



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

"The Future of Ethnic Israel, part VI"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] This is the last of our series of studies in Romans 11 and "The Future of Ethnic Israel." We're turning to Romans chapter 11 and reading beginning at verse 28 through verse 36. The apostle has just cited from the Old Testament, from several places actually, and now he concludes his argument by saying,

"As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 'Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?' 'Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."

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

[Prayer] Father, again we give Thee thanks and praise for all of the things that are ours through the Lord Jesus Christ. We do ask, Lord, that through the teaching of Thy word that we may gain an insight into the plans and purposes that Thou hast for the nation Israel. We rejoice in the way in which the affairs of men are ultimately redounding to the glory of our great God and Savior. We rejoice, Lord, in the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God and acknowledge before Thee that Thy ways are past finding out. We know, Lord, that we can entrust our affairs to Thee and expect Thee to answer all of the needs that we have. We ask that Thou would be with us as we study the Scriptures. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The apostle having argued the future of ethnic Israel by the explanation of the purpose of her falling away, namely Gentile salvation to provoke the Jews to jealousy in order that there may be world-wide blessing, and by the parable of the olive tree and has just now brought forward the ancient prophecies from the Old Testament which have said that, "The deliver shall come from Zion and turn godliness away from Jacob." I still have a little problem with this New International Version, and I'm thinking the Authorized Version and reading these verses, and occasionally they get tangled up a little bit. I did want to make one comment that I didn't have time to make last week and that is that this citation in verse 26 and verse 27 is a very free citation from several places in the Old Testament. The apostle refers to Isaiah chapter 59, verse 20 and 21. He also refers to Isaiah chapter 27 and verse 9, and it is possible that he in the midst of the reference to these two passages, somewhat freely, inserts also a phrase from Psalm 14, verse 7, as well as a reference in a word or so to Jeremiah chapter 31.

So what the apostle has done is not to cite one specific passage, but rather to look to the Old Testament and select several strands of teaching which have to do with the future of Israel. And the interesting thing about it is that the citation from Isaiah chapter 59, verse 20 and 21 is a reference to the Davidic Covenant. That is the promises that God gave to David that one from his seed would sit on the throne of Israel forever, and also there is a reference to the Abrahamic Covenant which is the basic fundamental unconditional covenant of the Old Testament, and finally, in the reference on the last phrase or clause of verse 27, "When I take away their sins," that's a reference to the New Covenant.

So it is remarkable here that the apostle in summing up what the Old Testament teaches about the future of Israel should reach back and take passages from the Old Testament which have to do with the three fundamental unconditional covenants: the Abrahamic Covenant, the David Covenant, and the New Covenant and combine them in one free citation in order to demonstrate that Israel does have an ethnic future. That's remarkable, and I think that it's worthwhile to lay a great deal of stress upon it. He understood that basic and fundamental to the future of Israel is the fulfillment of the promises that God gave to Abraham and his descendents.

Now that has raised the question of the broad plan and purpose of God in his dealing with the nations. So now in verse 28 through verse 32 the apostle obliges his readers by surveying the broad sweep of God's dealings with the nations. As we mentioned in the last study last Wednesday night, the key words in the final part of the chapter are the words, mystery and mercy, and you will note as you read these verses beginning at verse 28 through verse 32 that the word mercy becomes very prominent. In fact, it is mentioned four times. Listen to the apostle again in verse 30,

"Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they

too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on all."

It is not easy to distinguish mercy from grace, but if we were to try to simply do it we would say that grace is God's work in behalf on the guilty, whereas, mercy is God's work in behalf of the miserable. It is the work of grace to deliver us from guilt. It is the work of mercy to deliver us from misery. The work mercy in Greek is the word, *eleeo*, from which we get the English word which use to be fairly popular. I don't think I've seen it in a long time, but eleemosynary. Eleemosynary institutions are institutions of mercy, and so this is the word mercy.

Now let's look at verse 28 through verse 32 where the apostle speaks about his plans for the nations. What he does here is recapitulate what he's been saying, but apply it to God's dealings with the Gentiles and with the Israel in the broadest possible way. And what he says is essentially, Israel has been cast away, but she awaits a restoration.

Now beginning with verse 28, we'll just note a few things, but before we do let me say this too. I should have said this; this paragraph is brought to an end with two balanced sentences. Now if you'll study verse 28 through verse 32 you will see this. They are remarkable sentences. They are beautifully constructed. It's clear that Paul thought a great deal about what he was saying. He gave a great deal of care to what he was saying. Notice now he will give us a balanced sentence and then conclude with a statement that begins with a "for," then he will do the same thing again. There are two of them. "As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account. But as far as the election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs."

Now you can see the balance there. Then he in verse 29 says, "For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable." Now he will do the same thing in verse 30 through 32, but this time it will be expanded a little bit. Look at it.

"Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all."

Thus one part of the first of these sentences he says, "Enemies for your advantage." That is, Israel is now in the place of enmity toward God, but it is for the benefit of you Gentiles. They are, however, beloved on account of the fathers for they have the unconditional promises, for God does not change his mind. "The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable."

So that's the kind of thought that is before us here. "As far as the gospel is concerned they," now the "they", of course, is a reference to the nation Israel for the apostle is speaking to the Gentiles. Remember up here in about verse 13, he says, "I'm talking to you Gentiles in as much as I am the apostle of the Gentiles I make much of my ministry."

So, "As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account." This word "enemies" is probable passive; that is, they are treated as enemies on account of the Gentiles. Now that is suggested by the fact that in verse 27 just before it, the apostle has said, "And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." So, "As far as the gospel is concerned they are enemies on your account, but as far as the election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs."

Now notice the word "election". You will see from this that for the apostle even though the nation Israel is now in disobedience, the election still holds. You see, this is a question that the apostle wrested with in chapter 3, and then again in chapter 11 in the earlier part of the chapter. After all, we all know that Israel was chosen by God, but we also know that Israel has turned away from the Lord, therefore, are not their promises no longer valid because of their disobedience? And the apostle is over and over again

stressing the fact that those promises still pertain to the nation as a whole because of what he told the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

Now, of course, he does not mean; I hesitate to say this because most people probably will not think this, but I know that some do. He does not mean, of course, that every Jewish person who has ever lived shall be saved. Jewish people are to be saved just as Gentiles. They must be believers.

Now he is speaking here when he speaks about these promises still holding, he's speaking about the fact that as a nation Israel has a future, and in God's plans and purposes there is to be a generation that will believe in him in the future, so that the nation as a whole in the future will turn toward the Lord. In the meantime, when an Israelite believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is saved. When an Israelite does not believe, he is lost just like Gentiles.

So when the apostle states here that "they are loved on account of the patriarchs," he does not mean that God loves them in spite of their rebellion. He means simply, that he has made promises to the nation, and the nation has a glorious future. But every single individual Israelite is responsible to believe in Jesus Christ. He just guarantees by the promises of the Old Testament that there will be a time when the nation as a whole will turn to the Lord. So, "they are beloved on account of the fathers."

Well, why is that so? Well, then he says in verse 29 an explanation, "for". Now I like these little words, because they really help you to understand what the apostle is thinking when he writes. You will get the most out of the Apostle Paul when you seek to follow his thought. He thinks rather logically. Now occasionally he gets carried away with himself and writes a long sentence which is all tangled up, but now that's not bad as far as the doctrine is concerned. It's very clear. In fact, some of his sentences which are the despair of grammarians are also very strong in their emphasis upon points that he wants to make. We don't say that the apostle uses grammar perfectly. When we say the Bible is inspired, incidentally, we don't mean that there are not usages in the Bible that

were strange, that were unusual. After all, there is no such thing as correct grammar in the sense that if a person does not follow that particular usage he sins. Grammar is something that comes to being because of usage. So the apostle violated usage every now and then just as you and I do, but we gain a great deal often in emphasis by doing it.

So if you want to follow the apostle's thought look at his words carefully and note the particles. "For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable." Now that word gift, I just read it wrong, is really plural; gifts. "For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable." What does the apostle mean when he speaks about God's gifts to the nation Israel? Well, we might guess a little bit, and probably we would hit a lot of them, but it's much better to seek to find the answer in the book itself. Fortunately in this case, we have a good answer back in chapter 9. So turn to chapter 9 and verse 4 and 5, and let's notice some of the gifts that are given to the nation Israel. While you are finding that let me say this that the word for gifts here is the word *charisma*. So that these are the *charismata*.

Now we are living in a day in which there is a great deal of stress upon the charismatic in the Christian faith. Now unfortunately, the charismatic is not scriptural. There are a lot of people who think it's scriptural, but it is not scriptural. When Paul speaks here about the gifts and calls them *charismata*, he's really not talking about the same things that he talks about when he writes the church and speaks about spiritual gifts to them. He's talking about Israel's gifts. Israel's gifts of grace. *Charisma* is a word, incidentally, that comes from the word, *charis*, that means grace, so that *charismata* are gifts of grace.

Well, let's notice what the apostle says here in chapter 9 and verse 4. He says, "Theirs is the adoption as sons." Notice that this is of the nation as sons. "Theirs the divine glory," he thinks of the Shekinah over the tabernacle. "The covenants," Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New Covenant, Palestinian; all of these were covenants that were given to Israel. "The receiving of the law," the Mosaic Law, "the temple worship and the

promises," now when he speaks about the promises he has in mind primarily the Messianic promises. "Theirs are the patriarchs," they have the great tradition of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and all of the other great men of faith. "And from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is at the same time God over all, forever praised! Amen."

Now let's turn back to chapter 11. So when he says, "For the gifts of God are irrevocable," to the nation Israel he thinks about these things, and primarily, in his mind are the covenants, and also, the promises; the Messianic promises which are part of those covenants. But he also speaks about his call.

Now I think we could distinguish gifts and calling by simply saying this, that the gifts are the effects of the call. The call is the cause of the gifts. I would think that what he refers to as their calling is what happened when God chose Abraham in Ur of the Chaldeans and brought him out of that land, and ultimately, his descendants into the land. That was God's call of Israel. That was the beginning of his desire to bless them, his plan and purpose to bless them.

About twenty-five years ago in *Time Magazine* a Rabbi wrote some things in the religious section. His name was Finkelstein. Do you think he was Jewish? And in the midst of it he made a very interesting statement. It was in the days of selective service and he said, "The choosing by God was like selective service and its binding on all Jews to the end of the earth." Well, we actually had a great deal of right in what he was saying. The choosing by God of Israel is even more binding than selective service which is no longer with us. God chose Abraham and he had a beautiful destiny for his descendants, and that choice still is valid. "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." That word, irrevocable, incidentally, is a word that means really unregrettable, and of course, they're unregrettable because he does not change his mind about them. Just as we read in Malachi chapter 3 and verse 6, "I am the Lord and I change not." And so he has unconditionally chosen the nation Israel for future blessing.

Well, he has made himself rather plain, I think, but in order to emphasis that in verses 30 through 32 he goes over the same thing except in more detail. Now in verse 30 he says, "Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience." Well now that's easy to understand. What he's talking about here is the Gentiles. "Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience." So that Israel's disobedience while not canceling the promises has made it possible for God to turn to Gentiles to bring them into relationship to him as a result of the disobedience of that generation of Jews at the time of our Lord. Then he goes on to say, "So they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you." Let me go back.

"Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you."

So let's analyze what he's saying in a little bit of detail. Verse 30, "Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God," Gentiles, you were not within the family of God. You did not make up a part of the commonwealth of Israel, but you have received mercy as a result of their disobedience, Jewish disobedience, "so they too have now become disobedient." He refers to the nation Israel as having "become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you." What has he been saying in the passage just above? Why, he's been saying that at the present time God is bringing Gentiles to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus in order to provoke Jews to jealousy that they might turn to the Savior in order that the whole world might be blessed through the word of God.

Now there is a little problem in verse 31 that I want to discuss for just a moment. Did you notice the occurrence of the "nows"? He says, "So they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you.

Now first of all, if you have a Bible with some marginal notes you may note that the evidence for that word, now, the last now in the text is debated. As a matter of fact, the great majority of the manuscripts do not have that word, now. The New International Version has a little note at the bottom of the page which is misleading. We read in the note at the bottom of the page if you're looking at it, it's on verse 31, little tiny "c," I think if my eyes are good enough to see that. It says, "Some manuscripts do not have now." Well, the facts are that the great majority of manuscripts do not have the now. Some do have the now, is the way it really should have read. Some manuscripts have the now and also, some of the better. Some of the more ancient manuscripts have the word now.

Now you might now have expected that now to be there. If you're listening to what Paul has been saying in this chapter, he's been saying this, has he not? Israel at one time was chosen. They were blessed by God. They have become disobedient. Gentiles now make up; it appears, the majority in the church, because Israel is a remnant. There's only a remnant of those according to the election of grace. So you think of the church as largely composed of Gentiles at the present time, but also, Paul has said Gentiles are saved to provoke Jews to jealousy in order that they may believe and turn to the Lord in the future.

So to read here that they too may now receive mercy is a little startling. In fact, I think you would think that what the apostle should have said, that's always bad to do that in the Bible, what the apostle should have said was in order that they too may later receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you now. Isn't that what it sounds like from reading this chapter?

Now if you're reading it you should have nodded your head and said, yes. Well, do you know in some of the Greek manuscripts that copyist who was paying attention as they were reading and copying, they thought that too. And so you'll find inserted in some of the manuscripts the word, later, the word *busteron*, which means later in Greek. So those manuscripts read, "So they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you Gentiles."

Now I don't want to mislead you. That word is not genuine. That is, the evidence is very weak, but it just shows you that scribes reading along thought that Paul should have said later, and so they inserted it. They said surely this manuscript I'm copying is wrong. The fellow who copied it left out later, and so they inserted it. That, of course, is the reason why we have textual criticism, because down through the centuries scribes copying manuscripts do the same thing you do in copying, you make mistakes. Sometimes you write a word twice. Sometimes you eliminate a word. Don't you do that? Sure you do. I know you do. I know you're human. I did it once myself. [Laughter] Not only that but you'll skip whole lines. If one line ends in a certain word and then as you are copying along if another word ends in the same thing, your eye is liable to move from one to the other and skip what is in between. All of these things happen in the tradition in the handing down of the manuscripts that we have. So we have all types of errors.

Now it's a little startling that this "now" is here, and because it's a little startling, it's probably something that the scribes did not themselves insert. In other words, this is a reading that a scribe would not have inserted. And so most of the textual critics feel that since this is a rather difficult thing to understand, it must, therefore, be genuine that a scribe who tends to smooth out things would not have put the "now" there.

Now let's just assume the "now" is there. Personally, I don't think it's there. I'll tell you why in a moment. But let's assume Paul did write, "in order that they too may

now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you." What would he be speaking about? Well, would you look at it in verse 23? In verse 22 he said,

"Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again."

In other words, so far as the text of Paul is concerned the way is open for Israel to return to the Lord now. There is no barrier to Israel's belief placed there by God at the present time. If Israel were to read the Scriptures, Israel would find no barrier to turning to the Lord. His hands are still stretched forth to a disobedient and gainsaying people as we read at the end of chapter 10, but concerning Israel he said, "All day long I've held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." Incidentally, how does this look? When a person holds out his hands to a disobedient and obstinate people constantly, he's in the figure of a cross, is he not? And so this is the figure of God addressed to Israel. That's the message for the nation Israel at the present time. The way back is through the cross of the Messiah who suffered and shed his blood a couple of thousands of years ago now.

So that "they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you," refers to those who are coming back at the present time. That small trickle down through the years and his arms are outstretched to the whole of the nation at the present time. I'd like to say, however, that I just do not believe that that "now" is genuine. The mass of the manuscripts do not have it. Some of the finest of the manuscripts do not have it. The earliest manuscript of the Epistle to the Romans of significant value, evidentially, does not have it. And the widest spread attestation to its omission is enough to make me think that it's very questionable that this "now" is there. If the now is there, it does mean what I

have said, but I rather am inclined to think in the light of the context of this whole chapter that what Paul is speaking about is the future, and so he says, "so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you." So that it is his program that Israel come to faith through being provoked to jealousy by the Gentiles and in the future as a nation, they shall turn to the Lord. There are many other things that I could say about this, but for the sake of time we must go on.

Now I want you to notice the process that Paul has in mind here. He said at first there was Gentile disobedience. What is he referring to? Now just think about the Bible as a whole. You're reading through the Bible. All of you are, aren't you? You're already in the Book of Leviticus, and you're in the Book of Mark, I hope by now the fourth chapter and you probably have noticed this, that the earlier part of the Bible did not say anything about Israel at all. In fact, it spoke about just people, just God's creation, descendants from Adam. We noted, of course, as we read through there that there was apostasy from the Lord, and finally, the Tower of Babel, and then God reached down and chose a man, Abraham, out of the human race. He was a Gentile too.

So the first eleven chapters of the Bible represent Gentile disobedience, but from Genesis chapter 12 on through to Acts chapter 1, I guess we could say, what we have is the election of Israel. God deals with Israel, and he does not deal with Gentiles directly, but with Gentiles through Israel. But finally, Israel and the nation as a whole in the time of Christ after succession of apostasies finally apostatize in the greatest way and crucify the Messiah. And so Israel's election and then disobedience follows.

At the present age he's been talking about Gentile election. That is, the body of Christ is being built up by a vast number of people who have been brought to faith in Christ uniting with those earlier Jewish believers so that Jew and Gentile are members of the same body now in Jesus Christ. So that now is the day of Gentile election and salvation primarily. But what does the Bible say about this age? How will it end? Will

we bring in the Kingdom? Will the church do it? Will the Presbyterians, and the Baptists, and the Methodists, and the Anglicans, and the others get together and manifest Christian love and infidelity to the word of God preaching Biblical doctrine and Christ crucified and win the whole world so that Christ may come back to a cleansed earth? No. The Bible teaches that this age will end in apostasy, doesn't it?

So what we have is Gentile election and salvation and the age ending again in disobedience and apostasy. And the final stage is Israel provoked to jealousy, delivered by the grace of God through the testimony of the Gentiles who are saved, brought to faith in the Messiah, and as a result of that salvation going out world-wide. Paul has said, "Such a thing as life from the dead." That's the program that he's set forth here in verse 28 through verse 32. It really is one of the most magnificent sections in the Apostle Paul and one of the most neglected, because it tells us exactly what his plans and purposes are with reference to the nations. So there is salvation and disobedience, the call of Abraham, obedience and then apostasy, and then, again, a calling of God and apostasy so that the result is that he passes both Jews and Gentiles through the experience of election, blessing, and salvation, and also, disobedience in order that he may have mercy on them all. So that when they all come into the presence of the Lord, they will have all had the same experience of having passed through disobedience into the mercy of God. Notice that last verse, verse 32, "For God has bound all men over to disobedience," the Jews first, then the church of Jesus Christ that "he may have mercy upon them all."

So the Jews shall know the experience of being chosen, of being disobedient, of God exercising mercy to them. The Gentiles will know the experience of being rejected, of having the grace of God shown to them so that they come to know mercy, and thus, God's mercy is manifest to all, Jews and Gentiles. Everybody who gets to heaven is going to have the same testimony that John Allan, the converted Salvation Army man had who said, "I deserved to be damned. I deserve to go to hell, but God interfered."

So we shall all know the mercy of God. But look again at that verse 32. Does Paul teach us that everybody is going to be saved? Does he not say God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all? If we do believe that all men are disobedient in Adam that includes everybody, doesn't it? Well, then why should not "on them all" with reference to mercy have reference to everybody too? There are people who like to say I do not believe that God is a particularist in the work of salvation because the Bible speaks all the time about terms like world and all.

Well, let's be honest with the text. It says, "For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all." Does God save everybody? If you want to use that kind of reasoning and say that whenever all is referred to it means everybody, then you would have to say that he's going to save everybody. That's what our liberal friends like to say. Of course, you have to pass over hundreds of texts in the New Testament, particularly those written by or came from the Lord Jesus himself. No. When he says he has "bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy upon them all," he's not talking about all men without exception. He's talking about men without distinction. He's saying that he has bound all men, Jews and Gentiles, over to disobedience so that he may have mercy upon them all; that is, Jews or Gentiles, so that there is no distinction there. So it is not universalism. It is rather a reference to classes of people, Jews and Gentiles. He's had mercy on Jews and Gentiles in his dealings with men.

Well, the apostle now concludes with what has been called a hymn. It's the doxology. He seems to be caught up in the spirit of Wesleyan love divine with its lost and wonder love and praise. What can a man say about this plan of God with reference to the nations when the apostle cannot say anything? I wouldn't want to be one who is trying to say to you, now the apostle says you cannot say anything to this it's so great, and I want to stand up and say what he should have said. No. He said, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments,

and his paths beyond tracing out!" We've learned Paul's meaning in Romans 9, 10, and 11 only when we can join in this inscription of praise. "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom."

Wisdom is the word that looks at the plan of God. Knowledge is the word that looks at the steps that he has undertaken in carrying out his plan. "How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" What a very vivid word that last one is. Incidentally, it comes from a verb that means to track out. So they are untrackable; the divine decisions with reference to the salvation of Jews, with reference to the salvation of Gentiles, with reference to the salvation of you and me. The divine decisions are self-moved and they are wholly internal, and they are not traceable by the finite intellect. We cannot understand why his plan should have been constructed in the way it is constructed, ultimately. He says his ways are past finding out. We cannot track it out.

Now we can admire it as the apostle admires it. We can see how wonderfully he has worked in the experience of Jews and Gentiles, and how he has brought us together in the knowledge of his mercy and saved us. But so far as really understanding it fully, it's too profound for us. We can be sure of this; that it is God who has worked it, not man.

Politicians speak a lot about world peace. Jimmy gets up all the time and in almost every speech that Jimmy ever makes he refers to peace for the world. And almost all the politicians talk about peace for the world. The one thing they cannot give is the one thing they constantly talk about. Christians are not looking for world peace now. We know that world peace will not come now. Christians look for salvation. They're not interested in peace. They're interested in salvation, because they know that after and only after salvation has come from the Lord will there come world peace. I don't mean any disrespect to Jimmy, but he's just a politician. It would be great if those men would sit down and ponder the Scriptures. What they could learn from them for our good! But they do not go to the place from which to learn truth.

Now Paul is a great Bible man and so you would not be surprised then to find him quoting Scripture. "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" he says. That comes from Isaiah. "Who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him," the source; "through him," the instrumentality; "to him," the goal; "are all things. To him be the glory forever!"

So the apostle talks about by faith alone, by grace alone in chapter 1 through 8, and now he says, "To God alone be the glory," as he ponders God's broad plans for the nations and the nation Israel. Israel, ethnic Israel, does have a glorious future which will bring ultimate glory to the Lord God himself.

I have to read a great deal of material that's not very sound. I've read a lot of material on the Book of Genesis recently. I must confess I'm occasionally amused. I read material in which men deny that Abraham ever lived. They also deny that Moses wrote the books that are attributed to him. Now those are scholarly matters and, of course, we are interested in all of the evidence pro and con on this. But you know there is something that they cannot get around; that is, the existence of the nation Israel.

Now if you were in circles of the orthodox, you might occasionally hear some of the orthodox men saying as they refer to Abraham, "*Avraham Avinu*," Abraham our father. Now our liberal friends may seek with all their might and mane to erase any testimony to the existence of a man like Abraham, but they cannot explain the fact that here is a mysterious people that has been on the earth for thousands of years and they are separate from us. They're like the Gulf Stream in the ocean of humanity. They are still separate from us, and they're still talking about *Avraham Avinu*, Abraham our father. And then they tell us that Moses did not write the law, but these same people speak about *Moshe Rabbeinu*, Moshe or Moses our teacher.

So you cannot erase the indelible hand of God upon the nation Israel. They do have a future, and we look forward to it as believers in the same God, the same triune God; Father, Son, and Spirit. It's going to be great to see him glorified in the ultimate

salvation of his ancient people and to see them acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ whom they had crucified with the Gentiles as their own Lord and Savior.

Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these words from the Apostle Paul which so magnificently unfolds the major features of the providential dealing of our triune God with the nations. We thank Thee that Gentiles have been included that we too have been shut up to sin that we might have mercy shown to us. Accept our thanks. We give Thee grateful praise for the Lord Jesus Christ. We desire, Lord, to honor him, and ultimately to enjoy his presence forever. To Thee Lord be the glory unto the ages. For Christ's sake. Amen.