, irregardless of verse 1, "Has God cast away his people?" When Paul said, "God forbid," yes, he did not cast away those who walked by faith, but he did cast away the others. 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," that's an amazing doctrine right there. Right there is the mystery of the gospel. Right there in verse 17. The whole chapter is describing what verse 17 is summarizing in just that short portion of a

sentence. There's a cultivated olive tree in the vineyard of God and he nourishes that tree and he cares for it and he sends prophets to prune it and to trim it and to water it, and he'd been nurturing it through the centuries. He didn't send the prophets to other people. He sent them to the nation of Israel. That's the cultivated nurtured olive tree.

But then the owner of the vineyard left his property, went outside the boundaries of the fence that contained the kingdom of God in this cultivated olive tree, went out into the wild forest and he saw an olive tree that was rough grown, hadn't been cared, just growing in the wild, unruly, without God and without hope in the world, Gentiles. He took a branch off that Gentile tree, rough-sawn, not really producing any good fruit, hasn't been cared for, hasn't been pruned, it's disorderly. He took that unworthy, disorderly branch and he carried it back and opened the gate and went back into his vineyard, which is perfectly trimmed, and he goes up to that olive tree that he's been caring for for all these years and he looks at the tree and he says, "Now this branch here, it's dead. It's not producing fruit." And Jesus tells us what the Lord does when branches don't produce fruit, they're cut off.

So he trims off that branch and casts it away because of unbelief. He does an amazing thing. He takes that branch that he got from that Gentile tree, that unruly, wild, disorderly tree, he takes that branch and he's able, with great skill, to graft it into that tree that's been existing. That tree wasn't born at Pentecost, you know. It's been there right along. And he's grafting it into that tree and he attaches it in such a way where it's able to partake of the root and fatness of that olive tree and becomes one with it. That's why when you say we're a church, and if this is a church, what I'm describing is the church. That's why, well, you see where church, it's not getting you thinking in this direction. No one knows what a church is. But if it's a called-out assembly, if it's the people that God has chosen, well, God had already chosen people. It started with Abraham. He's dealing with the people. And now he's taken some new ones and made them join on to what he's already been doing. Now see, when you start saying church born at Pentecost, it just throws the whole thing out of whack. Big things happened at Pentecost, but one thing that didn't happen, there was no church born there. There was no ecclesia. The called-out assembly of Christ, the called-out assembly of God, the nation of God, the children of Israel, they've been around. And this is what happened. And so the Gentiles are brought into their number.

Now, you can keep your finger here. We'll go back here. But let's just review quickly that mystery of the gospel, which is summarized so beautifully in Ephesians 3, which we've covered in another sermon recently but let's just remind ourselves of what's there. Ephesians 3 and starting at verse 3. The grace of God has been given towards the Apostle Paul. How so? Verse 3, "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery." A mystery has been revealed to the Apostle Paul. Verse 4, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of," Messiah, the mystery of Christos, the anointed one, the one who is to sit on the throne of David governing the nation of Israel. There's a mystery there. It's also called the mystery of the gospel. Funny how the gospel is connected to this kingdom that was promised to the children of Abraham. And some people make the kingdom of the children of Abraham legalistic, materialistic, and earthly, and then the gospel is grace and it's completely separate. They are not separate.

This is the union of the scriptures here in the gospel. The gospel, given in the Old Testament, but not really fully revealed into the New.

In verse 5, this mystery, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men," and that's why on Wednesday night I was saying to you, when Abraham believed God, and God said in Romans chapter 4, and we're being told that Abraham was told he'd be the father of many nations, and we're told he didn't waver, he didn't stagger, he believed that. The father of many nations. How? He had Isaac, and Isaac's seed may multiply, but they had to make one nation. Well, he had Ishmael. Well, Ishmael would make, oh, he has two nations. There's no way that Abraham can even perceive of how he could be the father of many nations. Many sons would just multiply the nations that would come from him, but you've got two. And because this mystery of the Gentiles being brought in was not known by Abraham, it seemed like God gave him an absolute impossible promise. He could say, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and then when he takes the dagger over Isaac, he can say, "Well, the Lord did say it would be through Isaac, so I assume by faith, God will raise him from the dead." That's Abraham. That's shocking enough, but when Abraham believes that he'll be the father of many nations, and he has no idea that'll be through the Gentiles, it seems like God made an impossible promise. And to me, that's more amazing that Abraham could believe that. But he did. He did. This mystery was hidden in ages past.

Verse 5, "as it is," but it's "now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Here's the mystery of the gospel. Here's the mystery of Christ. What is this mystery? "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body." The mystery wasn't that God would bless the Gentiles, that was plainly stated in the Old Testament, the Messiah would bless the Gentiles. The mystery was how he would bless them and that the forefathers didn't know. How he would bless them and how would he? They would become fellow heirs, and if they're fellow heirs, they're fellow heirs with somebody else. Who is it? Well, that would be the children of Abraham. They're the only heirs of the promises. And now these Gentiles, through faith in Christ, become fellow heirs with the children of Israel, and lo and behold, and of the same body as the children of Israel. See, that's exactly where we are at in Romans 11. He took that wild olive branch and put it into that tree that already existed. We are of the same tree, the same olive tree, the same vineyard, the same body, fellow heirs with the believing remnant amongst the Jews, the election in Romans 11.

We are fellow heirs with the election in Romans 11. We're not fellow heirs with the rest in Romans 11, not with Golda Meir, but with David, with Paul. "The Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Messiah." How? By circumcision? No. Baptism? No. Good works? No. "By the gospel." So the mystery of the gospel that was revealed by the apostles is that the Gentiles would become a part of the true Israel of God through faith in Jesus Christ and be joined into that blessed covenant that God made with Abraham, and that took everybody by surprise. It was hidden in ages past and that's the beauty of what has been revealed here in the new covenant.

Verse 18, he talks about, don't boast against the branches. Verse 18, "But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." So you may say, "Well, now God's calling from amongst the Gentiles, and now we are God's chosen people." You were grafted into Abraham. Abraham wasn't grafted in you, so don't get too high-minded. We're the Johnny-come-lately's. So be thankful, not arrogant. That makes sense.

"Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith." That's how you were grafted in. "Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." So if we morphed in the direction of the Pharisees and scribes, and began to think that somehow we're worthy of this election because we help old ladies cross the street, and I was baptized when I was a baby, or whatever kind of thing you can imagine, the Lord will cut those people off just as fast as he cut off any of the unbelieving Jews.

And so verse 22, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity," there's no question, "but toward thee," you Gentiles who have been brought into this covenant, "goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." So the election are always revealed through their perseverance. Perseverance of the saints is the doctrine that will finally prove who the true sons of Abraham are and those that wear the mantle for a while and talk the talk, if they have not been regenerated, eventually they usually end up outing themselves.

Verse 23, and they will be cut off anyway, "And they also, if they abide," speaking of the Jewish nation, "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again." So if the Jews come back and say, "Lord, we did thee wrong. We did not realize, we rebelled," and they come to Christ, the Lord is able to graft them in. Imagine having to be grafted into a tree that was designed for you? It's pretty sad that it would have to come to that, but that's what's necessary. They have to be grafted in just like you and I, when it's all said and done. It's not something you inherit.

Verse 24, and "if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree," the Israel of God, the nation of God, the kingdom of God, "how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" If we can receive the gospel, then it seems like the Jews surely ought to be able to receive it because they were primed for it. He gave them Moses. He gave them the prophets. He sent to them the Lord Jesus. He sent to them the apostles. There were miracles and signs and wonders. So it ought to be an easy thing for the Jews to receive Christ. And the Lord is able to graft them in again, see? So no one, we can't say, "Okay, now God's done with the Jews so that none of them can be saved." That's not true. God will continue to fulfill his promise to Abraham in both A) the Jew that comes to Christ, fulfills the promise made to Abraham, and B) when the Gentile comes to Christ. The promise made to Abraham, both of them are fulfilling that promise. God continues to do it for remnant.

Now this brings us to verse 25, which is one of the most misunderstood verses in the whole, well, verse 25 and the first part of verse 26, one of the most misunderstood texts in the whole of the New Testament probably by many today. Paul writes, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." And so many people read that as if Paul's saying a lot of Gentiles are going to be brought into the church and then at the end of the age all the Jews will be saved. Not a careful reading in any way shape or form, but it's one that, you know, I thought that's what it was saying for many years and as long as I thought that's what the Bible was saying, I was going to be devoted to it, whether or not I could understand that. I never thought that they would be saved by Christ coming in the clouds; that's second-chance theology, which I knew even as a young man, that that couldn't be. I just thought that somehow there would be a massive conversion of Jews by virtue of them hearing the gospel and receiving Christ somehow. And if that were to happen, we would all be happy for that but that's not what's actually being said.

In verse 25, Paul says, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery." We already know what the mystery is. It was described in verse 17, and it was described in Ephesians 3 verse 6, the mystery of the gospel, that the Gentiles would be brought into the covenant God made with Abraham, the Gentiles would be fellow heirs with the believing Jews and of the same body, that the wild olive branch would be brought into the cultivated vineyard and attached to that nurtured olive tree that God has been caring for for all these years, the nation of Israel, his people, the kingdom of God. The fact that we join them is the mystery, you see. Now here he is going to again explain the mystery. He's just explaining the mystery in different ways, using different words. Same thing is happening here.

So Paul says, "I don't want you to be ignorant of this mystery because if you are ignorant of this mystery, I fear you could become a little arrogant. I fear that you may be wise in your own conceits." Why would this mystery of the gospel make Gentile believers wise in their own conceits? In other words, if they don't understand the mystery of the gospel, I should say, if a Gentile believer does not understand Ephesians 3:6, if he doesn't understand that we are the Israel of God by faith, Paul's saying that could make you wise in your own conceits. You know why? Because they don't think we were grafted into Israel. They think, "We are the church and God's dealing with us. We run the show now." They're not going to stop talking that way but human nature, you begin to slide that way, and you become wise in your own conceits because now the focus is on you, and God's done a new thing with you. No, what God did is he took that old promise with his people, and now he's invited you in. There's a banqueting table that has been set and God has the Israel of God, his people, his holy nation gathered before him and there's a long table, and there's chairs all around it, and through the course of history, he begins calling his children one by one. "Abraham, you sit there. Next to you is Isaac. Next to you is Jacob. And put David over there. And put Moses over there. And put Daniel over there. Put Ezekiel over here. Put Peter over here. Put Paul over here." And all these Jewish believers are looking at each other, and they're satisfied. God's keeping his promise. And then someone comes walking through the door, the black sheep, you know. It's this, here

comes Cornelius. "Whoa, whoa, whoa. What's he doing here?" And then Cornelius looks around, you know, and the Lord says, "I want you to sit over there." You can imagine one of these fellows not knowing, see, they didn't know, it was hidden from them. So it may seem malicious, but no, they may want to whisper into the Lord's ear, "Are you sure you have them sitting at the right table?" The dispensationalists come bursting in the room and they say, "Oh no, the Lord made a new table in a different room. It's a church table. You don't sit here. You go over there and the Lord will catch up with you later. This is where he really wants to spend most of his time." No, the Lord says, "I want you, Cornelius, you, the Gentile believer, I want you to sit at this table." And then he's going to say to all these Jewish believers throughout the ages, the descendants from Abraham, "I have an announcement to make. You didn't know this before, but from the beginning I had planned to adopt some new sons. You are the natural descendants from Abraham and I didn't let you in on this. You knew I was going to bless the Gentiles, but what I didn't tell you, what I didn't reveal to you was, I'm going to adopt them, and they're going to sit at this table with you."

That's the mystery of the gospel and Paul's explaining it again in verse 25, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits." If you're Cornelius walking to the table, right, and you're going to this Jewish table, this promise made to Abraham, tell me, are you going to go bursting in there with pride? "I'm wise in my own conceits. The Lord's dealing with me now." If you went to a church table and the door was shut in that room, you could grow wise in your own conceits, because you don't understand the mystery of the gospel. But if you understand that you've been attached to this olive tree, how do you think it is to be adopted and sit down at the table with the father and he has all his natural born sons on the table and you come in as the adopted, aren't you going to feel by nature like a little bit second fiddle and am I really going to be accepted? You're going to be humbled that you've been invited into this kingly family to which you were not naturally born. See when you understand the mystery of the gospel that we were grafted into the Israel of God, it doesn't make room for pride. But if you don't understand that and you say, we have our own little thing going on in a church, you could become as prideful as the Pharisees did about their Judaism.

So Paul says, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits," now he's going to describe the mystery again, "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." When he says blindness in part has happened to Israel, what does he mean? He means here's this long banqueting table, here's Abraham, here's Isaac, here's Jacob, there's David, there's Moses, Daniel, Ezekiel, here's Peter, here's John but there's what, and all these Jews look at each other and say, "But you've got a whole bunch of other chairs here. I know we're going to prosper as a people, and we're going to produce children, but there's going to be more Finkelsteins that are going to come walking through the door, and they're going to fill up those chairs." And they see Cornelius come in, and the Lord says, "I have always, from the foundation of the world, I have always planned for them to be my sons. I just didn't talk to you about it. I didn't

reveal it to you under the Old Covenant." God's Israel will never be complete until all his children are sitting at the table. That is the meaning of this text.

"Blindness in part has happened to Israel." Which part of Israel was blind? The Gentile part. They were without God, without hope in the world. But then in the gospel, the gospel's brought to the Gentiles and now they're brought in. Blindness in part has happened to Israel because these adopted sons haven't come into the room yet. Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. Come into what? The subject matter isn't a church. The subject matter is Israel, which actually is what the ecclesia is supposed to be. What I'm describing you is the ecclesia. See, some people don't understand. It seems vague. Why not use the word church? Not so much that it's wrong, but because of contemporary theology, it's an inconvenient phrase.

"Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles are brought into Israel," are brought into that covenant, the mystery of the gospel, and when that happens, when the fullness of the Gentiles are brought to this table, and all those chairs are finally filled, when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, in that manner, you take a Strong's concordance and look up the word "so," and you find one of the main definitions of "so," and you look at its use is "in this manner." It doesn't mean and then after this but in this manner, in this manner, by the Gentiles being brought in and being grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel, by being fellow heirs and joining that body, in that manner, all of God's Israel is saved. Israel, in part, has been blinded. The Gentiles haven't been brought in. But once they've been brought in, all of Israel is saved.

"As it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my," in time I just want to move along, "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." The covenant through which God would take away their sins is the promise made to Abraham which the Apostle Paul describes as the gospel fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. This is the new covenant. Nobody's saved by the old covenant. The people under the old covenant are saved by the new covenant. No wonder they long to see our day.

"When I shall take away their sins," the new covenant, the shed blood of Christ. When we come to the Lord's table tonight, we recognize this is the blood of the new covenant. Now, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." And I used to get to that verse and be really confused and say, "Well, okay, I've finally figured out what's really being said here," but then I was sort of thrown for a loop with verse 28. All right, as concerning the gospel, yes, the Jewish nation as a whole are enemies of the Christians. They turn from the Lord. They persecute the Christians. Paul was hauling them off to Jerusalem and having them killed. Concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake, and then I read it this way, but because they're the elect, chosen people of God by virtue of being the sons of Abraham, they are loved for the Father's sake. And then that made me think, "Well, what is he saying?" If that's the proper interpretation, then what the Lord is saying, "Look, they're enemies of Christ but because God so loved Abraham and Isaac, he loves

them even though they deny that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." That can't be. Then it occurred to me. I told you the key was verse 7.

"As concerned the gospel," verse 28, "they," the nation as a whole, "the nation as a whole, were enemies for your sake, but as touching the elect amongst the Jews." See, that's why in verse 7 it says, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Two groups of Jews, the election and the rest. That's what's being referred to here. And back in verse 7, he says, Israel as a whole has not received that which he was looking for but the election did, and the others by virtue of unbelief did not. This verse is saying the exact same thing as verse 7. As concerning the gospel, Israel as a whole, they are enemies for your sake, but as touching the elect amongst them, as touching the election, they, by virtue of their election and their faith in Christ and continuing in the faith of Abraham, they are beloved for the Father's sake. And the reason they're beloved for the Father's sake is because they walk in the faith of their fathers.

"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God didn't break his promise.

"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." Paul was hoping that the calling of the Gentiles would provoke the Jews to jealousy and for a little remnant it would.

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Jews and Gentiles.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Is not the mystery of the gospel far larger than the pathetic teachings of modern day theology? Isn't it more grand, isn't it more God-like than what we're getting today? "How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!"

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things," that includes the promises. They're all about Christ. There's no promise in blessing given to those outside of Christ because it's all about Christ, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the gospel and the privilege to sit at this banqueting table, yes, with the great men of the faith of the nation of God, Abraham, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, the apostles of our Lord, but most importantly, we sit at the table with the Lord Jesus Christ, our sovereign King, the Messiah who governs and rules over his people, Israel, that we were brought into this divine and holy and precious covenant, a covenant of the gospel. We can only but thank thee for it, for it is according to thy mercy. We were undeserving. And we thank thee for salvation in Christ Jesus, who has enabled both the Jews and the Gentiles to realize the hopes and the aspirations of the

people of God under the old covenant, for not only do we know that Messiah has come and has blessed, but we know his name. This they did not and his name is Jesus. And we live in a good day because we can see the fulfillment of these things in the unity of the gospel from Genesis to Revelation. So Father we thank thee for this and we pray that thou would open the eyes and the consciences of many through this word to the truth, this Christ-honoring truth that Christians Jew and Gentile together, through faith in Christ, are God's people, the Israel of God in him. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.