



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 11

"The Future of Ethnic Israel, part I"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our subject is Romans chapter 11 and "The Future of Ethnic Israel". So will you take your New Testaments and turn with me to the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and will you listen while I read verses 1 through 10 which will be the subject of the introductory message in this series? Just for experimentation I'm going to be reading from the New International Version, so that will account for some differences if you do not have that version before you. Now reading from the New International Version, Romans chapter 11 and verse 1, the apostle writes,

"I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: 'Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me'? And what was God's answer to him? 'I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were

hardened, as it is written: 'God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.' And David says: 'May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.'"

May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the word of God and for the great promises that are contained within it. We thank Thee for the fact that our robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. We thank Thee too, Lord, for all of the other blessings that are ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. We pray for this company of people in this auditorium and others who may listen ultimately over the radio or through the tapes to the ministry of the word of God. May the Holy Spirit, Lord, bring home to us and to them the truth of Thy word. We pray for the sick particularly those who are suffering, we especially remember them, give comfort and give assurance, and give encouragement.

We thank Thee for the great promises that soon if our Lord does not come all of us in this room shall enter Thy presence through death. We thank Thee for the promises that sustain us and help us, Lord, by Thy grace to lean upon them. And also through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit bring to the attention of our family and friends these great blessings which are available to all.

We pray for our elders and for our deacons. We ask for wisdom and guidance to them. We pray for our country, for our President, for others associated with him, and for our state and local governments. We ask, Lord, for the whole church of Jesus Christ today, minister to each of us and draw us closer to our Lord and to one another. May Thy hand be upon us in this hour. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] "The Future of Ethnic Israel." It is the contention of some from the study of God's word that ethnic Israel or Israel as a nation does not have a future, and that the only future that ethnic Israel has is a future of conversion here and there down through the present age and that we cannot according to Scripture look forward to a day when ethnic Israel as a whole shall turn to the Lord.

Now when we deal with a later section of the 11th chapter, we will deal with some of the views that have been expressed concerning this. But it is plain that there are a number who have denied that ethnic Israel does have a future. There are two great facts that stand out in Romans up to the point of the 11th chapter. The first point is simply this, the Gentiles have for the present displaced Israel in the stewardship of the kingdom of God upon the earth. Now that was predicted by our Lord in Matthew chapter 21 and verse 43. In one of his parables he said a very significant thing. Matthew chapter 21 and verse 43, "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit."

Now notice that statement, "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit." So our Lord Jesus is the one who predicted that the kingdom of God and its stewardship would be taken from Israel and given to another nation or another people. Now we learn from the unfolding of the divine revelation in the New Testament that this other people or another nation to whom he referred is what we know in the New Testament as the church of God. We are told by Peter that a church of God is a nation, and the unfolding of the account in Matthew and the epistolary literature makes it plain that the Lord Jesus had in mind the taking of the stewardship of the kingdom from the nation and giving it to the church of Jesus Christ.

Now the failure of Israel is traced to unbelief not only by our Lord, but also by the Apostle Paul and in the Epistle to the Romans. In chapter 9, verse 30 and following, the apostle says,

"What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Then in chapter 10, verse 3, the apostle says, "Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness." And then he concludes that chapter with this rather interesting picture, but concerning Israel he says, "All day long have I held out my hand to a disobedient and obstinate people."

Now that is one of the things that stand out in the Epistle to the Romans at this point. He has unfolded a beautiful picture of the salvation provided through the Lord Jesus Christ and Israel is not in or among the number that possessed this salvation.

Now the second great fact that stands out is that Israel still has the oracles. They still have the promises of God. Now that the apostle makes plain in Romans chapter 3 and verse 1 and following. This is what he says after he has said,

"A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly nor is circumcision merely outwardly and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly and circumcision is circumcision of the heart by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men but from God."

Well the natural question that one would ask is what advantage is it then to be a Jew? And so Paul answers it in chapter 3, verse 1 and 2. "What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way!" Now mind you,

Paul says this during the age of the church. He says there is great advantage in being a Jew. "Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God."

Now unfortunately, that rendering "the very words of God" is not really the best rendering. The word is really a word that means oracles and refers to the promises of God. Now I don't have time to talk about it. I wrote an article on this in one of the magazines several years ago, but it's plain that what Paul has in mind is the promises that have been given to Israel and this is why there is an advantage in every way, "Much in every way" in being a member of ethnic Israel. So Israel still has the oracles and this is their advantage. These oracles have not been fulfilled. If the first fact Israel's unbelief is developed in Romans chapters 9 and 10, then this fact that Israel still has the promises is developed in Romans chapter 11. And in this 11th chapter, there are two further subdivisions in the apostle's development. First of all, in the first ten verses he will show that Israel's failure about which he has spoken is not a total failure. That is, there is a remnant at the present time according to the election of grace. It is not true to say that Israel has totally failed. Israel has only partially failed.

Now in order to, just for a moment, clench the point; let me remind you that the church of Jesus Christ was for a lengthy period of time a Jewish church. If you'll just go back in your mind to the Day of Pentecost and the days and weeks after Pentecost through the Book of Acts you will see that the church was originally, largely a Jewish church. So when the apostle says that Israel's failure is not total, he is absolutely correct, of course.

Now the second thing that he will point out in Romans chapter 11 is that Israel's failure is not final. That is, it is true. Israel is existing today in a state of failure as a nation. It's not total, but it is also not final. And the apostle will later on, particularly in verses such as verse 25,

"I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written."

So Israel's failure is not total. Israel's failure is not final. And after having said that, the apostle concludes the section with a beautiful doxology. We must never forget that when we read the Bible and we read the promises of God with reference to the nation Israel, we should remember to read them as promises that come from a faithful God. I think often that fact that we have discussed these things so much often causes a veil of blindness to fall over our eyes to the simple meaning of the word of God. Robert Louis Stevenson, who is not noted as a Biblical interpreter but rather as a man of literature once wrote, "I cannot understand how you theologians and preachers can apply to the church or multiplicity of churches Scripture promises which in their plain meaning apply to God's chosen people Israel, and to Palestine, in which consequently must be still future. The prophetic books are full of teachings which if they were interpreted literally would be inspiring and a magnificent assurance of a great and glorious future, but which as they are spiritualized become pharisaical. As applied to the church they are a comedy."

Now this by a man who knew a great deal about reading literature, and he read the Bible and for him the statements of Scripture were taken at their plain and what he felt were their plain and simple meaning and he could not understand how individuals could think that Israel did not have a future of an ethnic character from the word of God. It's always good for us every now and then to get down upon our knees and ask God to let us take his word as it lies before us. There is such a tendency for us to turn to twisting or what Peter calls "torturing of the text of God" in order to make it mean things that are somehow unpalatable to us. The notable New Testament scholar, Adolph Schaller, was once approached by an ardent admirer who poured forth his praise, "I've always wanted to

meet a theologian who stands on the word of God." And Schaller said very solemnly, "Thank you, sir, but I don't stand on the word of God. I stand under it."

Now standing under the word of God is the proper place for us to stand. Let's look now for a few moments at Romans 11:1 through 10 and see what it tells us about Israel. The apostle writes and we turn first of all to his question that opens the chapter. The apostle asks, "I ask then: Did God reject his people?"

Now no one, of course, believes who knows anything much about Greek that anyone else can translate the Bible as well as he can and consequently, I am not totally happy with the renderings in the New International Version. I did work on certain parts of the New International Version. Those parts, of course, are a lot better than the others. [Laughter] But I won't tell you the ones on which I worked because you probably will find some things that are unsatisfactory to you in them. But I want to rephrase and retranslate this text in order to bring out something which I think the translators have not brought out quite as nicely as they could for an expository class like this. The apostle writes literally, "I say then, God has not cast away or cast off his people, has he?" It is evident from the way that the apostle phrases this question that he expects the answer, No! God has not cast away or cast off his people, has he? So the very question itself lets us know the kind of answer that the apostle expects. It was a natural question, incidentally, for him to ask because take a look back at verse 19 through verse 21,

"Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses said, 'I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.' And Isaiah boldly says, 'I was found by those who did not seek me; I will reveal myself to those who did not ask for me.' But concerning Israel he says, 'All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.'"

"Disobedient and obstinate people." Well, the natural question would be then, has God cast away his people? So he says, "I say then, God has not cast away his people, has he?" In fact, the very fact that he calls them people and his people is evidence that he is not going to cast them away. God does not call a group his people and then cast them away. It's clear that he regards them as related to him by covenant. So, did God reject his people? "By no means!" By no means! So it is clear right at the beginning from this question that the apostle asks that Israel has an ethnic future. It would seem at least to me that this is a necessary inference from that opening statement.

Now the statement, by the way, "God has not cast away his people, has he?" is a statement which itself is built upon statements of the Old Testament, because several times in the Old Testament the expression is used. "God has not cast away his people." So the apostle simply takes a statement from the Old Testament and rephrases it in question form expecting a negative answer. In 1 Samuel chapter 12, verse 22 and Psalm 94, verse 14 and Psalm 95, verse 4 we have these statements made that God has not cast away his people. He is faithful to the promises that he himself makes.

Now that is fundamental for us to remember. The promises of God are promises that he keeps. Well, the question itself suggests the kind of answer that the apostle expects, but you wouldn't know that necessarily from the English text. "I say then, did God reject his people?" Now the translators have said, "By no means!" They have sought by that to render in such a way that the answer is plain. Paul's answer then follows and it's given in verse 1b through verse 6. There may have been changes in the divine economy. There are no longer sacrifices that are valid in the city of Jerusalem since the time of the cross. There is no longer a valid priesthood. The ironic priesthood does not have any status before God any longer since the cross. There is no temple at which the sacrifices are to be made and to have validity there, because remember, when the Lord Jesus suffered on the cross we read, "The veil of the temple was writ and twain from top to bottom." Not from bottom to top, incidentally, as if it were done by man, but from top

to bottom. It was God's sweeping away the Old Testament cultus with the law, the priesthood, and the offerings; the whole thing as far as a covenant under which Israel was to live at that time.

Now, of course, the truths implicit in that old covenant were truths that are repeated in the New Testament in large part. He did not say we'll not have any need any longer for the Old Testament. The principles of righteousness unfolded there, the righteousness contained in the law, particularly the moral law, is significant for us. The illustrations of truths concerning atonement are significant for us, but the law, the priesthood, the offerings, the temple; they have been done away with. But there is no change in the great promises of God. That is why when the apostles preached they did not say, well, we can't preach from the Old Testament now.

We have to have something else. They turned to the Old Testament and they preached from the truths contained in the Old Testament. I often told my own students that it would be good for us as an exercise to put our Old Testaments aside for awhile. In theological classes I've often said it would be good for us to tear the New Testament out of our Bible for one year and to be forced to defend Christianity with the Old Testament alone, because that is what the apostles did. They defended the Christian truth from the Scriptures. In other words, the promises they expounded and they showed simply how they were fulfilled in the ministry of the Lord Jesus in his life, death, burial, and resurrection. "I ask then: Did God reject his people?" Paul's first answer is simply to deny it. "God forbid! May it not come to be." The apostle loves that expression. It's a very familiar opening Pauline rebuttal. It's just a denial directly. Has God become a liar or a covenant breaker? By no means! May it not come to be. His character is at stake, in other words.

So he sees that the character of God is at stake in the future of Israel and the promises made to the nation. Now he says in further answer to the question, "By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin."

He introduces his own case. After all, if it's true that God has cast away his people, how can you account for me? I'm an Israelite. I'm of the tribe of Benjamin. Incidentally, Benjamin was a very important tribe in Israel. In fact, Benjamin was the Israelitish aristocracy. So he was from the Israelitish aristocracy. A little tribe, but a very significant tribe identified with Judah. So, I am an Israelite myself. That proves that God has not cast away his people. I'm a descendent of Abraham. I'm from the tribe of Benjamin.

Now he states it directly. "God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew." Now that statement, "whom he foreknew," is a rather interesting statement. We don't have time to talk in great detail about what that means, but I've said several times in the course of exposition here that the New Testament word, to foreknow, is a word that really means to foreknow in the sense of enter into intimate relationship with and choose and that there is not a significant difference between foreknowledge and its usage in the New Testament and foreordination. The difference is one of emphasis. Foreknowledge stresses the intimate relationship involved in election. Foreordination suggests or stresses the end or the goal in the choice of God.

Now to show you that foreknowledge does not mean that he looked down through the years and saw who would believe and then chose them. Just take a look at this sentence. "God did not reject his people whom he foreknew." You see, his readers and he agree that God foreknew that. So it is clear from this use of the term that there would be no problem at all if they understood that God had foreknown Israel in the sense that he looked down through the years and saw that they would believe. Why, of course, he will not cast away people whom he knew would ultimately believe in him. There would be no question at all. The question then is, when God chooses someone, foreordains them according to his sovereign grace, and then they pass into a period of time in which they are disobedient does their promise still, their promise of acceptance, still hold? That's the question. So it is evident in the way that the apostle answers this,

"God did not reject his people whom he foreknew," that understands this in the sense of foreordination.

One of the classical scholars, Arthur Wade, who was probably the preeminent translator of classical literature, decided once that he would translate the Pauline Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews. You can go into libraries and obtain copies of his work. I have one in my own library, and it's an interesting translation because it's a translation made by a classical scholar, not primarily a Biblical scholar. So he does not have the ax to grind that so many of us who are theologians or would like to be theologians want to grind. This is the way he renders this. He says that "God did not reject his people whom he marked out for his own so long ago." So he renders foreknew as foreordained.

In other words, he understands the meaning of the Greek word. It means to enter into intimate relationship with in the sense of choice. So it is a word of election. That, of course, is the reason he will not reject his people. He has chosen them. But what about their unbelief someone might say? Well, God does something about unbelief. You see the Bible itself teaches us that it is his sovereign grace by which we are brought to faith. So it is by his sovereign grace that he brings Israel to faith in order that his promises be fulfilled. It's a magnificent statement you see the apostle makes.

So he says, God has not cast away nor will reject or did not reject his people whom he marked out for his own so long ago. God then is not fickle. He has had a plan within a plan. Later on in the chapter he will point out that Israel's unbelief at the present time was not a surprise to him. In fact, Israel's unbelief at the present time is in order that Gentiles might enter in, and the Gentiles are being blessed at the present time in order that Israel might be provoked to jealousy and return to him so that Jews and Gentiles may pass through the experience of rejection and acceptance to the glory of God and his grace. So a magnificent program that the apostle sets forth here, but we're anticipating ourselves.

The third answer that he gives is an appeal to the parallel with Elijah and his day. In Elijah's day, he said, there was apostasy. In fact, there was general apostasy in the land, but it was not universal. There were in the midst of general apostasy a number who had not apostatized. Listen to what he says,

"Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah? How he appealed to God against Israel, 'Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me?'"

Now there isn't a sound preacher in the world, a sound free grace man who hasn't felt like Elijah at one time or another. That he's the only one who understands grace. Well, "what was God's answer to him?" I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So you see, what he says to the people who are reading the Epistle to the Romans is that the situation today is like it was in Elijah's day. There was general apostasy. The nation Israel was generally in unbelief. There was Ahab, there was Jezebel, and there were the vast majority of the people, who were following them, and there was Elijah and Elijah thought he was the only one, but while there weren't many, there were seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal.

So he said it's like that today. Today there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Look at what he says in verse 5, "So too, at the present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Now in this 5th verse there are some rather interesting and important things that are stated. I wish it were possible to deal with all of them. You notice the apostle says, that there is a similarity, there is an analogy between the time of Elijah and the present time. So he says there is general apostasy in the present time. Israel is in general apostasy, but just like in Elijah's day, there was a remnant of believers so in the present day, there is a remnant of Jewish believers.

Now when he says in verse 5, "So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace," he does not refer to the Gentiles then. He refers to the Jewish believers in the body of Christ. You see, the body of Christ today is made up of Gentile believers and Jewish believers. We've had an interesting transformation. The church began as a Jewish body and then as the gospel spread over the Western world, many Gentiles began to come into the body of Christ, and at the present time the vast majority in the church of Christ are Gentiles. But there are still Jewish believers in the body of Christ today. There have always been down through the centuries. In fact, some of the outstanding Christians have been Jewish believers. Think of some in our own day. I was taught Hebrew at Dallas Theological Seminary by Charles Lee Feinberg. He was not a Gentile. Feinberg; as a matter of fact, Dr. Feinberg was studying to be a rabbi at one time and was converted. I had in my class a man that I sat right next to for many years at the seminary; he too, was a Jewish young man. His father was a missionary to the Jewish people, and down through the years there has been Jewish believers; Adolph Saver, Alfred Edersheim, Charles Feinberg, many others, Jewish Christians. There are many in this city right in Dallas.

Now they're an infinitesimal minority in the church at the present time. They may be growing. They may be growing, but anyway, that is what Paul is talking about when he says, "So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace." Now if you have your New Testaments turn over to Galatians chapter 6. In Galatians chapter 6 the apostle refers to this group and he calls them here by a term that more clearly identifies them. Galatians chapter 6, the apostle says in verse 15 of Galatians 6, "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God."

Now when he says the Israel of God he refers to Jewish believers in the church of Jesus Christ. The Israel of God, you see, he's been having in Galatians to contend with the Israel of Moses, that is those who were legalists who were not knowledgeable of the

doctrines of the grace of God and who wanted to put the Galatian Christians under the law, and so at the conclusion of the letter he says, "Peace be upon them even upon the Israel of God." That is those Jewish believers who have not fallen prey to the Judaizers who have maintained fidelity to the principles of grace; the Israel of God.

Now that's what he's talking about here when he says, "So too at the present time there is a remnant, a Jewish remnant, chosen by grace." Notice they are chosen by grace. Really the Greek text says, according to the election of grace. So it is an election by grace not by works; a gracious election.

Now the 6th verse is not parenthetical, but it explains the negative force of the proceeding phrase "according to the election of grace". He says, "And if by grace then it is no longer by works. If it were grace would no longer be grace." So the apostle defines grace as being antithetical to works. You cannot talk about a salvation by works and then talk about doing something in order to be saved. For example, just one simple example, you cannot talk about the salvation of God as being by grace if you say it's necessary for you to be baptized in water in order to be saved. That's a work. That's a physical work. That's a visual work. And since it's a work it cannot be the means by which we are saved for we are saved by grace apart from works. Augustine said, "*Gratia nisi gratis non est gratia.*" Grace unless it should be free is not grace. So the grace that the apostle speaks is election by grace apart from works.

There are always people who think that the Apostle Paul was unintelligible. I like the words that James Denney said about this. He said, "To say that Paul is unintelligible or that he presents Christianity in a way which does it every kind of injustice and is finally unacceptable to us is to fly in the face of history and experience. There have always been people who found Paul intelligible and accepted the gospel as he preached it. There are such people still, who if not in theological classrooms, then in mission halls, at street corners, and lowly rooms. It's not historical scholarship that is wanted for the understanding of him and neither of it is insight of genius. It is despair." You notice that,

it is despair that one needs to understand Paul. Paul did not preach for philosophers, he preached for sinners. He had no gospel except for men whose mouths were stopped and who were standing condemned at the bar of God. They understood him, and they find him eminently intelligible still. When a man has the simplicity to say what Dr. Schaller, "What could I do if God did not justify the ungodly? he had the key to the Pauline gospel of reconciliation in his hand." How true.

What you need to understand Paul is a sense of sin; a sense, therefore, of despair; a sense of condemnation; a sense of the need of grace then you'll understand Paul, because he talks about grace and he talks about how God's grace meets our sin and guilt and condemnation fully in the blood of Christ. Then Paul becomes plain and clear, but until you come to that place he will be unintelligible to you because you are a natural man, and the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God. They are foolishness to him. Never can he know them for they are spiritual discerned.

That's good, isn't it? Christians love that, you know. Now let's see. We want to talk about the logical conclusion here in verses 7 through 10. I love the Apostle Paul. I guess of all the students of the word of God, Paul is my favorite, and I like him because I do find him easy to follow. I love these then and therefore's and on account of this the apostle uses because it all seems to flow so beautifully. "What then?" he says, "what Israel sought so earnestly she," this translation says, it, "she did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, just as it is written." Viewed from the human side the nation has failed to obtain righteousness as a whole. There's a remnant, but as a whole, as a nation, they have failed. That's from the human side, but from the divine side, the election has obtained that which was promised to those who believe. But the elect did. Well, what about these that did not attain it? Ah, now this is a hard verse for some people, but I remind you it is just as much in the Bible as John 3:16. So if you can believe John 3:16, you have to believe this. If you cannot believe this you don't really believe John 3:16. What you really trust in is your own reason. He says, "The others were hardened." Were

hardened. Now someone jumps up and says, ah, but did you notice it's the passive voice? In other words, they were responsible for it. You didn't read far enough. He said, "As it is written: 'God gave them a spirit of stupor. God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.'"

Now you might say, well, that's one passage Paul. So he says we won't stop with one from Deuteronomy we'll go on to talk about the Psalms. "And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and" the Greek text says it a little stronger, "and bend forever their backs or bow down their backs always." These Old Testament passages are designed to prove the point. The men of Israel in Paul's days are hardened and blind like Israel in the wilderness. They are dazed and obtuse like Israel in the days of Isaiah. So he quotes from the law. He quotes from the prophets. He quotes from the writings. He quotes from all three of the sections of the Bible, because someone may jump up and say, oh, that's the law only! So Paul says all right. I'll pull it from the whole of the Old Testament, from the law, the prophets, and the writing and they all testify to the fact that God hardened the hearts of the disobedient.

Well, he stops at that point. It's a rather bad place to stop, so far as Romans is concerned. But he goes on to deal with it and we will deal with it next week, because he says, "Again did I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery?" Well, he'll deal with that next time. We'll stop at this point and pick it up as we attempt to deal with the subject of Romans 11 and an ethnic future for the nation of Israel. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these words that have come from the Apostle Paul. We thank Thee for the grace that has been shown us. We should never have turned to Thee were it not for the ministry of the Holy Spirit who has brought us to

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Christ in our sin. We thank Thee for the righteousness conveyed to us by grace. May we
be thankful for it. Bless the hour that follows. For Jesus' sake. Amen.