Man Rejects, But God Loves
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 80-192

The Scripture is clear that God does love the world. John 3:16 says that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. The apostle Paul talked about God's love for mankind. And more specifically, the Bible is very clear, the words of Jesus indicate to us that God even loves his enemies. There is then a universal love of God that touches every part of his creation, embracing of course especially mankind. God does love mankind.

Earlier in the conference, I talked about the fact that the universal, or general love of God can be understood if you look at it in four ways. This general universal love of God for mankind is expressed first of all in common grace. That's what John Calvin used to refer to the general goodness of God that touches everybody. In Matthew chapter 5, it says that, "God causes his son to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." In other words, God grants to all of mankind certain providential benefits of life. The goodness of God extends to all mankind. The sun shines on their fields. The rain drops on their crops. And they are provided there by food and sustenance.

So we see the general love of God in common grace. They fall in love, and they have babies, and they enjoy family life, and they see a sun set and take a vacation and swim in a cool river, and they enjoy the ocean, and all of the wonders of life in the created order are exposed to them as well. And so, that's common grace. And that's an extension or an expression of God's general love.

Secondly, that general love of God is expressed not only in common grace, but it's expressed in compassion. That is to say, you see God grieving over the condition of the world, over the condition of lost people, of fallen humanity. You find him in the Old Testament shedding tears through the eyes of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 13. You find him in the New Testament shedding tears through the eyes of Jesus, who cries over Jerusalem. He weeps at Jerusalem's wickedness. He weeps at Jerusalem's iniquity and unrepented attitude. It is grief over the terrible condition of man in his sin.

Thirdly, that general love of God is manifested through warnings. From the beginning of Scripture to the end, God pours out warnings about the consequence of sin. Warnings of judgment. Warnings of eternal perdition. Warnings of hell that are explicit and repeated again and again throughout the pages of holy Scripture. God fills the Bible with warnings to sinners of what is to come inevitably if they do not repent and embrace the truth.

And finally, the love of God in a very general sense to all mankind is expressed through the gospel offer. We are told to go through all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. There is then a love of God that is general. It demonstrates itself through common grace, and men should see that common grave, that providential working, and it should lead them to repentance. It comes through grief, as the sorrow of God is expressed over sin on the pages of Scripture. It comes through warning, as the judgment of God is expressed on the pages of Scripture repeatedly. And then it comes in the universal offer of the gospel, as we carry it to the ends of the Earth, and to every person.

Now, as we know, that love of God is primarily rejected by the world. They are frankly indifferent to his common grace. They are indifferent to his goodness and beauty, which he provides for them, and their indifference is demonstrated in Romans 1, where it says that they are "not thankful." They don't see God doing that. It isn't the hand of God that they see. They are oblivious as it were, and disinterested in his common grace, his providence. They are also uninterested in his compassion. They give no thought, have no care, for the sorrow of God over their plight. They are indifferent also to his warnings, and make light of judgment. Romans 1 said, "Even though they know that people who do these things will die, they not only do them, but approve of those who practice them", verse 32. They are indifferent to the gospel. They spurn the gospel. They reject it. They make a mockery of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Or, they treat him with indifference.

And so, this broad love of God is rejected for the most part. The question then is, what is God's response? And the answer is, the love of God in its broadest sense is rejected by mankind. In fact, it is universally rejected, with the exception of those who believe. And those who believe, believe because there is another kind of love which penetrates this universal rejection and saves souls in spite of their rejection. To understand that is very important in understanding the love of God.

All people are enemies of God by nature. All people are rejecters of God's love by nature, and they frankly can do nothing about it. They have not the capacity to please God. They have not the disposition to love God. But God, in sovereign love, and unique love, penetrates through that universal rejection to forgive and save some sinners, in spite of their rejection. Not because they reject less than others. Not because they deserve salvation more than others. But purely on the basis of his own will, and his own desire, and his own sovereign love, he determines to penetrate that universal rejection, and rescue those upon whom he decides to set his saving love. This is another kind of love. This is a different kind of love. Different in degree, and different in extent.

That first love we talked about is greater in extent, lesser in degree. That saving love is greater in degree, and lesser in extent. God does love the world. The Bible makes that clear. He loves the world with a generous, sparing, grieving, compassionate, providential, warning, love that even offers the gospel. But sinners reject it. They should buy this love, be led to repentance. But they are not, because of the utter wickedness of their sinful hearts, sinners stubbornly persist in rejection, and are

therefore put in eternal judgment in a place called Hell.

God's love spurned turns to hate. Psalms 5:5 and 6 talks about how God hates those who do iniquity, how he abhors the wicked. God's love spurned gives way to divine hate, manifested in eternal judgment. And while this love is universal in its extent, and it is limited in degree, it is not the sort of love that saves everybody. It is not the sort of love that saves everybody. There is a love that does save. The love that does save is less in its extent, that is, it's applied to fewer. It's greater in degree, because it saves them forever.

When you speak about love rejected, then you have to speak about this rejection being penetrated by God's saving love, by which he penetrates the universal rejection and saves some. This love, I believe, is described by Jesus in a very wonderful way in John 13. John 13 in verse 1, Jesus in the upper room with his disciples is sort of launching the last upper room discourse, which of course has been put at his betrayal, and then soon after his arrest, and his execution. But as he was in the upper room, preparing for the feast of the Passover, it says in verse 1 that he was "knowing that his hour had come." The hour of his death. He knew that he should depart out of this world to the father. It was coming. He would die, and he was going back to the father. Then it says at the end of verse 1, and this is a very important statement, "having loved his own who were in the world." God has a special love, and Christ manifested that love as God to his own who were in the world. What kind of love is it with which God loves his own? It is this kind, "He loved his own who were in the world. He loved them eis telos. What does that mean? Eis telos means to the end. What does that mean? Completely. We would say in the vernacular to the max. Perfectly. Fully. Comprehensively. Or we might say, in King James English, he loved them to the uttermost. He loved them to the absolute end of his capacity to love, which has no end.

God loves his own so completely as to love them to the very max. He loves them so much that he forgives their sins. He loves them so much that he grants them eternal life. He loves them so much that he makes them like his son. He loves them so much that he lavishes on them all the riches of his grace forever. This love has no limits. You must notice that it is unconditional. It is not somehow give to those who are more deserving of it than others, or less sinful. It is simply and only because God has determined to love certain people. This is the particular love of God for the elect. It is the love that will stop at nothing to redeem. It is the love that lays down its life. And there is no greater love than that, Jesus said. And he would do that the very next day after saying this.

These are not people who somehow deserved this love. It is holy gracious. It is sovereign, and it is utterly uninfluenced. God penetrates this rejection with a saving love, and takes some to be his own. This is the great wonder of redemption.

Let me give you some illustrations of it. Go back in your Bible to Deuteronomy chapter 7, and we see a pattern of how God works. In Deuteronomy chapter 7, verses 6 to 8, we read this. This is

addressed to Israel from God, "For you are a holy people" of the separated people, "to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth." As Richard Wolf used to say, "How odd of God to choose the Jews." But he did. Uninfluenced, God, out of all the peoples on the face of the Earth, chose this people to be his own possession. That meant that he sent his redeeming love on Israel. Verse 7 says, "The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you because you are more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples." It wasn't because you somehow had reached such a large proportions of great prowess and power influence. But, verse 8 says, "Because the Lord loved you. He thus decided to love you. And he kept the oath, which he swore to your fathers."

God chose the nation Israel. Now, it is true that not all Israel is Israel. As Paul said, "Not all Jews are true Jews." Romans, chapter 2 says, "There are many who are in unbelief, did not receive salvation." But there were a large number, a great portion of Israelites then and through all have redempted history. And yet, the future when, as Romans 11 says, "God ultimately brings salvation to his nation Israel." And by the way, he's preserving them to that end. They are uniquely a people whom God has chosen to save." Again, not all of them. But many. Not the entire nation of Israel. Not every Jew who ever lived. Not salvation of a race. Not all Israel is elect to salvation. Not all Israel is Abraham's by faith. "Those who are of faith", Galatians 3:7, "are the sons of Abraham", the true sons of Abraham.

But nonetheless, it is from the nation Israel that God has chosen many. Why did he choose them? Because they chose him first? No. He just chose to love them eternally.

Now go to Ezekiel 16. I wish I had time to discuss everything that's in this chapter. Unfortunately, it's got 63 verses in it, and that's not possible for me to do, to cover all of that. We will flow through the chapter. There are a number of things that I footnoted in the MacArthur Study Bible that explains some important historical things that flow through this chapter. But I wanna focus just on one main lesson for this morning, and that is the graphic picture of God's relentless love for those that he has predetermined to love savingly, not because of what they are, but in spite of what they are.

This is a monumental chapter. I knew this chapter existed, of course, but it was when I was writing the notes for the study Bible that this chapter gripped my heart like it never had before. This is the most vivid, forceful, dramatic chapter in Ezekiel, and frankly, there are may such chapters. But this leads the parade. It is a chapter that demonstrates God's penetrating love. It is a chapter that demonstrates God's saving love in spite of people.

And the story of Israel is presented in this chapter. The history of Israel is presented here in loathsome language, in sordid and somewhat graphic terms. And according to some of the rabbis, as the mission records, it was not to be read in public. Now, I don't believe that they didn't want it read in

public just because it has some very graphic terms in it. I think the reason they didn't want it read in public is because it is such a horrendous description of Israel.

The chapter focuses on, however, not the ugliness of Israel, not the sordidness of Israel, but the gracious, electing, saving, forgiving, eternal love of God in spite of rejection. Let's begin with the first verse. "The word of the Lord came to me saying, son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations and say, Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem, your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanites. Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite." Amorites and Hittites were general names for the Canaanites who dwell in the land. And of course, before Jerusalem became God's city, it belonged to the Pagans, and it belonged to the Canaanites. It belonged to the Amorites and the Hittites. So he is picturing Israel here as a born child. In fact, a female child, a girl child, born to Paganism. Born in a Pagan environment. Parented, as it were historically, by Canaanites. As for your birth, verse 3, "on the day you were born, your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing, you were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths. No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field for you were abhorred on the day you were born."

Picture here is of a mother having a child, who doesn't want the child. Doesn't even bother to detach the umbilical cord. Doesn't bother to wash the baby. Doesn't bother to rub with salt, which had the effect of healing with it any infection or any wound on the surface. No wrapping in cloth. No compassion. Just taking the baby and just throwing it into the middle of an open field, throwing it in the middle of a vacant lot, like the proverbial babies in the dumpsters that we find today. You were a dumpster baby. Nobody wanted you. Nobody wanted you. You were a throwaway. You were hated, abhorred, the day you were born.

Israel was unwanted. Israel was uncared for. Israel was just a weak, dirty, as it were offspring of paganism. Defenseless, poor, and liable to perish. Verse 6, "When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you while you were in your blood, live. I said to you while you were in your blood, live." Child's bleeding to death. But I came along and said, live. You were bloody and dirty and dying, and nobody wanted you. And you were squirming in the dirt. Nothing beautiful. Nothing attractive. Nothing desirable. Hated and despised. But I came along, and I said, live. "And I made you like numerous like plants in a field. Then you grew up, became tall, and reached the age for fine ornaments. Your breasts were formed and your hair had grown, yet you were naked and bare." Probably this refers to the time in Egypt when Israel began to flourish as a people. And even though they were in slavery, they were numbering more and more. And so, there were a few million when the exodus finally came 430 years after they were taken there.

Originally, in the time of the patriarchs, the time of Abraham, Issac and Jacob, they were just a nothing. Just a people born in a Pagan environment, as it were, dying in a field. God got them out of that Canaanitish land. Canaanites didn't want them. They were outcasts to them. Took them into

Egypt, and there grew them into a nation. Then you became - you passed puberty is what he is saying. And you were still naked and bare, and that's not appropriate. "Then I passed by you and saw you and behold, you were at the time for love." You had reached the time where you could marry and bear children. "So I spread my skirt", some translations say I spread my wing over you, "covered your nakedness." That's a pledge to marry. God found Israel and said you're gonna be my wife. You're gonna be my wife. God found Israel in a foreign land. God found Israel as it were in Egypt, and she was still naked and bare, lacking refinement. And God came along, and spread his skirt, spread his wing over her, covered her nakedness. Took her as a bride. Marriage happened in early years, 15, 14, as soon as the child reached puberty, they were married to one they probably had been previously a spouse to. And certainly God had been a spouse to Israel from the time that Abraham had come. But now it's time for the marriage. And God went to Egypt to get his bride, as it were. And he says, "I swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became mine, declares the Lord God." That's the marriage. God took a vow. You're mine. And I pledge to be faithful to you. You're mine.

And then God did what should be done for a wedding. "I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. I also clothed you with embroidered cloth and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet." I'd like to remind the environmentalists of that. "I wrapped you with fine linen, covered you with silk" I mean, this is great. This scruffy outcast, dirty, bloody baby who grew up to be a unrefined, naked, bare, uncovered young woman, God is now turning into something splendorous. "I clothed you with embroidered cloth." All by hand, of course. The imagery here is great effort, great beauty. Fine linen. Silk. "I adorned you with ornaments. Bracelets on your hands. A necklace around your neck. I put a ring in your nostril." Please notice nostril doesn't go in the nose to be pulled around like a bull. It was just a small one on the side. "Earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head." And these are all lavish expressions of a husband's love. Everybody would understand this. This was how a queen would be wed. Not a commoner, but a queen. "A crown adorned with gold, silver. Your dress was fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour honey and oil so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty." This is how a queen would get decked out for a royal wedding. God says, I just gave you everything. Absolutely everything. And he did. Everything he gave them probably kind of relates to the land of milk and honey and all the riches and all the beauty and all the splendor and all the wonder of the land of Canaan, right? There was plenty of gold there. There was silver there, or available there. There was all this beautiful clothing. We know that because Solomon was into all of that, and we see it in other contexts, God put him into the land of milk and honey. A land where they can have the finest flour, where there can have the best food, where they can have the finest honey, the best oil for cooking. Everything. I just made you beautiful.

You know, you can take a pretty scruffy girl and fix her up, and she could look pretty good. Really. She was a knockout on the outside, this one. But the outside doesn't tell the tale, does it? "Your fame", verse 14 says, "went forth among the nations on account of your beauty." It's even true, 1

Kings 10 says that, "the Queen of Sheba came", didn't she? So see, the glory of Israel at the time of Solomon. "It was all perfect", verse 14, "because of my splendor, which I bestowed on you, declares the Lord God." What did you do? What did the wife do? Absolutely nothing. An outcast, a newborn lying in a pile of dirt bleeding to death. And the Lord says, you can live. Lets her grow in a foreign land, goes and takes her out of captivity, makes her a bride, covers her nakedness, refines her, makes her splendorous and glorious and beautiful. And we would assume that such love would illicit universal gratitude and obligation to such a husband. But, verse 15, " You trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your fame." You were just proud. You realized that you had so much to offer, and everybody came wanting it, and you gave it. You poured out your harlotries to every passerby who might be willing. Now Israel is pictured as a shameless harlot. This is the wife that God has espoused to himself. Any passerby, didn't matter who it was. "You took some of your clothes, made for yourself high places of various colors." High places were where idols were worshipped. "And you played the harlot on them", you went up there and you worshipped idols. That's the spiritual adultery that's being depicted here in the imagery. "You did things which should never come about nor happen." You did things that ought not to ever occur, ever. "You also took your beautiful jewels made of my gold and of my silver which I had given you and you made for yourself male images that you might play the harlot with them. Then you took your embroidered cloth and covered them and offered my oil and my incense before them, and also my bread which I gave you, fine flour, oil and honey with which I fed you, you would offer before them for a soothing aroma." You baked bread for idols so they can smell the aroma, as it were. And then it got worse, "You took your sons and daughters whom you had born to me," other Israelites, " you sacrificed them to idols to be devoured." They had certain ceremonies in which you literally offered a child as a sacrifice. "Were your harlotry so small a matter? You slaughtered my children. You offered them up to idols by causing them to pass through the fire." Remember the god Molec was worshipped by incinerating an infant? And the Jews did it. "Besides all your abominations and harlotries you didn't remember the days of your youth when you were naked and bare, and even earlier than that when you were lying in the field squirming in your blood. You forgot where you came from." You forgot what I had done for you. "And it came about after all your wickedness," and here's a parenthetical, "woe, woe to you, declares the Lord God, that came about after all your wickedness that you built yourself a shrine, that's an idol shrine, "you made yourself a high place in every square. You built yourself a high place at the top of every street," I mean everywhere. Idolatry was ubiquitous. It was every place. It was in every square, at the end of every street, there was idols all over the place, as Israel wanted to show off its beauties, it just invited the idolatrous world in and made all kinds of alliances. The fool Solomon married hundreds of Pagan women who brought with them all their own Gods.

Verse 25 says, "You built yourself a high place at the top of every street and made your beauty abominable." You used your beauty for all illicit purposes, and then, in very graphic terms, "You spread your legs to every passerby to multiply your harlotry. You played the harlot with Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, and multiplied your harlotry to make me angry." This is just a tragic look at the history of Israel. "Behold now, I have stretched out my hand against you and diminished your rations,

and I delivered you up to the desire of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines who are ashamed of your lewd conduct." You're so bad, even the pagans can't believe it. Even Philistines are ashamed of the way you conduct yourselves. "You played the harlot with the Assyrians because you weren't satisfied. You played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied." You just went from people to people, from idol to idol, from false religion to false religion. And by the way, they did include physical adulteries as well. "You multiplied your harlotry with the land of merchants, which is Chaldea to the east, and even with this you were not satisfied." And then, here comes the issue. No matter what I did on the outside, verse 30 says, "How languishing is your heart?" You are dominated by this evil heart. You are dominated by these passions and desires, "declares the Lord God, while you do all these things, you are like the actions of a bold-faced harlot." Bold faced. Hiding nothing.

"When you built your shrine at the beginning of every street and made your high place in every square and disdaining money, you weren't like a harlot." Here he says, you're different than a harlot in this way. You don't want money. You don't do it for money. "You adulterous wife who took strangers instead of her husband. Men give gifts to all harlots", all harlots are in it for money, "but you give your gifts to all your lovers to bribe them to come to you from every direction for your harlotries." This is the harlot paying the client. This is how wretches their idolatries had become.

So, verse 34, he says look, "You're different from those women in your harlotries in that no one plays the harlot as you do because you give money, and no money is given you." So you're different. Listen to these words. This is spoken to Israel. "Therefore, O harlot," is there any wonder why the rabbi's didn't wanna read the chapter? "Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God, because your lewdness was poured out, your nakedness uncovered through your harlotries with your lovers and with all your detestable idols and because of the blood of your sons which you gave to idols, therefore behold, I shall gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, even all those whom you loved and all those whom you hated, so I shall gather them against you from every direction and expose your nakedness to them that they may see all your nakedness. Thus I shall judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged. I shall bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy. I shall also give you into the hands of your lovers and they will tear down your shrines, demolish your high places, strip you of your clothing, take away your jewels, and leave you naked and bare." Judgment. "They will incite a crowd", that's the Babylonian army, "against you, and they will stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords." That's exactly what they did. Started in 604, 603, first deportation for Juda, the son of the king of Israel, and then came another one in 597. And finally, in 586, they destroyed the city of Jerusalem. The Babylonian captivity, that massive judgment is described here. "Then they will burn", verse 41, "your houses with fire, execute judgments on you, in the sight of many women", and there were slaughters in the streets of a horrifying kind in the 586 holocaust. "I'll stop you from playing the harlot and you will also no longer pay your lovers." Do you know one thing that happened? This is something to keep in mind. The Babylonian captivity permanently ended idolatry in Israel. It was gone after that. When God said it would be, it was. You can go to Israel today, and while they may not worship the true and living God, you won't find idols

there. Verse 42, God says, "I will calm my fury, and my jealousy will depart from you, and I'll be pacified and angry no more because you have not remembered the days of your youth but have enraged me by all these things. Behold, I in turn will bring your conduct down on your own head, declares the Lord God, so that you will not commit this lewdness on top of all your other abominations."

I'm not gonna let it happen. And then, in Verse 44, I'll just refer to this. He talks about Samaria. Verse - down to - all the way down to Verse 52, he's talking about Samaria and Sodom. Samaria rejected God, turned their back on God. Samaria was to the North, of course, of Jerusalem. Samaria was taken into captivity in 722 by the Assyrians because God pronounced a final sweeping judgment on the capital of the northern kingdom, which was Samaria. Samaria was bad enough to feel the fury of God. Sodom in the South - we all know, Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed Genesis 19.

But look at what he says, verse 46, "Your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters, and her younger sister who lives south of you is Sodom with her daughters." So you've got Samaria in the North and Sodom in the South, "Yet you have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations", I can't say you're as bad as Samaria, who was judged. I can't say you're as bad as Sodom, who was judged long ago, "but as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they. You are worse than Sodom and Gomorrah." Let me tell you, Sodom and Gomorrah was bad. So was Samaria. You're worse. You are worse. Verse 51, "Samaria didn't commit half of your sins." You multiplied your abominations more than they. You're worse than Samaria, worse than Sodom. Verse 52, he says, "Bury your disgrace, and that you have made judgment favorable for your sisters." Because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. You are so bad, you make Sodom and Samaria appear righteousness. That has to be the strongest indictment on the pages of the Old Testament against Israel.

You may be saying, why are you reading all of this? I'm trying to get to the end. So let's just go there, okay? I think we get the point. Verse 60, this is a big word. What's the first word in verse 60? Nevertheless. "Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth." There's an attribute of God that you wanna hang to. It's called faithfulness. He keeps his covenance, doesn't he? Nevertheless. What? After all of that, nevertheless? "I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an ever-lasting covenant with you." And I believe that's the new covenant. That's the saving power of the new covenant, which was extended even to Old Testament believers. But it was bound up in Christ. It certainly wasn't the mosaic covenant. That couldn't save. "I am gonna remember my covenant to you as a nation, and I'm gonna give you to as a nation the new covenant." That is to say, I'm gonna provide salvation to you in spite of this. I'm gonna save you, is what he's saying. "Then you'll remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both your older and your younger. And I'll give them to you as daughters, but not because of your covenant. Thus I will establish my covenant with you and you shall know that

I am the Lord in order that you may remember and be ashamed and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation." I'm gonna humiliate you with grace. I'm gonna shut your mouth with mercy. "When I have forgiven you for all that you have done, the Lord God declares."

Can I ask you a simple question? Why didn't God forgive Sodom? They were not so bad as Israel. Why didn't God forgive Samaria? They were only half as bad. Why did God just forgive them? Answer: because he wanted to. Because he had sent his love on them. He had a predetermining loving covenant with the most wicked people to forgive them. That's saving love, penetrating wickedness as its fiercest to achieve its purpose. He loved them with an everlasting love, Jeremiah 31 says. God's love for his own is perfect, complete, saving, eternal. And no contribution is made to it by the object, understood? God determines to save. And he reached down and takes that nation as wicked as they are. And out of that nation, he saves a great many. He's saving them even now, as Jews are coming to Christ. And someday in the future, the fullness of this will come to pass, and the Bible says, "All is real shall be saved."

I believe that the rebels are gonna be purged out in the end before the return of Christ, and that salvation is going to come to Israel. Isaiah 45:17 says, "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." That's why there are still some Jews around. I never met a Hittite. I never met an Amorite, a _____ or a Perisite. I don't mean a Parasite. But I know a lot of Israelites. God has preserved them. At the present time, there is a remnant, according to Grace, Romans 11 says, "that some day, all Israel will be saved. When they look on him whom they've pierced, mourn for him as an only son, according to the prophet Zachariah, then the deliverer will come from Zion and remove ungodliness from Jacob." This is my covenant, Romans 11:27. God says, "With them, when I take away their sins." And the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable.

It's not just Israel, but that's the illustration I want you to see. God loves gentiles too, and he's calling out his church the same way. And he's penetrating rejection with a saving love that captures sinners in spite of their sin, and draws them to himself. You have not chosen me. I've chosen you. God's penetrating elective love overrules rejection, penetrates and rescues, forgives, saves, eternally those upon whom God has set his everlasting salvation.

When Solomon was born, the prophet Nathan nicknamed Solomon. You know what he nicknamed him? Jebediah. It means "loved of God". It tells us in the Bible that when Solomon was an infant, God set his love on him. Solomon? Sexual sin, multiple wives, pride, idolatry, foolishness. His live was full of all of that. But God set his love on him. God delighted to love Solomon graciously. Years after Solomon, Nehemiah came along returning from Persia to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. And when Nehemiah discovered the Israelites who came back was starting to marry foreign wives, got back into idolatry, a few of them started that direction, he outlawed it. He said this, "Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin regarding these things?" You don't wanna do what he did. You don't wanna fall into the judgment that that brings. "Yet among the many nations there was no king like him. He was

loved by his God." Amazing that Nehemiah points out Solomon as a bad example, and yet says "he was loved by his God". In the midst of holding up Solomon as a negative example, not to be emulated, is it affirmed that God loved him. And you know what? It is sinners that God loves, and sets his love upon. Sinners like you and me, God loves whom he will in spite of our sin. Isn't that cause for rejoicing? When he chooses to love redemptively. When he chooses to love savingly. When he chooses to love eternally. He fully forgives, and never releases from that love. Oh, by the way, it also says in 1 Kings 33, that "Solomon loved the Lord." And we love him, because he first loved us.

Join me in prayer. Our father, we remember the Lord, Jesus on the cross. Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing. And you heard his prayer. And you forgave a thief upon whom you set your saving love. And he was with you that day in paradise. And then you answered his prayer by forgiving a Centurion Soldier who was part of the execution crew. You saved him. And then in the book of Acts, it says many of the priests believed. No doubt, some of the priests who were standing on the hill that the cross, supporting the execution of this chair to the religious status quo. You saved - you penetrated through their darkness and saved them. And on the day of Pentecost, there were 3,000, and soon after that, 5,000 more, and thousands more, and you heard Jesus' prayer, and you saved many who probably were standing on the hill that day, maybe saying "crucify him". Father, we thank you that you penetrate through the rejection, through the hostility, and through the sin, for love savingly sinners, bring them to your staff and to give them eternal life. We are awed by this. We are stunned by it, and we are thrilled by it. We thank you for loving us first, and teaching us to love you in return. In Christ name, we ask, Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2013 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).