



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

“The Future of Ethnic Israel, part V”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are drawing near the conclusion of our study of this great chapter, Romans 11 and “The Future of Ethnic Israel”. I hope that the depth and the technicality of it has not been too much for you, and that the fact that we have referred to a number of things that are not easy to follow has not put you off too much. I suggest that if you find it especially difficult that you just read the Bible. It’s amazing how clear the Bible is when Bible teachers are not so clear. It reminds me of an old story about Alexander McLaren who was sometimes called the monarch of the pulpit. He was a very fine preacher of the word in Britain in Manchester for many years, and he loved to tell the story about the old verger in the Episcopalian or Anglican Church in Oxford where the Bampton Lectures have been held historically. There was a church in which a number of outstanding men through the years had preached and lectured, and he use to like to say after he had been there for many years he said, “I heard every lecture and sermon delivered in this here church for forty years, and thank God I’m a Christian still!”

[Laughter] So I do hope that what I’m saying to you may not deter you from your Christian faith.

Now I’ve taken a little advantage of you and I must admit it, because I’m supposed to give a lecture on Romans 11 to a scholarly society in Canada in about a month from now. I was just going over some of the things with a view to that particular

lecture. So you have been something of a guinea pig, and I'm sorry to have to do you that way, but in the future things will be a little different.

Now tonight we want to take a look at verses 25, 26, and 27; three very important verses in connection with this subject of, “The Future of Ethnic Israel.” In fact, I think that probably if we had to pick out any verses that are really the heart of the matter, it would be these verses. Let me read from the New International Version New Testament.

“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: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege and opportunity to study again the Scriptures. How great it is to be able to open them and to read in them the things that concern our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and also, the things that have to do with the purposes that Thou hast for Israel and the Gentiles. Enable us, Lord, to understand. Enable us to profit from the things that we study from Romans 11. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The importance of this subject of the ethnic future of Israel is one that does justify a fairly detailed treatment. One of the greatest of the theologians of the present day in a book on the return of Christ has said that a separate chapter on Israel in his book which he gave was justified for several reasons. One of them is that renewed attention has been given to Israel due to the tragic outbursts of anti-Semitism in our day.

Now that, of course, is not a situation that pertains to the 20th Century entirely, because that has been characteristic of the centuries down to the 20th Century as well. But we have seen a very tragic outburst of anti-Semitism, particularly in Nazi Germany. Then Professor Berkouwer went on to say that the rise of the Jewish state in the land of Palestine is another of the important reasons that would lead him to write a separate chapter on the subject in his book on the return of Christ. That is something unique, because we have not had the rise of a Jewish state for centuries before the 20th Century. In 1948, of course, the nation came into existence after having been out of existence for hundreds of years. That is sufficient for Professor Berkouwer to consider the question of Israel in his large book.

Now the apostle we have said has shown that Israel's restoration to the place of preeminence among the nations in the purpose of God is possible because faith is the lone condition for Israel's restoration. We have seen that just above here in verse 23, I believe it is, of chapter 11 where the apostle says, “And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.” So Israel's return is possible. Its lone condition is faith. This of course, this is from the human standpoint. We're looking at it from that standpoint in this statement. We know from other passages in the Bible that Israel's restoration will not take place until she has passed through considerable sufferings and trials. We know those as the tribulation period of the future or Daniel's seventieth week, Israel's seventieth week really, or technically. We have also seen that Israel's restoration is probable, not simply possibly, but probable for the simple reason that Paul argues that it is more likely than Gentile salvation itself. And he used the illustration of the olive tree saying that, “If the natural branches should be cut off and unnatural branches grafted in, how much more reasonable that the natural branches should be grafted in to their own olive tree again.” And he reached the climax of that particularly argument in verse 24 by saying,

“After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!”

So it's a logical argument based upon the fact that it would be easier to graft the natural branches into their own tree than unnatural branches into a tree that does not belong to them.

Now Paul, having said it's possible and probable, says finally here in these verses that it has been prophesied. So he turns to the Old Testament Scriptures and cites a section from the Old Testament in proof that Israel shall be restored. “The deliverer will come from Zion. He will turn godlessness away from Jacob.” You will notice as we come to these last verses that the key words in the final part of the chapter become mystery and mercy.

Now tonight we look at the mystery, but in our last study next week, the Lord willing we should look at the subject of mercy in connection with the program of God. But these two words mystery and mercy unlock the divine secret of the histories of the nations, and it is a story of divine mercy both to the Gentiles and also to the nation Israel.

Well, now we look at verse 25 first, and here we have the beginning of the prophecy of Israel's restoration. He in the exposition of God's mercy to Israel begins with a declaration of it. He says,

“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 shall be saved.”

Now notice that he relates this particular verse to the preceding. Now there is no real connection here, but in the original text there is. One of the disappointing things, in

my opinion, with the New International Version is that they have tended to overlook those particles, conjunctive particles that connect sentences, and phrases, and clauses together.

Now verse 25 begins in the Greek text with a little “for”. “For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery.” Now that little word “for” is causal. It introduces the ultimate ground of the hope of Israel’s regrafting into the olive tree. And it is here that the hardening is in part and that there must come in a full number of Gentiles before that time takes place.

Now he is concerned that his readers not be ignorant and so he says, “I don’t want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers.” There are some renderings in the Authorized Version that will go with me to my dying day probably on into heaven. And I must confess that here is a case, because the Authorized Version reads something like, “I do not want you to be ignorant brethren of this ministry.” I’ve always like that, because I have a friend who is a preacher and he likes to say when he comes to these “I don’t want you to be ignorant brethren,” that he did not mind being one of the evangelical brethren, or one of the Plymouth brethren, or one of the grace brethren, he just did not want to be one of the ignorant brethren. [Laughter] So “I don’t want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brethren.”

Now Israel’s restoration is expected because, notice what he says, her restoration is expected for her hardening is only partial. For he said how much more readily will these, the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree for I don’t want you to be ignorant of this fact, that Israel has experienced a hardening in part. So the fact that Israel’s hardening is only a partial hardening is some reason for expecting that Israel be grafted again in to the olive tree connected with the Abrahamic promises. Furthermore, he says it is something that is temporary because it is related to the coming in of the full number of the Gentiles.

Now we can look at it from the standpoint of Israel's hardening and we would say Israel's hardening is subject to two limitations which sum up this chapter. It isn't in part, that has to do with the extent of her hardening. Now remember we said that Israel's hardening is partial because there are Jewish people who are being saved today, and so those Jewish people can say God has fulfilled his promises to us. We have come into relationship to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And so the promises that God gave of spiritual salvation are our possession. So the hardening is only partial. It's only partial. It's a hardening that is an extent. Look back again at verse 5, “So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.”

Notice the word remnant. There is at the present time a remnant of Jewish believers chosen by grace. And then look at verse 17. Paul says, “If some of the branches have been broken off.” So it is clear that in the apostle's mind he does not think of Israel as having been rejected in the present age. He thinks of Israel's rejection in the present age as a partial rejection. Perhaps we should just simply say her rejection is not total in the present age. We can only speak loosely of today being a day of Israel's rejection. It is only loosely, it is partial, but speaking from the standpoint of Israel's hardening it is temporary because in verse 25 until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

So in other words, this hardening that has come to Israel is a temporary hardening. In duration it is temporary. Now he alluded to this above in the context too. In verse 12, he had said, “But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!” So he speaks about Israel's fullness. In other words, their rejection is temporary. Verse 15, “For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?”

So again, he expects that there will be an acceptance on the part of Israel. So then Israel's hardening is subject to two limitations. It's a hardening in part, and it's a

hardening that is temporary. The apostle calls these things a mystery, *musterion*. Now that is the Greek word that is used. “I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery.” The word mystery as we’ve often said is not a word that means something mysterious. It rather refers to a secret, a divine secret. It has to do with a particular doctrine that is known only through revelation and usually a doctrine that was hidden for a time, but has now come to be the subject of the Spirit’s revelation or illuminations. So *musterion* means a secret. Revelation hidden from olden times but now made known.

So Paul claims that this view of the progress of God’s purpose through the ages was not something that was revealed in the Old Testament, and I presume he would say in the sense in which it is revealed in the New. Not that the Old Testament does not give some clues with reference to this, but it is something that is now the subject of divine revelation. When he says in verse 25, “until the full number of the Gentiles be come in,” this term, “the full number of the Gentiles,” the fullness of the Gentiles is a soteriological term. It’s a term that refers to the entrance of Gentiles into the relationship to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It refers to their engrafting into the olive tree. So when he writes, “Until the full number of the Gentile’s has come in,” he means have been grafted into the olive tree and have become partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Someone called me last week and said after the message in the course of conversation about something else, “it certainly is great to be related to the root.” I never thought of it that way. I was shocked at first at my ignorance of what he was talking about, but then I remembered it was I who had been speaking about the topic on the Wednesday night. But that is right. We are the unnatural branches that have come into relationship with the root and fatness of the olive tree.

So when he speaks here then of the fullness of the Gentiles, a soteriological term, refers to Gentile’s salvation in the present age. Now there is a term in the Bible that is related to eschatological truth and that truth is the times of the Gentiles. Now the fullness of the Gentiles is to be distinguished from the times of the Gentiles. The times of the

Gentiles is a governmental or eschatological term that refers to the period of time from the fall of Jerusalem in 605 B.C. to the second advent of Jesus Christ when the political affairs of this world are in Gentile hands. So, that we are living in the times of the Gentiles.

Now we also are living in the time when the fullness of the Gentiles, that when the full number of the Gentiles is in process of being completed. But one is a soteriological term; the other is an eschatological term.

Now we're talking then about the soteriological term. “I don't want you to be ignorant, blindness or hardening has occurred in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.” One might ask the question, has come into what? Well, unfortunately Paul does not tell us with absolute clearness in this text. So some have said, have come into the kingdom of God. Others have said, have come into the church. Now neither of these two terms is used here. He does not say has come into the church. He doesn't say has come into the kingdom of God, but he has talked about an olive tree and he has talked about being grafted in the olive tree. And he said that the olive tree has to do with the blessings given to the fathers. And he's spoken about how Israel is enemies on your account, but as far as election is concerned they're loved on account of the patriarchs. So we then, I believe, from this passage can only say that what Paul says here is that until the full number of the Gentiles has come into the olive tree; that is, in possession of the blessings given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now that I think is all that this context justifies us in saying clearly, but we know from other passages in Paul that he would acquaint this with coming into the church of Jesus Christ. And so we do say that this is probably a reference to the coming into the church until the full number of Gentiles has come in. But it is the church that has been grafted into the olive tree and made partaker of the root and fatness of that olive tree.

Now I wish it were possible for us to turn to chapter 15, verses 16 and 18. If you are a Bible student it would be good to take up your pencil or your pen if you don't mind writing in your Bible, and write Romans chapter 15, verse 16 and verse 18 where the

apostle uses similar expressions or related expressions for the entrance of Gentiles into salvation, and the fact that today is the day of Gentile salvation.

Well, when we come to verse 26, we come to a verse that is very hotly disputed. These opening words, “And so all Israel will be saved,” represent three hotly debated exegetical questions. What is the force of, and so? Of course, you are reading only the English text and the English text may give us a little more certainty than if we read the Greek text and we knew that there were possibilities of translation in the Greek text. So this is especially a problem for individuals who read the Greek text since they may know of different possibilities of rendering. But this has been a little phrase, *kai hetos*, that has been hotly debated.

Now I wish it was possible for me to go into great detail here. I’m going to do that in Toronto when I’m up there, the Lord willing, but I’ll try to sum up some of the things that are at issue here. Some have suggested that this means simply “and in this manner and so” but when they explain the manner, “and in this manner,” they refer back to the preceding context in verse 1 through verse 24 and simply say what we have seen in the preceding verses of the chapter is that down through the centuries some Israelites are coming into relationship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in this age. They are a remnant, and when this age is over and these few Israelites that are coming in as the years go by, when this age is over then all Israel will be saved.

In other words, all Israel represents then the trickle of Jewish believers that have come into the church since the time of the apostles to the present day, and usually associated with this is the fact that there will be no great outpouring of blessing upon ethnic Israel in the future. That all of the blessing that Israel can expect, ethnic Israel, national Israel, the people we know as the Jews, all the future that they can expect is that trickle of Jewish believers down through the centuries. They do not look forward to a bright future of a vast end gathering of the Nation Israel into the kingdom of God. That is the way it has been interpreted, “and in this way,” this way, is a reference to the

preceding context in which Paul has said what we try to do is preach the gospel, save Gentiles in order that the Gentiles might provoke the Jews to jealousy and some of the Jews be saved. So in this way all Israel shall be saved. We will not have an ethnic future for Israel.

Now we must in the interpretation of holy Scripture, we must pay attention to men who are Christian men who are scholarly men and who have sought to explain the text of Scripture as fairly as they are able. And so we must not rule out of hand an interpretation like this just because we don't like it. Too often we tend to do that, and therefore, there is no communication between these people. And the amillennialists and the premillennialists do not have any opportunity for debate so that one or the other might be brought to the truth.

Now I can say this, that that view is a very much of a minority view in present day scholarship, biblical scholarship. I'm not speaking about unbelieving contemporary scholarship, but believing Christian scholarship. That is a minority view. Other interpretations have been given. It has been said that when Paul says, “And so all Israel shall be saved,” that this is to be understood as “and then all Israel shall be saved.” And it should be taken then in a temporal sense.

Now it is possible to give it this temporal sense because the adverb *betos*, translated “so” can have in certain contexts a temporal sense. I looked at every usage of *betos* and *kai betos* in the apostle's writings, in the concordance and I can find only one case in *kai betos* might have this force. So it is a very rare meaning, but unfortunately it's the way that people read the text. They say a hardening in part has happened until the full numbers of the Gentiles has come in and then all Israel shall be saved. I suggest to you that that is probably an unlikely translation of this passage. It is possible to take it in an imperative sense, but give it a slightly different meaning from the first sense. To say accordingly or and so or and in this manner, but to refer not to the little trickle down through the years but to the immediately preceding context.

In fact, 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 in this manner all Israel shall be saved. That is, as the full number of the Gentiles comes in all Israel shall be saved. That makes very good sense, and it is a relating of this 26th verse to the 25th verse which is the way in which you ordinarily read things. You don’t read one verse and relate it to something said words and words or hundreds of words said above as a general rule, but first of all, in reading any writing you seek to relate the sentence that you are reading to the immediately preceding one.

Now there are people who are irrational. They do make one sentence and then they say another sentence, and they don’t have any relationship to each other, and we stand there puzzled at what they mean. But when a person speaks rationally he relates sentences to sentences so that his discourse is intelligible. So it’s natural in any interpretation whether you are interpreting literature or the Bible or a scientific work to read a sentence to relate it either to the preceding sentence or to the one that follows. That way you have intelligible speech. If you don’t, you don’t have intelligible speech. So it’s possible to take it that way. I rather like that sense myself. I think it’s much more likely. But let me mention a couple of other possibilities.

We could take this, and therefore, all Israel will be saved. There is some justification for the usage of the term “so” in the sense of “therefore” or an inferential sense. But again, there’s not a whole lot of support from usage for that. It’s possible, because when words are very common words, we use them so often we give them different meanings. If you were to look up “for” in an English dictionary for example, you would probably find that there are as many meanings for “for” in English as Heinz has varieties. That’s just a fact. It’s a common word. All of our languages reflect that. So it wouldn’t be surprising for us to find that this Greek word had also the force, and therefore, all Israel will be saved. But again, it’s a rare meaning, and it’s a meaning and

it's much better to take the common meaning if the common meaning of a word makes sense rather than a rare meaning. Dr. Chafer who was one of my mentors in theology was a Presbyterian and he never wanted to relinquish sprinkling as a method of baptism. And so when he would teach the men who were mainly baptistic, that is they mainly believed in emersion, not all. I came to the seminary as a Presbyterian, and men used to leave Dr. Chafer's lecture on baptism and go out and come in as Presbyterians and leave as Baptists, because his explanation was so weak in support of sprinkling.

Now I'm not trying to make fun of sprinkling because it's possible to make a much better case for it than Dr. Chafer did. But he always would start out by saying, “Now in the case of the word *baptismo* there are two meanings. The common meaning is to immerse. The common meaning is to dip. It comes from *bapto* and the suffix of that particular root means to cause to dip, therefore, baptism, first of all, means to immerse. But there is a secondary meaning.” And then he would argue on the basis of the secondary meaning. Well, it's good to do that if the first meaning doesn't make sense, but if the first meaning makes sense don't seek a strange meaning. That's very bad. There's lots of Christians who do that in reading the Bible, incidentally. And there's a tendency to do it when you want the Bible to say something that it doesn't really say, but you can make a case for it by appealing to secondary and in tertiary senses that the word may have.

Now there is another sense in which this may be taken and I will close with this, not close the message, but close my discussion of this by mentioning this. Notice that in the following words we have the little word “as”. “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written.” Now it is possible to take this “so” as correlative then. The *hetos* with the *kathos* that follows. These are the two Greek words. And so we relate this so not with what precedes as much as what follows. “And so all Israel will be saved as it is written.”

Now that makes very good sense. And that might be the sense that the apostle has in mind. That sense is justifiable. We have cases of this in the New Testament. It

may be the best sense, but it's either this sense, evidentially, or “in this manner” referring to the fact that all the Gentiles must come in, and then it's Israel's turn to enter again into the program of God. So we'll drop it at that. We want to try to rule out, however, the meaning. I don't think it's justified to say “and so all Israel will be saved” a reference to a little trickle down through the centuries. That is not stated by that particular little phrase.

Now what does “all Israel” mean? Well, you might think looking at this phrase first that this must mean every single Israelite and that might seem to go against what I just said about taking the ordinary meaning. But I suggest to you that the ordinary meaning for “all Israel” is not every single Israelite. Now the reason I suggest that is because the Bible, I think, teaches that.

Now what I'd like for you to do is to turn with me to 1 Kings chapter 12 and verse 1. You know when you interpret the Bible it's very important that you interpret it according to the Bible itself. We call this the analogy of Scripture, and all good Bible students use the analogy of Scripture. We're indebted to the Reformers for the publicizing of this particular scriptural rule of interpretation, but the apostles used it. The writers of Scripture used it. They just simply discovered what was already there.

Now we read here, “Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king.” Now it's obvious from this context that all the Israelites had not, but Israel as a whole had, but not all the Israelites. The context will make it plain. Turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 12 and verse 1 through 5. 2 Chronicles chapter 12, verse 1 through verse 5. Let me read a few verses here.

“After Rehoboam's position as king was established and he had become strong, he and all Israel with him abandoned the law of the Lord.” (Notice the expression, all Israel.)

“Because they had been unfaithful to the Lord, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam. With twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen and the innumerable troops of Libyans, Sukkites and Cushites that came with

him from Egypt, he captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem. Then the prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and to the leaders of Judah who had assembled in Jerusalem for fear of Shishak, and he said to them, “This is what the Lord says, you have abandoned me; therefore, I now abandon you to Shishak.”

But now here is a prophet and he’s a prophet of the Lord and he comes and gives the message of the Lord and verse 1, however, had said “he and all Israel with him abandoned the law of the Lord.” It’s clear that the prophet Shemaiah is not included. So “all Israel” does not refer to all Israel. That is, every single Israelite. There may be exceptions.

Now I’d like for you also to notice Daniel chapter 9, verse 11. No, I don’t have time. You just put that in your notes and look that up when you get a chance because that supports this.

Now the clue to the force of this word then is found in usage, and from usage we learn that the expression “all Israel” does not refer to every single Israelite. In fact, the clue to the understanding of it may well be the response that the nation Israel gave to Jesus Christ. Do you remember what response they gave to him? We’re inclined to say occasionally, all or Israel rejected the Lord. That’s not really true. Not every Israelite rejected the Lord. The nation as a whole did. The great mass of the generation at the time of our Lord plus their leadership did, but not every single Israelite. So when we say all Israel rejected the Lord, we mean the nation as a whole, not every single Jewish individual.

Now this usage is found in Rabbinic Literature. Let me read to you a quotation for the Mishnah Tractat Sanhedrin. This is what it says, “Thus all Israel has a portion in the age to come.” But then after you have read that the passage goes on to speak about those Israelites who don’t have a portion in the age to come, naming the Sadducees, the sorcerers, and various other peoples. But nevertheless, it says, all Israel has a place in the

future. So the term “all Israel” does not refer to every single Israelite, but Israel as a whole, the national leadership and the great mass of the people.

Now the Bible makes that plain because in the prophetic portions of the word of God in the Old Testament we learn that Israel is going to have to pass through great tribulation and many of the Israelites shall lose their lives by virtue of their disobedience and apostasy in the last days. And God is going to bring the true elect Israel through to the possession of their blessings.

Now that brings us to a brief discussion of the non-premillennial interpretation of Romans 11:26a, specifically that last word, “and so all Israel,” that is the nation as a whole, “shall be saved.” Now remember we said that John Calvin, a great biblical man and a great interpreter said, “Many understand this of the Jewish people as though Paul had said religion would again be restored among them as before, but I extend the word Israel to all the people of God, Jews and Gentiles.” And we have rejected that because it’s contrary to the New Testament usage of the term Israel. You do not find the term Israel in the New Testament ever referred to Gentiles. There are only two passages where the proponents of that idea can lean and those two are not interpreted correctly. They are Galatians chapter 6, verse 16 and Romans chapter 9, verse 6. Both of which should not be interpreted to mean that Israel may refer to Gentiles. It’s contrary to the context here which we’ve had a contrast throughout this passage between Israel the nation and the nations that are Gentiles. It would be strange if the apostle should suddenly here, “so all Israel will be saved,” mean by that Jewish people and Gentiles. It’s contrary to the usage of the term in this context. It’s also contrary to verse 28 where he says, “As far as the gospel is concerned, they, Israel, ethnic Israel, are enemies on your account; but as far as the election is concerned, they, ethnic Israel are loved on account of the patriarchs.” So we reject that.

Professor Berkouwer, William Hendrickson, a good commentator, and some others have said that “all Israel shall be saved” refers to the elect Jews throughout the present

age. We’ve talked about that. We’re said that that is unlikely to be the interpretation. Let me just suggest to you some reasons in addition to the ones that we have given. Notice that it says, “And so all Israel will be saved.”

Now according to the idea that this is a reference to the trickle of Jews down through the age, what we should expect then is some Jews being saved all the time. Which is, of course, true, but is that the meaning of all Israel? Well, in Greek it’s an interesting thing that when an author wants to speak of something in the future as action that is durative in the future he uses a particular kind of construction. The normal use of a future tense is a kind of point action; action as an event, not a continuous thing. And it is that later form of the verb that is found here. It is the simple future tense. It is a future passive, but it’s a simple future tense which refers to a future event primarily. So it’s then normal interpreted as a reference to an ethnic future for Israel.

Now perhaps next time if we have a chance, I’ll give you some more reasons for that, but our time is just about up and I wanted to say just a word about John Murray’s interpretation. Mr. Murray is an amillennialist. He’s now a premillennialist. I mean he is in heaven now, but he was a very wonderful Christian man. A very fine interpreter and he was an amillennialist or post-millennialist. He did not believe in the interpretations of Professor Berkouwer with whom he was very familiar. But he writes, “It is of ethnic Israel, Paul is speaking, and Israel could not possibly include Gentiles.” Mr. Murray did not believe in a millennium to come, but he at least acknowledged when he says, “So all Israel will be saved,” God did have in mind an ethnic future for Israel.

Now the last of the passages is a most interesting text and the apostle cites it. I just want to sum it up by saying this. That this citation that the apostle appeals to you will not find in any one verse in the Old Testament. The apostle went back into the Old Testament to the Book of Isaiah, he selected a portion from Isaiah chapter 59, then a portion from Isaiah chapter 27, and possibly, he took one of the phrases from Jeremiah chapter 31 or the passage of the new covenant, and possibly a simple little phrase from

one of the Psalms. But he wove it all together, and the interesting thing about it is that this quotation found right here in verse 26, the last half of the verse and verse 27, is a collection of three Messianic passages. Isaiah chapter 59 is a reference to the Davidic Covenant. “The Redeemer will come from Zion.”

The next of the passages from Isaiah chapter 27 is a reference to the Abrahamic Covenant. The wording of that particular passage is taken from Genesis 17. And the last phrase, “When I take away their sins,” or the last clause, that many commentators feel is related to Jeremiah 31 or the New Covenant. So what he has in effect said is ethnic Israel has a future and that’s what the Scriptures say. The Scriptures in which the David Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, and the New Covenant are given and these three covenants are the three unconditional covenants of the Old Testament which speak of God’s grace to be given at his own time and upon his own initiative. As he says here, “This is my covenant with them.” It is what I am doing.

Well, there is a mystery about Israel. There’s something which no philosopher will be able to discover. Their present existence, their present dispersion, their future destiny have all been revealed to us in the word of God, but God’s word can only be apprehended through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. It’s quite in accordance with this remark that one of the most acute philosophers, the great philosopher that Germany has produced probably, Hegel, a man who was very fond of showing the meaning of history said when he came to the history of the Jews and commented, “It’s a dark, troublesome enigma to me. I am not able to understand it. It does not fit in with any of our categories. It is a riddle.” It is a mysterious nation, and it’s a mysterious nation because at the heart of Israel is Israel’s Messiah.

And do you remember what Israel’s Messiah is called in the Old Testament? More than one place. Wonderful. *Pele*. Wonderful. When Samson’s parents asked for his understanding he performed wonderfully. Isaiah said, “His name shall be called Wonderful.” You cannot explain the being and attributes of the Messianic King, Israel’s

Jehovah. And the same characteristic pertains to the nation Israel. It is a unique nation. It is wonderful. It has the hand of God upon it, but it's basic history is unfolding and we look forward to in the future to the restoration of the nation Israel to its place of preeminence in order that the whole of the world may enter in to the magnificent blessings of world-wide salvation recorded in Scripture.

Yes, I'm a Calvinist. I do believe that God has his elect, but the elect are not a little company of people sitting over in one corner of heaven. There is a vast multitude of individuals who are coming into the body of Christ in the future that shall make the body of the redeemed in heaven a vast horde of people, perhaps, far greater than the lost down through the centuries. We look forward to that. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these words given to us by the Apostle Paul. We rejoice in the promise, “And so all Israel shall be saved.” We anticipate the greatness of the manifestation of Thy power and in the meantime, Lord, enable us if it should please Thee to provoke some of them to jealousy that they may turn to Christ. For his name sake. Amen.