

The Restoration of Israel

Studies in Romans

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Bible Text: Romans 11:1-36

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Romans 11. I'm going to read the chapter, it's a long chapter, but I think we need to read it. There's an awful lot of opinion passed upon this chapter and I think that a reading of the chapter will, in itself, be the most effective way of guiding our thoughts in the right direction as to its interpretation. Romans 11.

“1 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. 2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. 5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. 7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded 8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. 9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: 10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

“11 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. 12 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? 13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. 15 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? 16 For if the firstfruit be

holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. 17 And 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; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. 24 For 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: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

“25 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. 26 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: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. 30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. 33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

The Lord will add his own blessing to the reading of his precious Word for his name's sake.

From the very reading of this chapter you will, I think, immediately have some grasp of its complexity. But let's try to put it in context: remember that starting in chapter 9, we have a new segment, a new section of this epistle and 9, 10 and 11 deal together with the great subject of the purpose of grace. The Apostle Paul has largely been defending God and the gospel. The gospel being the message of justification by faith alone without the works of the law, faith in the merits of Christ. He has been defending that gospel against criticisms from the Jews who opposed his teaching that both Jews and Gentiles could

now stand on an equal footing and be saved in this way without reference to any righteousness earned by law-keeping.

In chapter 9, Paul's great emphasis was on the fact that grace is sovereign in its ordination and as he entered into, what I've called a great theodicy, a great defense of God and his gospel, he met head on some of the great issues that begged to be dealt with particularly the issue of God's election, God's predestination, God's eternal purpose. And while he did not deal with the subject as many today would like him to have done, while he certainly didn't deal with it in a way that the Jews expected him to do, nonetheless he did make it clear that the grace of God is sovereign in its ordination.

In chapter 10, he moves on to another aspect of his grace where the carnal mind would say, "Since salvation is all by this sovereign grace, dependent on the eternal and unchangeable will and purpose of God, therefore, man need not be exhorted, man need not be preached to." Paul took the opposite tack and he rather preached that grace is sincere in its offer and I have spent the last few Sabbath evenings going through this great 10th chapter of Romans emphasizing the universal and free offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ so that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Now we come to chapter 11 and here the theme is that grace is successful in its operation. It does, despite all that has been said about the unbelief of Israel and the removal of the gospel of that nation to the Gentiles. Grace will achieve its purpose; that purpose is still on track. I want you to understand the basic proposition of this 11th chapter of Romans that God's promise has never been withdrawn and it will be fulfilled precisely as God has always intended. Now, that's the truth that Paul is emphasizing regarding the nation of Israel: God's purpose for Israel has not changed. It has not been placed in abeyance while he works out another purpose. That is one of the abysmal errors of the dispensational system, that we are living in a hiatus within God's purpose, that he had a purpose for Israel which somehow came unstuck with the rejection of Christ, that he has suspended his purpose, that he has had a parenthetical insertion here which we call the church age or worse still, to use the words of perhaps the most famous of all dispensational theologians in modern America, instead of a parenthesis, he has inserted an intercalation.

And if you don't understand the difference in words, don't worry too much, it's just a little bit more of based on the first. Think of it in terms of a sentence: when you write a sentence, you put something in parenthesis. The words in parenthesis are not essential to understanding the sentence. You can read with them, but they do stand in some relation to what goes before and to what comes after. In an intercalation, what is inserted has nothing to do with what goes before and nothing to do with what comes after.

And it is a huge error and I mean a huge error, that has had tremendously hurtful consequences, to see the suspension of the purpose of God, the fragmentation of the purpose of God as this system has devised. God's purpose has not been changed, it has not been placed in abeyance. And let me make this clear, it has not been spiritualized and made over to the church. In other words, the promises that God made to Israel have not now suddenly all become so spiritualized that the only fulfillment they have is in the

church in which there is neither Jew nor Greek. You will find from Romans 11, that the purpose of God is now being fulfilled and it will be so completely fulfilled as to leave no promise of God concerning Israel less than entirely realized.

And that's true of Israel both in her rejection and in her restoration. In other words, when you come to Romans 11, what the term "Israel" means in statements that deal with her rejection, it also means in those statements that deal with her restoration. Now, simple as that kind of observation is, it has great significance when you come to interpret Romans 11. Let me put it as bluntly as I can that here Israel means Israel and it means it in a consistent sense. Let me put that another way, in Romans 11, the subject is God's purpose for national or literal Israel. Paul's chief aim in this chapter is to prove that the Jewish charges against the gospel are baseless so he shows that far from overthrowing the gospel, the Lord's rejection of Israel, which as chapter 10 has shown us, has been foretold in many Old Testament passages, the Lord's rejection of Israel actually confirms the complete scripturalness of the gospel because, you see, the rejection of Israel is only part of the story. If Paul Harvey were here, he could say, "Now for the rest of the story." And Romans 11 is largely about the rest of the story. The full story of Romans 11 is this, and I hope that you will grasp this: that God did great good for the world by his partial and temporary rejection of Israel and he will do incomparably greater good for the world by his final restoration of Israel. That's the message of Romans 11.

Now, I'm going to embark tonight on something that will scare the living daylights out of most of you. I intend because I don't like leaving things hanging for three weeks in a row and I'll be not preaching here for three weeks, two of them when I'm gone and Easter with Colin Mercer here. I'm going to deal with Romans 11 tonight so I hope you've all brought your pack lunches or should I say your pack breakfasts. No, actually I think we can be fairly succinct.

I want to give you a three part outline of the chapter, deal with each part fairly briefly and then I want to apply that as we come to the very end to some matters that I think will benefit us as we put this truth into operation. When you look at the first 15 verses of this chapter, you can write over them "Israel's rejection," verses 1-15. Then, verses 16-24, you can write over those verses "Israel's regrafting." And then, verses 25-32, "Israel's restoration." Israel's rejection, that's her cutting off from the olive tree. Israel's regrafting, her reinsertion into the olive tree. And Israel's restoration to the privileges that are promised in the Word of God.

Now, let's look quickly at the rejection. Verse 1, "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." You'll see immediately that this states the subject, it's the rejection of national Israel. Now, to ask the question in verse 1 is to answer it as Paul immediately makes clear: Has God cast away his people? Just ask the question and anybody who knows anything about Scripture, more importantly, anybody who has ever had any experience of God, will immediately find an answer rising up in his heart and it is the answer that Paul gives: God forbid. An emphatic "no." You see, the Old Testament is full of promises that God gave to Israel.

Promises that guarantee that he would not cast them off. When I read the words of verse 2, they lead me to think that Paul had Psalm 94:14 in his mind as he was writing this. That verse says, “For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.” Paul says, “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.”

Now, to the Jews, that promise of the 94th Psalm appeared to contradict everything that Paul said about Israel being cut off from salvation because of their unbelief toward the Lord Jesus Christ; why the Gentiles were received as God’s people. Paul had made this clear back in chapter 10:20-23. You will find that Paul is quoting from Elias and he is showing that God has cut Israel off.

Now, there’s no contradiction as he immediately proceeds to show. In this first verse and in the second verse, in the Greek text there is something that’s, I think, of vital importance and that is that the verb stands right at the head of the sentence. In other words, it’s in a place of peculiar and intended emphasis. The idea is: has God utterly or totally and finally cast off his people? And the answer is: emphatically “no,” God has not utterly, totally, finally cast off his people and so we have these reasons given. Verses 1-10 show us that the rejection of Israel was not total.

Now, verse 5 and verse 7, the intervening verses are explanatory; they are not of the essence of the argument. So, verse 5 and verse 7 link up and we read then, “5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for,” that is, a righteous standing with God by keeping the law, “but the election,” the election means the elect people just as the circumcision meant the circumcised Israelites, the election here means the elect Israelites, the election, “hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.”

Now, this is the key statement, verse 5 and verse 7: the rejection of Israel was not total. There is an elect people in there. Paul was a Jew and Paul was saved so, therefore, it would be untrue to say that God had cut off all Jews and Jews were not being saved, for Paul was a Jew. Furthermore, Paul was not only saved, but Paul was entrusted to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ and to carry the gospel to the Gentile peoples. What Paul’s point is that as in the days of Elijah, when Elijah thought the whole country is gone, the whole people is gone, God said, “I have reserved a remnant.” And so, now there’s a remnant according to the election of grace.

Now, follow me carefully for Paul uses this fact to establish a very important truth: by reserving a remnant, God has given us the harbinger of the restoration of the whole nation. That elect remnant is the harbinger of the coming restoration of the nation. Now, that’s the only conclusion that you can reach from the fact that Paul uses the remnant to prove the proposition of verse 2 that “God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew.” Those words “his people whom he foreknew” have caused a great deal of discussion among scholars. What does it mean? To some, and here you’ll get some of the greatest names in Bible commentary, Charles Hodge, Robert Haldane, John Calvin, Bishop Moales, Lenski, the great Lutheran commentator, they all would agree on this: that this simply means God has not cast off the true Israel, the elect within the nation. In

other words, he has cast off the external Israel, the national Israel but not the true or the spiritual Israel.

Now, as far as it goes, that's a true statement but I can't accept that it's the meaning of verse 2 for a very simple reason: this stands as a proof, verse 2 stands as a proof of what is stated in verse 1, "God forbid." Now, everybody, Calvin, Hodge, Haldane, the whole bunch of them, they all agree that in verse 1, the people is national Israel. So, here's the question: has God cast off national Israel? And I would say that it would immediately become clear that it's illogical when he uses the term "people" again in the next verse to conclude that it's not the same people as in verse 1 which is the same people as in the last verse of chapter 10. He's speaking of national Israel and the argument here is not: God didn't cast off the entire nation as is clear from the fact that he's still saving a few people out of it, the argument is rather: God has not cast off national Israel because he foreknew them as his peculiar people.

Now, what does that mean? Does it mean that every Jew was and is saved? No, it doesn't. Let me tell you what it means. Deuteronomy 7:6, the words of Moses to the people of Israel, "thou art an holy," or a separated, "people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself." And he says "this is different from all the other nations of the earth." This is the people whom God foreknew or as Amos puts it in chapter 3:2, the Lord is speaking, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." This people whom God foreknew during this period of punishment are largely cut off, but during that same period, he continues to preserve a remnant until the day when he fully restores the nations.

So, this statement in verse 2 is vital. God purposed to make the nation of Israel his own peculiar people for the blessing of the whole world. And he'll never cast them off so as to abrogate that purpose or replace it with another. In the meantime, he preserves a remnant. The rejection of Israel is not total.

From verse 11-15, you'll see that the rejection of Israel is not final. Now, Israel has stumbled. These are the words that the Apostle uses in verse 11 and following. Israel has stumbled; Israel has fallen; Israel has been diminished; Israel has been cast away. And that's a just punishment for her sin but it is not intended to bring her down to full and final ruin. Indeed, and this is something we don't often stop to think about, the rejection or the casting off of Israel temporarily is part of God's purpose of mercy for the world. Let me give you a quote from Charles Hodge which I think puts it very, very well. He says,

"The Jews, even those who were professors of Christianity, were in the first place very slow to allow the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles. And in the second, they appear almost uniformly to have desired to clog the gospel with ceremonial observances of the law. This was one of the greatest hindrances to the progress of the cause of Christ during the apostolic age and would, in all human probability, have been a thousand

fold greater had the Jews as a nation embraced the Christian faith. On both these accounts, the rejection of the Jews was incidentally a means of facilitating the progress of the gospel.”

I want you to think about what Hodge is saying for he's got it right on. This is what Paul is saying: God cut off the Jews in order to reach the Gentiles. When you go to the book of Acts and then to many of the Pauline epistles, you'll discover the Jews definitely were very slow to let the gospel out to the Gentiles and when they did, they wanted to make the Gentiles into Jews in order to qualify them to receive the gospel. These were such encumbrances to the gospel that had the whole Jewish nation at that time embraced the gospel, it would've been a merely national religion. It would never have reached the world and it was God's purpose to reach the world and this is what Paul is arguing in this section, that had the Jews not been overthrown as a nation, they would greatly have hindered the progress of the gospel. Remember what he wrote to the Thessalonians? 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16, “they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved.” So, the casting off of the Jews was a divine means of bringing salvation to the world, but God had no intention whatsoever of making that casting off either final or perpetual.

Notice Paul's argument in verse 12 and verse 15. This is one of the most amazing statements. It's one reason why I am a convinced millennialist and why I believe that in the long run, there will be more in heaven than in hell. Watch this carefully: “12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world.” Let's stop: because of the Jews' fall and their casting off, what has happened? The gospel has gone untrammelled to the Gentiles; it spread like a mighty fire through the Gentile nations; it has fashioned Gentile history; it has led countless millions into the knowledge of sins forgiven through the grace of God and the application of the blood of Jesus Christ. “12 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? 15 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?”

I was interested to read the Lutheran Lenski's comments on that in order to see if his bankrupt system of amillennialism and I know some people listening to me will not like that, but it is a bankrupt system, when he wants to defend that, he actually gives us this interpretation: that the casting away of the Jews was the reconciling of the world; it was riches to the Gentiles and to themselves it will be like life from the dead. Well, I do not see how anybody could reach that conclusion from the words of the Apostle Paul. He's contrasting two things: the effect of the fall of the Jews versus the effect of the fullness or the restoration of the Jews. That's what he's contrasting and it is a pure perversion, it is the imposition of a pre-conceived scheme on the text of Scripture to come to any other conclusion. Paul is contrasting the effect of one thing versus the effect of another on the world and he's saying the effect of the fall of the Jews has been, really, spiritually a tremendous benefit to the world.

Now, if their fall has produced such a benefit, what will their receiving be like? If their emptiness, their diminishing, if their emptiness has brought such blessing, what will their

fullness be like? It will be like life from the dead. What a wonderful statement that is. There is a day coming when spiritual fullness will run through this world like a great Amazon River in full speed, covering the earth, that it will make every spiritual movement in the history of the church seem like a time of deadness when this is a time of life. That's what Paul is saying. So, the rejection of Israel is not only not total, but neither is it final.

Now, from her rejection we move to her regrafting, verses 16-24, and it's a vitally important passage from many points of view. Under the figure of a single olive tree, it describes the one united church of God in all ages and I want you to notice this: both Old Testament and New Testament. By the roots and the firstfruits, the Apostle means Abraham and the Patriarchs and they are called holy or separated unto God. By the lump and the branches, Paul means the nation of Israel and he says, "If the root in the firstfruits were holy and separated unto God, then so are the other branches." So is the nation of Israel, the natural branches. National Israel have, of course, been cut off. Now, we find that the branches of a wild olive tree, namely the Gentiles, have been grafted into that stock from the root of Abraham and the Old Testament saints. We have been grafted in. I want you to get a picture of the church here. It didn't start at Pentecost, the root goes right back to Abraham. Now, that's not to say that there was nobody saved before Abraham, it's now talking about the organization of a people upon the earth and he's saying, "Here is this olive tree. The root is Abraham. The firstfruits, Abraham and the Patriarchs. Out of that have grown various branches. The branches of Israel have largely been cut off and we have been grafted into that common stock."

I want you to notice this: this is the one indivisible, united church of God from both Old and New Testament. There are differences between the Testaments. Dispensationalism is not all wrong, there is a distinction to be made. And as I will make clear before I'm finished tonight, there are promises to Israel that belong to Israel and must not be stolen from her by any hermeneutical scheme. But there is a fundamental continuity between the Old and the New.

Now, Paul in verses 17 and 18 deals with a subject that I would love to have time to deal with rather more fully. I would like to go on rampant rage about this to be quite honest, this is something I feel very strongly about. In verses 17 and 18, he's saying that the fact that Israel has been cut off and we have now been brought in, is not a cause for Gentile Christians to boast against Israel. Now, let me make this statement: Christianity is never anti-Semitic and anti-Semitism is never Christian. Let me make that absolutely clear and I need to make it clear because we have all sorts of kooks and nutcases, forgive the vernacular, running around parading the image of the cross and all they are doing is perverting the gospel and the name of our Savior to a purpose that was born in hell and has the stench of the pit about it. There is nothing new about anti-Semitism. You find that Jews were murdered in Russia because those so-called Orthodox Christians who were far more ungodly, Christ-rejecting and heathen than the worst of the Jews ever were because those so-called Orthodox Christians had come to the conclusion that the Jews were Christ killers and, therefore, they were open to all the scorn and the opprobrium and the violence that these ungodly rascals to heap upon them. Paul is saying: if you have been

ever grafted into Christ, you do not boast against the branches that were cut off; you do not become anti-Semitic.

Now, I don't have time to deal with anti-Semitism any further tonight, but you beware of it. Somehow or other you find it rearing its filthy head among what is called Right Wing Christianity. I don't like these terms of political parties getting attached to the cause of Christ. I don't care what wing it is. It's strange that the Nazis were violently anti-Jewish and the Communists were violently anti-Jewish. That doesn't seem to me to make an awful lot of difference what wing the killing comes from, it's still hellish in its conception and in its operation. But I want you to understand: it's never Christian. It is never Christian. Paul says you don't boast against them.

Actually, the cutting off of the Jews as a nation from the benefits of God's mighty saving grace, should be a warning to us all. Verses 20-21, it's important that you do not try to apply these verses individually. That has led to a great deal of needless concern. This is not dealing with an individual Christian being in Christ and cut out of Christ, this is dealing with groups, with nations, with great entities, that like the Jewish nation, have been blessed by being brought into the economy of what we will call the church. And he says that as Israel was cut off and lost those benefits, so may other nations. Is that not what's happening in America tonight? Is that not what's happening all across Western Europe? You look at one country after another mightily blessed of God, you would say there was a time when they were in covenant with God and they were vehicles of the mighty movings of God. It's not to say that the nations were all saved as to the individuals but it is to say that you had a time when the British nation and the American nation were self-consciously proclaiming themselves to be Christian nations. Where are they tonight?

I fear that we are living to see the fulfillment of this awful warning: beware that you're not cut off as well and I think we are in that place that we have now but that small remnant. Listen, let me tell you and this is another subject that I have no time to do anything but mention. Let me tell you: if you want bigness, be prepared to go apostate. Oh, I believe there is a day coming before Jesus returns when there will be a mighty sweeping movement of the Holy Ghost sweeping millions into the Kingdom. Revelation 7 seems to me to make that abundantly clear but I also find that in those days and in the days before it, the testimony of Christ will be a remnant testimony. When the great churches have become apostate, they've become daughters of the harlot to use the words of Revelation 17, apostasy sweeping the earth, humanism just keeping enough of the name and the terminology of Christianity to fool the people. If you want bigness, you'll got apostate. There is a day and I believe it's upon us, when it is the remnant testimony outside the camp being willing, no matter what the cost may be, to be noted as Christ's and stand for God. That day is upon us. We're living to see the fulfillment of the warning of verse 20 and 21.

What Paul is saying is that just as the Gentiles, by following Israel into unbelief, may be cut off, so Israel by following the Gentiles into faith in Christ, may yet be regrafted into their own olive tree as he says in verses 22-24. This is the future for Israel: ultimately

and, of course, I'm leaving out a lot of things in between, I'm deliberately not getting into a detailed scheme of prophecy, but ultimately, Israel is to be brought into the blessings of the gospel. And this, again, is something you've got to remember: her future is a gospel future; it is to be brought into the blessings of the gospel, regrafted right into the one olive tree to be justified by faith in Christ.

That leads to the final section, verses 25-32 and Israel's restoration. Now, currently, only a small remnant of Jews believe but in the restoration, verse 26, "all Israel shall be saved." I don't think that that is saying that every single Jew, whoever will live from that time on, will be saved. It may, God can do any size of a miracle that he wishes. I verily would rejoice in that but certainly it does mean that national Israel will be a saved nation as Isaiah puts in chapter 45:25, "In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Now, this is the restoration.

Let me point out the time of this restoration for this is interesting. Verse 25, it's after "the fullness of the Gentiles." Now, what is the fullness of the Gentiles? Some people, post-millennialists, say that it means the same here as it means up in verse 12 where we have the fullness of Israel. It's talking about their spiritual fullness, when the Gentile nations have been fully converted, then the result will be that they will evangelize the Jews and the Jews will be saved in great numbers. There's a big difficulty with that because immediately we are told that the fullness of Israel is going to have such an effect upon the Gentiles that it will be like life from the dead. But if the Gentiles have already been spiritually full, how can you be fuller than full? It doesn't make a lot of sense.

There are others like Lenski and some of his amillennial friends who translate, or should I say interpret this, as saying that the Jews as a nation will remain in unbelief right until the end. They'll be in hardness until the very last Gentile has been brought into Christ, the last sinner has been saved and so all Israel, all the elect, will be saved. For the same reasons that I gave above, I don't think that cuts any ice.

For my part, I believe that this fullness is another way of making the same statement that Jesus made in Matthew 24:14, "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come." This is the penetration fully of the nations with the gospel and that's what leads up to the Second Coming of Christ. And it's interesting to me that in verse 26, the restoration of Israel happens when the Deliverer comes out of Zion. The return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's turn to the book of Isaiah 59 and right at the end of the chapter, verses 20 and 21, and truly this is what Paul is quoting,

"20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. 21 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."

That's the restoration that Paul is talking about and it's at the time of the Second Coming of Christ. Now, keep that in mind for that has enormous significance as you'll see before we're through.

Verses 26 and 27, you have the result of this restoration. He "shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Israel will enter into the pardon as Zechariah puts it, "There's a fountain open in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness." The reason for this restoration, verse 28-32, first of all, verse 28: God's sovereign election. Isn't it amazing how often Paul comes back to that? When he was dealing with the rejection of Israel: God's sovereign election. He's dealing with the remnant: God's sovereign election. He's dealing with the restoration: God's sovereign election.

Let me ask you a question: how many fundamental Bible believing churches in America tonight do you think you'd go to and hear a sermon on God's sovereign election? How many? Why on earth should I be ashamed of something that God rejoices in? Why? This is what brings it about, the purpose of God. Let me tell you: when God purposes something, it's going to come to pass. I delight in that. That's what gives certainty to the preaching of the gospel. That's what gives certainty to the missionary outreach of the church. That's what gives certainty to the great program that has laid down in the Scriptures. It is going to come to pass. Oh, yes, there will be an antichrist, both religious and political. There will be an amalgamation of nations. There will be a mighty army gathered against Jerusalem. There will be horrendous, hellish and earthly forces bringing to bear all their power to seek to overthrow the purpose of God. But the purpose of God according to election will stand. That's what he's saying. His election brings it about.

Furthermore, his covenant with Abraham must be fulfilled. It must be fulfilled. They are beloved for the fathers' sakes. The immutability of the purpose, again, in verse 29 is emphasized. This is one of the most wonderful verses in all the Bible, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." They are irrevocable. He will never go back upon them. He will never take back his gift or his effectual calling.

Then the reason, ultimately, verse 32, "that he might have mercy upon all." God intends and here you get into some Old Testament prophecies, notably the book of Zechariah. God intends, through the Jew, through his restoration, to have mercy on the whole world.

Now, that's the outline. I don't want you to think that I've preached yet. I've just given you the outline. This is a chapter of immense importance and I want to close by just applying it as I said, to a few areas. 1. There is an area of controversy. In fact, there are two controversies: I have mentioned dispensationalism as a hermeneutical scheme. It has the view of Israel as forever distinct from the church. There is a dichotomy; there is a disjunction between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Now, let me immediately enter the disclaimer on behalf of some of my dispensational brethren: they are not all painting with the same brush; they're not all telling the same story. There are some, indeed, progressive dispensationalists, I think, would be better to forget the name

dispensationalist altogether because it's too old, it has too many connotations for them to re-invent it. That's only my opinion and I give it in love for them. But, historically, you have the notion not only of the forever earthly people, that's Israel, the forever heavenly people, that's the church. As one dispensationalist preacher in Britain put it: Israel saved through a mixture of law and grace; Israel bringing tribulation saints to salvation without the Holy Ghost who has gone to heaven with the raptured church. And preaching an everlasting gospel that's neither everlasting nor a gospel. Those are not my inventions, I am giving you a quote.

But look at Romans 11: there is one olive tree. The root is Abraham. Israel, the natural branch, is cut off. We are grafted into what? Into that stock of Abraham. As Paul said, he taught the Galatians this, didn't he? Chapter 3, "Those who are saved, those who are believers are the children of faithful Abraham." And then Israel is grafted right back into what? Into the very stock into which we have already been grafted. There is a unity here that dispensationalism utterly overthrows and, therefore, as an hermeneutical scheme, it is fundamentally flawed and must, for the good of the cause of Christ and the clarity of the gospel, it must be repudiated.

And then we come to the realm of eschatology. It's a big word, isn't it, for the doctrine of last things. Romans 11 sheds a lot of light on this subject. As I have tried to point out, rather briefly, Romans 11 deals with Israel as a nation in its rejection and Israel as a nation in its restoration. In other words, there is a future for national Israel or a national future for the Jews. That's why the return of Israel to her homeland was no ordinary historical event. I am far from believing that all that the Jews say and do in their land is right but I am also far from believing that they have no right to be there. I believe they are there in the fulfillment of the promise and the purpose of God from a long time back.

There is a future for national Israel but see what that means: if Romans 11 is talking about a future for national Israel, then this means that those Old Testament texts which deal with the same truth, must be taken literally and not spiritualized. Now, I don't have time to go through the Old Testament texts that deal with this in detail, but I want you to turn with me to the book of Zechariah and I want you to turn to chapter 12. There are many a place here you could turn to but we'll go to chapter 12 and we'll start in verse 6. Now, you'll notice that throughout this section in Zechariah 12 and into 13, in that day right through to the end of the book. In that day, in that day, in that day, in that day, in that day. Do you get the impression God is trying to put a time scale here? Let me rephrase that, Dr. Paisley taught me a long time ago: God doesn't try to do anything, he does it. Let us try to understand that God is emphasizing a particular time here: in that day. Verse 6,

"In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left," and notice this, "and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem."

And can you imagine after a statement like that, there are many learned commentators who say: we are not intended to interpret this as meaning Jerusalem at all, it's the church that's intended, it's a spiritual inhabiting. I am happy to see the spiritual application to the church, but when God says Jerusalem shall be inhabited in her own place even in Jerusalem, is there any language known to man that could more clearly, positively and demonstrably state the obvious? God is dealing with Jerusalem in its own place.

Now then, verse 7,

“The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. 8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.” Now watch this carefully, “10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

That's what Paul is talking about. That's what happens at the coming of Christ but you'll see immediately this has huge, huge, ramifications. Romans 11 demands, therefore, millennial blessing. That's why I said that when you come to Romans 11, amillennialism is a bankrupt hermeneutical system. Romans 11 demands millennial blessing. Watch it again very carefully, verse 12, verse 15, verse 32. “12 If the fall of the Jews be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? 15 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? 32 That he might have mercy upon all.” And any scheme that sees no restoration for Israel that will lead to a spiritual enrichment for the whole world, is wrong. I believe that effectively removes amillennial schemes from all eschatological investigation.

Now, both post-millennialism and pre-millennialism see worldwide blessing following the restoration of Israel, in that they agree. But there is this very important distinction: according to post-millennialism, the restoration of Israel comes a long time, some believe a literal thousand years, some believe a prolonged time. The restoration of Israel comes a long time before the Second Coming which is post-millennial, it's after the millennium. Well, there are a literal thousand years or a long period. So, the restoration of Israel, according to post-millennialism, comes say a thousand years or a long time before the Second Coming of Christ.

But according to what we have read tonight, the restoration of Israel comes at and as a consequence of the Second Coming of Christ. Revelation 1:7, “They look on him whom they have pierced.” What we have read tonight already in Zechariah 12:10, “At that time

of great mourning, they shall look upon me whom they have pierced. Revelation 1:7 makes it clear that's the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and it's in that day, Zechariah 13:1, "There shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness."

So, what does that mean? Well, it means what I've been telling you all these years: that the only biblical scheme of eschatological interpretation is pre-millennial and if that sounds dogmatic, it's intended to. So, this is good for dealing with controversy. What we have read tonight we should look upon as speaking to the issue of our confidence: here's God's program for the future of the nations. And I want you to see something: the gospel will never cease to have its effect. The gospel is going to penetrate the Gentile nations. I don't say all those nations are going to be saved, but God has a people in them and as among the Jews, there is a remnant. There will be a remnant there and, again, if I may bring in the 7th of Revelation, at the very end there will be such an explosion of spiritual power as that a great number which no man can number, a great multitude out of every tribe and tongue and kindred and nation, will be gloriously converted to Christ. Oh, the gospel will be preached in every nation and Jesus is coming again. The Jews will be restored and received and then, then shall we see the fullness of the gospel.

Tonight, we are living to see the gospel have its triumphs and what triumphs we have to celebrate. Was not Pentecost a glorious triumph? Was not the Reformation a glorious triumph? Were not the mighty revivals that rocked England and America glorious triumphs? Yes, we have seen the triumphs. But as even Christian theologians at times have lamented, those triumphs seem to be so quickly swallowed up, engulfed in the ever rising tide of wickedness in the nation. But let me tell you, there's a day coming when we will see the fullness of the gospel and it will make everything that we have ever seen thus far, seem like death and it will be like resurrection. The end shall be fulfilled, the words of Isaiah 11:9, "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."

We may use what we have read tonight for our comfort. Verse 29, I said, was one of the most outstanding verses in all the Bible. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." And that wonderful promise holds just as true for you as an individual believer as it does for the Jewish people. All upon whom God sets his purpose of grace, may rejoice in this: his gifts of his calling are irrevocable. "I am the Lord," he says in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord. I change not. Therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Why do Christians not perish? Because they never fail? No, sir. Because they're supernaturally strong? No, sir. Because Jehovah does not change.

As we read in Numbers 23:19, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Thank God we come to this passage and we look at Israel and we see the purpose of God on track and we say, "Thank God. There's comfort there for me." If you're a Christian here tonight and you're going through a rough and rocky period, the devil will come and hiss with the hiss of the serpent in your ear to tell you

God has given you up that you might be sealed but you'll not make it finally to heaven. Just remember this: the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.

Now, we come to the great conclusion. Read verses 33-36. May I invite you to memorize verse 33-36? Ponder these verses and let them fashion your thinking. Here is the great conclusion. Do you notice immediately the end of all doctrine? Not just Romans 11 but the whole doctrinal section of Romans, this is the summary of it all, the end of all doctrine especially the study of the gospel is worship. That's the purpose. We have been a long time looking at this doctrine of free justification, the imputed righteousness of Christ, the merit of Christ and made over to us fully to make us acceptable to God. I trust that having traversed this great tract of biblical doctrine, you are brought to the feet of the Lord Jehovah to worship.

There are three elements in the worship, the greatness of God, verses 33 and 34, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" He's all-knowing, he's all wise. His judgment is unsearchable and his ways untraceable, he's absolutely dependent upon none. The greatness of God.

The grace of God, verse 35, "who hath first given to him," that is to put among their obligation, "and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" Have we not learned in Romans that there is nobody that can place God under obligation. There is nobody who can say, "I have earned salvation." I have earned nothing but hell. But Christ has earned the crown of glory for all his believing people.

And then there is the glory of God. What a statement, "of him," that is, from him, he is the source of all things, "and through him," he is the sustainer of all things, "and to him," he is the supreme goal of all things, "to whom be glory for ever."

Can I say to you tonight that if your conception of the gospel has not brought you to your face in humiliation before God from the depths of your agony to cry, "To him be all the glory," then you have never known the gospel. This is what the gospel does: "To him be all the glory." I trust that God will write it upon our hearts.

Some of us thought we would never reach the end of what's called the doctrinal section of things. There is a whole lot of doctrine in what's left of Romans. It starts with the gospel of God, chapter 1, and ends with the glory of God, chapter 11:36. Are you in that olive tree? Are you in Christ? Are you one of those redeemed? Are you one of those who say, "I can't place God under obligation but I do receive the free gift of his grace. To him I give the glory." Make sure you're in Christ. Nothing else will do.

Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Our gracious God and our Father in heaven, we would, indeed, ascribe all glory onto thy holy name. Of thee, through thee and to thee are all things. And, O Lord, we would be willing instruments of thy praise and of thy glory. We pray that indeed thou will so fill

our minds with the successful operation of God's purpose of grace in Christ so that all Israel shall be saved and her restoration shall bring in a time of life and vitality and millennial fullness under the glorious reign of the returned Christ as human minds can hardly conceive. O God, we pray, so fill our hearts with this that we may truly be caught up in the ecstasy of the Apostle in the Isle of Patmos when he longed for the coming of the Savior and he cried, Even so, Come, Lord Jesus.

Father in heaven, bless thy Word to stir up our hearts to seek to win Jews and Gentiles now for Christ, to be willing to be that remnant testimony standing valiantly for the truth against the encroaching tides of apostasy and wickedness. O God, stir our hearts through this truth and keep us faithful right to the very end. Visit us, Lord, with mighty outpourings of thy Spirit and, O Lord, let us see a great number brought in for we believe that thou art able to do it but we are encouraged that even though we're in a day of remnant testimony, the day of fullness, the fullness of the gospel and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea, that day is certainly approaching. Let it come. Let it come and let it come soon. Part us now with thy blessing and keep us in the fear and in the joy of the Lord, faithful to Christ in all things. We pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.