

Has God Cancelled His Promises to Israel? Part 3

Scripture: Romans 11:7-10

Code: 45-84

Well let's look to the Word of God and we're going to wrap up our look at Romans 11:1 to 10. In Romans 11:1 to 10 we're examining a very important portion of Scripture. And our time is limited tonight so we're going to just kind of draw to a conclusion some of the things that we've already been learning. But I want you to open your Bible to those passages, the ten verses in that first section of Romans 11.

Some years ago I had the opportunity to attend a conference in Jerusalem that was called The Jerusalem Conference on Prophecy. And it was a very interesting conference for many reasons. One of the most intriguing elements of the conference was there was a man there who was scheduled to be a speaker. And the place, the great convention hall there in the city of Jerusalem was packed with not only American delegates but also with many Jewish national leaders, including the mayor of Jerusalem and David Ben-Gurion himself and many others.

This speaker who represented Christianity and Christian doctrine, he said, stood up and made basically the announcement to all of those people gathered there that because the Jews had rejected Jesus Christ, God had removed them permanently from His plan. And there was no future for Israel. In fact, his belief was that all promises once given to Israel were forfeited in the rejection of Christ and are now to be fulfilled in the spiritual Israel which is the church. And all of those Jewish dignitaries sitting on the platform listened to that.

He spoke on Isaiah 9 for a while and he said when it says there that "Unto us a child is born, a son is given, and a government shall be on His shoulders," it means nothing more than that if you'll commit yourself to Christ the government of your life will be on His shoulders. He will not rule in any real kingdom in the world, nor will there be any real kingdom given to the nation Israel.

And someone followed him by standing up and saying, "It seems to me a strange place to come to make such an announcement, to come to Israel, gathering together their national leaders to tell them that there will be no kingdom as promised and there is no future place for the people of Israel." But...said this speaker who gave a rebuttal, as it turned out, "I want you to know that is not what the Bible teaches, there is a place for Israel and there is a glorious kingdom coming where the Lord Jesus Christ will reign in power."

And that's what we've been studying, haven't we, over the last several weeks. And we've asked the question, has God really set Israel aside? When they rejected Jesus Christ, was there instantaneously and forever a forfeiture of all God's promises to them? Did the whole thing turn to ashes? Is God through with the nation Israel? Do we in a sense like that man mock the Jew for his hope that God still has a place for His people? Can it be that He has set them aside?

Listen to what the prophets have said, just by way of reminder. In Jeremiah chapter 31 there are two verses I want just for you to listen to. Verse 35 and 36, "Thus saith the Lord who given the sun for a light by day and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who divideth the sea when its waves roar, the Lord of host is His name. If these ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever."

In other words, God says when I lose control of everything, then Israel will cease to be My people and not until. And as we all know, that will never happen.

In the forty-third chapter of Isaiah we find again similarly in verse 1, "But now, thus saith the Lord who created thee, O Jacob, and He who formed thee, O Israel, fear not for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee. And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, for I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Savior. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee, since thou was precious in My sight, thou hast been honorable and I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee and people for thy life. Fear not for I am with thee. I will bring thy seed from the east and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up. To the south, Keep not back, bring My sons from far and My daughters from the ends of the earth, even everyone who is called by My name for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him, yea I have made Him." And verse 10, "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen that ye may know and believe Me and understand that I am He, before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me."

Verse 21, "This people have I formed for Myself, they shall show forth My praise." Verse 22, "But thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of Me, O Israel." Verse 25, "I, even I, He who blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake and will not remember thy sins." The whole thing is right there.

I called you to be My people. But you would not hear Me and you would not listen. But I am the one who for My own sake because I have to be true to My promises will blot out your sins. The rejection, the disobedience of Israel does not change the promise of God.

In that marvelous prophecy of Zechariah chapter 8, just a couple of verses. Verse 20, "Thus saith the Lord of host, It shall yet come to pass that there shall come many peoples and the inhabitants of

many cities and the inhabitant of one city shall go to another saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, to seek the Lord of host. I will go also." In other words, the prophet says the day is going to come when the world wants to seek the Lord. Yes, and many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of host in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord. Now listen to this, "Thus saith the Lord of host," verse 23 of Zechariah 8, "In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nation, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew saying, We will go with you for we have heard that God is with you."

As Zechariah looks down through history he sees a time coming when the world desires to go and meet God, when the world desires to be introduced to God. And they will hold on, as it were, to the coattails of a Jew because Jews will be known as those who know God. That is not presently the case. They are secular. But when the glorious time of the Kingdom comes and the world begins to turn to see the majesty of God as revealed in the glorious Christ, the Jews will be the people introducing the world to God and nations will see in the Kingdom the blessedness of Israel and they will come to be led to God by the Jews.

Now I want to suggest to you that's always been God's plan. That's always been God's plan. When God brought out of the loins of Abraham the people of Israel, when he identified the Jews as His special people, it was for the purpose of being the means of taking the world to God. They were never to be an end in themselves, they were always to be a means to bringing people to God. Tragically they failed to do that. They failed to be that people. Throughout their history instead of bringing people to God, Romans 2 says the name of God is blasphemed because of you. They did the very opposite. And even reluctantly like Jonah when they were used to bring Gentiles to God, they got upset about it and mad and wanted to die because they found it difficult to imagine Gentiles horning in on their God. They really missed the whole point of their existence. They were a witness nation, as I read earlier...they were a witness nation. They failed. But the day will come when they will be that nation. And the nations of the world will hang on their garments to be brought to God.

The nation of Israel will fulfill its intended destiny. But because they did not the Lord had to call a new nation, a no people, as Paul calls them. A people who were not God's people, Gentiles, the church, and we are His witnessing people, but the day will come when Israel will be brought back into that place. It begins even in the Tribulation with the sealing of one hundred and forty-four thousand Jews, according to Revelation 7 and 14, and those 144,000, twelve thousand from every tribe in Israel, will be sent to evangelize the world and protected by God from those who would desire to take their lives. And the result of their evangelism will be an innumerable number of Gentiles from every tongue and people and nation and tribe who are redeemed out of the Tribulation. So they during the Tribulation time will begin their evangelism. And during the Kingdom they will be God's ambassadors bringing the nations to see the Savior. The day will come when they fulfill their intended purpose.

But as I said, for now they're rejected. As Jesus said in Matthew 23:38, "Your house is left unto you desolate." As He said in the parables preceding that in chapter 21, He said, "The Kingdom will be taken from you and given to a people who are worthy of it." As He said in the parable of chapter 22 of Matthew, "Because you wouldn't come to the wedding feast when you were called you can't come." Now He said to His messengers, "Go out and call anybody who will come and bring them in, whoever they are."

But that's not the final end. For the day will come when Israel will be brought back. And that's the message of Romans 11. It's to help us to understand, listen carefully, that the setting aside of Israel is partial, passing and purposeful. It's partial. It's only part of them that are set aside, even now. It's passing, it's only temporary. It's purposeful, God has a purpose for the setting aside of Israel. And that's what we're learning.

The partial aspect is discussed in the first ten verses. The passing aspect is discussed in verses 11 through 25. And the purposeful part in verses 26 to 36, the end of the chapter. So we're looking at the first ten verses. And we're remembering that the setting aside of Israel is only partial...it's only partial. And we have Paul giving us three illustrations of that. Remember them? The first one is the writer, look at verse 1. "I say then, hath God cast away His people? He says me genito, no, no, no way, absolutely impossible." Strong Greek negative. It can't happen. "God forbid, it's utterly impossible. God has not cast away His people."

Reason number one, proof number one, "For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham and the tribe of Benjamin." Not a proselyte but a genuine Jew. Not only a genuine Jew out of the loins of Abraham but of one of the choice of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, the tribe of Benjamin. And so Paul is saying God could not have totally set aside the Jews or I wouldn't be redeemed, right? So he says I'm living proof that the setting aside of Israel is only partial, just partial. The first reason then is the writer himself.

Second is the remnant, do you remember it in verses 2 to 6? "God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Don't you remember what the Scripture said about Elijah?" And then he goes back to that incident in 1 Kings 19 where Elijah says, "I, only I, am left," remember that? As if to say there are none other faithful in the land, they've all gone after Baal. They've all followed the god of Jezebel in the evil compromise with Ahab. Here I've just slaughtered all these priests and all these prophets of Baal, I've just killed them all and the nation is just as apostate as it was before. Nobody is paying any attention to this great victory. Nobody is turning to God, is what he is saying in his own mind. I, only I, am left.

And then he is reminded that the Lord has how many? Seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal. And Paul says, notice it in verse 5, "So then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." God always has a graciously chosen remnant out of Israel. I

bless God because we have a large segment of that remnant right here in Grace Church, a large segment of it. And all around the world even today while the nation is apostate, while the nation is grossly secular, and while the part of the nation that is religious seems to be fanatically and legalistically religious, or almost philosophical rather than religious at all, almost only attending to tradition rather than theology, yet in the midst of either total secularism or a watered down meaningless religion, or a hard-lined legalism, in the midst of all of that there exists a true remnant. There always was and there always will be. And that's his second point.

Obviously God has not totally set aside His people because there is a remnant. And I remind you that it is a remnant according to the election of grace. And the reason Paul says that is because he wants to emphasize that God chooses that remnant. He's not denying that they must come in personal faith. He is simply emphasizing the sovereign side to show that this is the plan of God, that God is not sitting in heaven saying, "O I hope I have a remnant. I hope some Jews get saved." God is not an Arminian theologian. He's not sitting in heaven wishing that people would get saved so there's always going to be a remnant. He will choose that remnant. And the emphasis of the election of grace is to say that God is actively aggressively choosing that remnant to demonstrate to the world that there is an ongoing continual love and commitment to the people of Israel.

So the first six verses then add up to the reality that God is not finished with the Jews, and we've been through those. He has not cast off the nation Israel, as the writer Paul and the remnant illustrate. He is preserving as always a godly seed, a godly seed, a godly seed. We saw that also in chapter 9 verses 27 and 29. Now we come to the last point...the writer, the remnant and the revelation.

Notice in verse 7 and this is just a very simple look at the Old Testament. He quotes some of the Old Testament passages. And he wants to support his point with Scripture. See, he's a good expository preacher. He doesn't make a point without reaching back. He's already reached back into the passage relative to Elijah, 1 Kings 19. Now he's going to reach back some more to support what he says with Scripture. Notice verse 7, "What then...what's the conclusion of all of this?...what is the conclusion?...Israel hath not obtained that which he seeks for but the election have obtained it and the rest are blinded."

In other words, he is simply saying when you look at the nation Israel and you see that the nation has not come into the covenant, as it were, the nation has not been redeemed, the nation has not been blessed by God, the nation has not found salvation, don't conclude that God has set the nation aside. No, the reason the nation hasn't obtained it...we'll find out in a moment...they have sought it, they haven't obtained it. But the election has obtained it and the rest are blinded.

Now let's take that phrase "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeks." What is that saying? The word for "seek" is a very interesting word, zeteo has the idea of seeking. Again you put a preposition

on the front of it, epizeteo you get a very intense kind of seeking, earnest diligent seeking, really. I mean, the Jewish people were fanatically religious, weren't they? I mean, they were seeking, seeking, seeking people. And the present tense by the way indicates the constancy of their effort. Would you notice back in chapter 10 verse 2? Paul says, "I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God." They have a zeal for God. But it is not according to knowledge. They are ignorant of God's righteousness and they go about to establish their own righteousness. And, boy, that's a hard road. I mean, they are exercising themselves to the very inth degree to try to establish their own righteousness. They live for this. They live for it, keeping all the rules, all the ceremonies, all the rituals, all the laws. They were seeking...Israel seeking, seeking, seeking, seeking.

Now what are they seeking for? What are they seeking for? Well they were seeking for righteousness. That's the point in chapter 10 verse 3. They went about to establish their own righteousness and didn't submit themselves to the righteousness of God and never learned that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. They didn't know it was...they didn't know it was a matter of faith not works. But they seek righteousness.

Now we've learned so much in Romans. What is righteousness? It's being right with God, isn't it? They sought to be right with God. They sought to be right with God. That was their pursuit. They wanted acceptance with God. Sometimes they called it eternal life like the rich young ruler and said, "What do I have to do to get eternal life?" That was another way of saying to be right with God. Here was a guy who was raised in the synagogue to the point where he was a leader of the synagogue, who was a very religious man, who came with a humble heart, falling on his knees before the Lord. You remember the account in Matthew 19. He had all the right sort of features to his arrival. He asked the right question. He really wanted to be right with God. And when Jesus gave him the conditions to make himself right with God, or through which he could be made right with God, he walked away because they did not fit his preconceived criteria...which was, you do it on your own. Jesus said to him, "You need to confess your sin," in effect by giving him some commandments and the guy says, "No, I've kept all those." You see, he thought he was righteous enough on his own, that was the problem.

So they sought diligently a right relationship. I mean, every time I go to Jerusalem and I see them going through all this genuflecting and bending and bowing and all these prayers and the earnestness with which they go through this, you see these people seeking to be right with God, seeking to be right with God. But they never got what they sought. They never got it. Why? Because they sought it not according to knowledge. They were ignorant of true righteousness, God's righteousness, and went about to establish their own which was utterly impossible. So they sought it and never got it.

Go back to chapter 9 verse 30 for a moment where he says, "The Gentiles who followed not after righteousness." In other words, on the other hand you've got basically the pagan world which didn't particularly seek to be righteous, didn't seek to live up to some moral code. I mean, all you have to

do is study Greek culture to know that immorality was okay, vice was okay. In fact, there were all kinds of horrible sins connected with pagan Greek worship. So they weren't seeking after righteousness. They weren't seeking either to be right with God, they were seeking just to pacify the gods. They weren't seeking some kind of an intimate right relationship with the living God. But they didn't seek it but they attained it, they came to it. Because they responded to the righteousness which is by faith. But Israel who followed after the law of righteousness has not attained to the law of righteousness.

In other words, because they tried to do it by works they never got it because the Gentiles never tried to do it by works but accepted it by faith, they got it.

So the Jews are seen as incessantly attempting to be right with God, utterly impossible. And that's what Jesus basically was driving out when He said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you'll never get it." Well, nobody's righteousness could exceed theirs, not in the human sense, they were so utterly religious.

So he says, sure they sought it, they never obtained it. Verse 7 again, "But the election hath obtained it." And all he means by that is the elect, just as sometimes he says the circumcision, meaning the circumcised. The ones who were chosen obtained it. Now may I remind you that here the word "elect" or "election" doesn't have reference to the theocratic nation of Israel, doesn't have reference to the kingdom of Israel as a nation, it has reference to the believing Jews, the individual Jews chosen out of the nation, those who were redeemed, those who were the true Jews. As Paul said in chapter 9, "Not all Israel is Israel." As he said in chapter 2, "The true Jew is one who is circumcised...where?...in the heart, inwardly." They did obtain it. They received righteousness. They became right with God. They got eternal life. They were redeemed...the elect. They were redeemed. And the rest, literally the Greek should read, the rest were hardened. The rest were hardened.

So he says Israel sought and sought and sought to be right with God. Never got it. But there was a group that did. They were the elect. And again we understand that salvation has a side where God elects and a side where man receives by faith. The emphasis here is on the elect because it is demonstrating to us that God in His sovereignty is not through with Israel. So the emphasis is on God's choosing of them. It is not to say that there's no balance, there is, it's just emphasis. And the rest were hardened.

Now notice this, they were hardened. Very interesting. The form of it indicates that they were hardened by some outside power, some outside force. And that force is none other than God Himself. They were hardened by God. You say, "Does God harden people?" Well do you remember chapter 9 verse 18, "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will, He hardens." And who was his illustration in chapter 9? Who is the illustration of God hardening? Who

was it? Pharaoh...God hardened Pharaoh.

Now what I just want to remind you, we've dealt with this in great detail in chapter 9, when you go back and read the account of Pharaoh in the book of Exodus, you will read "God hardened Pharaoh's heart...God hardened Pharaoh's heart...God hardened Pharaoh's heart." But you will also read, "Pharaoh hardened his heart...Pharaoh hardened his heart." When God hardens it is a result of a process of willful rejection of true righteousness, a process of hardening hardening hardening. In chapter 10 verse 16 of Romans he says in regard to Israel, "They have not all obeyed the gospel," that's the problem. Verse 21, why? "He has stretched forth His hands all day long unto a disobedient and contrary people." When God moves in with judicial final judgmental condemning hardening of the heart, it is as a result and response to a continual process of willful rejection. It is a judicial thing that comes to those who continue to reject, who continue to reject, who continue to reject.

Perhaps the balance of this can be seen in a passage, comes to mind, Luke 22:22, just listen to this, and is in reference to Judas. Jesus says, "Behold the hand of the one who betrays Me is with Me at the table," referred to Judas. And verse 22, very interesting, "And truly the Son of Man goes...listen to this...as it was determined." Now do you think it was determined before the world began that Jesus would go to the cross? Sure. Does that make a hero out of Judas? Oh no. "Truly the Son of Man goes as it was determined, but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed." Yes it is the plan of God, but woe to the man who does it. And there you have that inexplicable mysterious balance of God's predetermined sovereign choice and yet man's responsibility. So God's hardening is never ever separated from man's hardening, never. We can say that it is the judgment of God on a person through the fault of that person.

So, the nation rejects. And they're hardened judicially because they have chosen to reject willfully. But there is a remnant elect to demonstrate that God is not through with Israel. Now Paul quotes from the Old Testament law to demonstrate that this is not a surprise to God. The question that sort of underlies this whole section, 9, 10 and 11, is that if the gospel is true why did the Jews reject it? And Paul is saying here, "Look, God knew they would all along. In fact, their rejection is confirmed in the plan of God by an act of judgment on them because of their obstinate disobedience." And he quotes from the Old Testament, look at verse 8. And we'll see these just very simply...clearly.

"According as it is written," that's the key note to know we're going on a journey back to the Old Testament. "God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they shouldn't see, ears that they shouldn't hear unto this day." I don't know why the King James put parentheses in there, they ought not to be there. What it's simply saying is that it was written this way in the Old Testament that God would give them the spirit of slumber and eyes that couldn't see and ears that couldn't hear.

Now that verse, interesting, that verse fascinates me because it comes from two different Old Testament verses that are combined. The first one is Deuteronomy 29:4 which says, "Yet the Lord

hath not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear unto this day." The second half of the verse comes from Deuteronomy 29:4. The first half of the verse comes from Isaiah 29:10, "For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of slumber, or the spirit of deep sleep." So he takes a passage from Moses and a passage from Isaiah...the law and what? the prophets. And these two are combined under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit here to indicate that God Himself has withheld spiritual understanding from His people. Look at it again, it is God who gave you deep sleep. It is God who made eyes that wouldn't see and ears that wouldn't hear.

In other words, listen carefully, the present day unbelief, listen now, the present day unbelief of Israel does not alter the plan of God, it is the plan of God. So, when God in the Old Testament made His promises to Israel, promises that He would not break, promises that He would not violate, at the same time that He planned to fulfill those promises He planned also for Israel's rejection. So to say then that the promises are cancelled because Israel rejects is to assume then that God made promises assuming something would happen, it didn't happen so He changed them. Can't be. And that's what Paul is saying.

Listen, Paul says in Moses' day God gave the people ignorance, shut their eyes, shut their ears, in Moses' day. In Isaiah's day He did the same thing. You remember in Isaiah 6 and Isaiah is told to go tell this people and that their ears would be fat and they would not hear and their eyes would be closed and so forth? So Paul says, "Look, don't be surprised at the rejection of Israel, don't be surprised that God hardens them, that happened in the day of Moses, that happened in the day of Isaiah." And so he draws out of the time of Moses a great and glorious time, the time of Isaiah, an equally interesting and unique time and says this is nothing new. They were often blind. They were often hard-hearted. They were often apostate. They were all the time disobedient and contrary. And to see now God blinding them in the main is nothing new, He did it in the past. And so this is not something that is foreign to the plan of God.

So, Paul is saying, "Look, just because we see the mass of Jews rejecting Jesus Christ doesn't mean He's permanently set them aside. I'm living proof He hasn't totally set Jews aside. The remnant is still out there. And this is no surprise to the plan of God, rather it fits in because it's God Himself who does the hardening in response to their unbelief."

Then another Old Testament great is quoted in verse 9, who is that? David...David. And David said, "Let their table be made a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a recompense unto them." That's Psalm 69:22 and 23...Psalm 69, beloved, is one of the most marvelous Messianic Psalms in the whole Old Testament. Along with Psalm 22 they are the two most quoted Psalms in speaking about the suffering of the Savior. It is a lament of the Messiah's grief. It is a lament of the Messiah's suffering and pain. And the psalmist in Psalm 69 pronounces a curse on the enemies of God, a curse. And he says, "Let their table be made a snare and a trap and a stumbling block."

Very interesting. It is a Psalm that's what we call imprecatory, it prays for judgment to fall on the enemies of God. You remember in that same Psalm the Lord says, "Zeal for your house is eaten Me up. The reproaches that have fallen on you have fallen on Me." And it is the Psalm Jesus quoted when He made a whip and cleansed the temple. It is a Psalm that is zealous for the holiness of God. It is a Psalm that calls down judgment on those who reject God, those who deny God His rightful worship. And so the Messiah will, as did David, pray that the enemies of God be punished, be they Jew or Gentile. And so the Messiah then says let their table be made a snare and a trap and a stumbling block.

So that the judgment that's come on Israel fits right into the prophetic picture, right into the plan of God. Moses said it. Isaiah said it. David said it. The statement itself is most interesting. I suppose you wouldn't think there was any safer place than at your own table, right? Where you're eating your own food. And the vividness of it is marked, I think, it should be in our minds, the place of feasting, the place of celebration, the place of joy, the place of festivity, the secure place of plenty, the place of bounty, the place of blessing, the table...may the very table at which they eat become the trap that catches them. What you have pictured here is the Jew feasting. And what is the Jew's food? What would the Jew say his food was? The law of God. And it is that very law that becomes the trap, that very law becomes the snare. And by the way, the terms...the first term "snare" literally means trap. The second term "trap" means a net used by hunters to throw over their prey. The third term "stumbling block" is anything in which a person is caught. They're not to be distinct, they're really synonyms, they're really shades different is all. The point is they all sort of say the same thing. Let it be that when they think they're feasting on the Word of God, that Word itself becomes the trap that catches them.

You say, "Well why in the world would anybody wish that on someone?" The end of verse 9, "As a recompense," antapodoma, a pay back for the way they have abused God, for the way they have denied God His rightful place, for the way they have dishonored Him and His Messiah, pay them back...pay them back. And God will pay back and God is paying back a disobedient hard-hearted people.

Any good trap feeds the animal it attempts to catch, right? That's how it catches them. And the Jews are caught in the very trap on which they feed, the Word is a two-edged sword.

And then verse 10, the psalmist further says, "Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see and bow down their back always." The picture of the bowed back is the picture of pain, grief in part and also the picture of someone blind, groping to try to find the light with the bowed back feeling in front of him lest he fall in a hole or injure himself or stumble. And so here is the psalmist crying out, "O God, blind them, bend their back, trap them." And he's speaking of those who refuse to be obedient to God.

And, of course, the tragedy of that has come to pass in the history of Israel. This whole idea of darkened eyes and deaf ears is filled...fills the New Testament. I don't know if you're aware of this, but this whole concept sort of crystallizes in Isaiah 6:9 to 13 where it talks about their eyes and their ears and they can't understand. They see with their eyes, they do not see. They hear with their ears, they really don't hear. Their mind can't understand. That passage in Isaiah 6 is the most often quoted Old Testament text in all the New Testament. It's quoted in Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8, Acts 28. It's commonly quoted, John 12. It's quoted throughout the New Testament to indicate that God has blinded His people for their willful rejection. It's sort of God moving in and saying, "If that's the way you're going to be, then I confirm that ultimately and finally." And Israel is blind. But that, the point is, still fits in to the plan of God. They grope around in the darkness. That doesn't surprise God. That's part of the plan.

So the point is very clear...and we'll just draw it together. Has God set aside Israel totally? No. Paul is proof of that. The remnant is proof of that. And the very fact that God in the midst of a blind nation which biblically was predicted to occur has chosen out a remnant and judicially punished that blind nation with confirmed blindness was always part of the prophetic plan from way back in Moses' time, Isaiah's time, David's time. So we're not surprised. No. The unbelief of the gospel by the Jews doesn't obviate the gospel and it doesn't in any way thwart the plan of God. Not in the least...not in the least. God has His promise and He will fulfill it.

Now in our next study we want to look at the fact that God's setting aside of Israel is not only only partial, it is only passing. And what a thrilling thing that is. Let's bow in just a word of prayer.

And while your heads are bowed for a moment. I've really tried to pull together some loose ends tonight and I thank you for letting me do that. It's been a little bit different than we normally do. But for those of us who have studied so intensely through this section, we want to get these things straight. But just for a moment would you meditate with me?

What are the practical implications of this? Of what we've said tonight? Let me suggest some very briefly. One, go after Jewish people with the gospel, eagerly, anxiously, passionately because there is a remnant...there is a remnant. And God may use you to reach them.

Secondly, remember that the only way of salvation is by grace, not by establishing your own righteousness, not by seeking through your own works to be right with God, you can't do it. You can't do it. And remember this, the longer you reject the gospel and the longer you harden your heart, the more likely it is that God will judicially confirm that hard heart and you will pass beyond the possibility of salvation.

And another lesson. Is it not amazing how many people are destroyed and damned by the very thing they put their hope in? How many people are trapped at their own table? Are feeding on a religion they believe is right and it traps them? Let's commit ourselves to evangelize the Jewish people, to affirm to them and to all the rest of the world that salvation is a matter of grace and nothing more, to warn men that if they reject continually their own hard hearted rejection will become a judicial act of God by which they are confirmed in eternal unbelief. And to warn them that they may well be destroyed by the very thing they think is feeding their souls. God's plan is on schedule. The promises will be fulfilled just as all His promises must be fulfilled.

Father, we thank You tonight for helping us to get an insight into this whole matter of the place of Israel. Thank You, God, that You're a God who keeps His word. We thank You for the fact that we can open the book, read it, believe it, trust it for not one jot or tittle shall in any way be removed from it till all is fulfilled. We pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for the place of Israel. We pray, O God, that the remnant might rejoice in their election and be zealous to reach others. We pray, O God, that we might be faithful to preach the gospel of grace and warn those who are hardening their hearts, who are feeding at a table which is a trap. May we be faithful to apply what we have learned.

Our Father, we pray that You'll do Your work in each heart. And we give You thanks in Christ's name. Amen.

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