**Why Every Calvinist Should Be a Premillennialist, Part 5**
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 90-338

I want to thank you all for your patience as I have been working through this series of messages on the future of Israel. I know that most of you are saying we believe it. We are convinced. We don't need any more evidence or any more proof, we believe that God has a future for Israel. And I'm glad for that and I know you respond to the teaching of the Word of God.

But, there are many more things to say to seal the case and to be able to pull together everything as important going forward for the usages of these messages in every avenue in which they will ultimately be used...television, radio, DVD, CDs, wherever in the future. It's important for us to cover the ground with the completeness or with the degree of completeness that's consistent with what Scripture teaches. We're talking about eschatology from eschaton, the Greek word for last things. We're talking about the end. We're talking about the future. We're talking about prophecy. And in the Bible, God reveals the future. This is not something uncommon in Scripture, this is something very, very common. It is a basic characteristic of Scripture starting with the book of Genesis and running all the way to the book of Revelation to see predictions and promises from God about the future. This is a characteristic of Scripture all the way through.

For example, in the very beginning God predicted that if Adam and Eve ate, they would die. And, of course, death came into the world when they sinned and death has passed to every human being, just as God predicted. God predicted that because of sin, men would labor by the sweat of their brow to earn their bread. Women would suffer labor pains in the birth of children. God said it would happen, it happens.

God also predicted because of the sinfulness of man that the world would be destroyed by water and the entire population of the earth would be drowned with the exception of eight people. This was prophesied and it happened exactly as God said it would happen. God predicted that from the loins of a man named Abraham would come the great nation of Israel and that came to pass. God promised that He would give to Abraham and Sarah who were barren and in their old age, a son of promise. They laughed at the idea, but it happened. God predicted it, God brought it to pass. He promised Abraham and Sarah a son of promise and gave them Isaac.

God also promised that He would give a man a seed of a woman who would destroy Satan and who would be a great ruler and sovereign King to come...none other, of course, than our Lord Jesus Christ. God promised specific land to Israel. All of this in the book of Genesis. And the whole of Scripture from Genesis on all the way to Revelation features the record of God's promises, God's prophecies, God's predictions, many of which came to pass historically and the record of their coming to pass is written down in the Bible.

Many of the prophecies that God gave were directed at the coming of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. His birth to a virgin, His sinless life, His substitutionary death, His literal resurrection, His exaltation, all of these are promised in the Old Testament and they came to pass historically in the arrival of Jesus Christ. So it is no surprise, it is no change in the nature or character of Scripture that there are predictions about the future and the final end of world history. And just as prior prophecies have been precise and clear, unmistakable, so the same precision and the same clarity exists in the prophecies of the future that have as of yet not come to pass. When we consider the great coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are many, many elements to the prophecy that are very clear, unmistakable, unambiguous and precise.

For example, the Bible predicts the Rapture of the church, the catching away, the snatching away of believers in the twinkling of an eye and gathering them into heaven after they have been changed in the process. Those that are dead rising first. Those who are alive being caught up with them to be with the Lord. The Bible predicts a future time called the Time of Jacob's Trouble, the time of Tribulation, it lays out what will happen during that period of time, also called the seventieth week of Daniel. And at the end of that time of Tribulation, there is a time of Great Tribulation. The Bible defines that as a week, the Bible defines it as a seven-year period, the Great Tribulation, half of that period, 42 months, the precision is very clear. The Bible tells us that during that period of time, there will be horrible things happening in this world. They will happen because the judgment of God is released. The Bible predicts the final appearance of the last Antichrist and one who serves alongside of him, the false prophet, who will attempt to displace Christ finally, to seduce the whole world into his false religion. The Bible also predicts the death, destruction and damnation of the final Antichrist.

The Bible predicts the final battle against Christ in a place called Har Megiddo, the battle of Armageddon. It even discusses the nature of the battle and where the forces come from in detail. The battle is followed by the return of Jesus Christ and it ends when Christ comes triumphantly with His

saints in His Second Coming to judge the ungodly, to destroy them, send them to hell, to raise the unraised saints so that they can be glorified and enter into the Kingdom with the believers who have come to faith during the time of Tribulation. The Bible talks about the Kingdom, the establishment of the Kingdom when Christ returns. This Kingdom will have unique characteristics laid out in great detail in Scripture in the Old Testament, as well as in the New. It will be a Kingdom that will cover the whole earth. It will be a Kingdom centered in Israel. Jesus will reign from Jerusalem.

The Bible predicts the final Kingdom lasts a thousand years, during which Satan and all demons are bound, restricted from operating and peace and justice and righteousness prevail across the earth. The Bible then predicts the eternal judgment of the ungodly and their being sent into the Lake of Fire along with the false prophet and the beast and the devil and all his demons. The Bible then predicts the creation of the new heaven and the new earth.

Those are just general categories of eschatological areas that are laid out in Scripture in detail. Now this prophetic truth about the end is eschatology, the study of last things. What I've been trying to show you is that there does not need to be so much confusion about these events. It is really unnecessary. And if you are faithful to a straightforward reading of Scripture, you need not be confused at all. I was talking to one of our missionaries from China, he was reminding me that he has never met a Christian in China who did not understand prophecies of the end the same way we understand them because it's biblical. And if all you have is a Bible, and you're not influenced by some unbiblical view, it's inescapable what the Bible says.

So there are two things to keep in mind. If you want to understand eschatology, if you want to understand the doctrine of last things...one, interpret all prophetic eschatological texts the same way you interpret everything else. Don't change the rules of interpretation. Don't create a separate set of rules in order to avoid the obvious. Secondly, interpret all the promises and covenants with Israel normally and literally. Take all the texts at face value and the promises of God and the covenants of God with Israel at face value. If you do that, use normal interpretive principles and let Israel be Israel and God's promises to Israel valid and to be fulfilled, you can't miss the biblical scheme of eschatology.

The centerpiece then is to understand what God has promised is real. The Old Testament laid out promises to Israel, as you clearly remember, we've been going through those now for a number of weeks. Israel is God's elect, God promised them a great nation, a great land, great blessing, a king, a kingdom, salvation, redemption, peace, righteousness. That's what God promised them ultimately and finally in the end. We believe that God will keep that promise. There is nothing in Scripture to

cancel or obviate those promises. There is no reason to do that. Israel is God's elect, preserved to the fulfillment of all those promises. And we, the church, will share in that fulfillment by participating in the great blessing, in the great Kingdom and in the great New Covenant of salvation through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Strangely, however, and this is the rub, as Shakespeare would say, there is a widespread and deep seated idea in Christian theology that Israel by unbelief and rejection of Christ has thereby forfeited all the promises and covenants. They are canceled because of Israel's apostasy. They are canceled because of Israel's rejection of Christ. This dominates Reformed theology, though those in Reformed theology are the protectors of divine election and divine sovereignty. And so it seems a very contradictory notion to come from those who are the protectors of the doctrine of divine election. The idea is that the church has replaced Israel. All the promises to Israel are to be fulfilled in the church. All the earthly promises to Israel are to be fulfilled spiritually in the church. The church replaces Israel, that's why it's called Replacement Theology...Replacement Theology. Israel is permanently set aside, all the promises originally given to them are fulfilled spiritually in the church now and in heaven. There is no future for Israel. Messiah will not come and establish a Kingdom. He will not sit on a throne in Jerusalem. He will not rule over the whole earth for a period of a thousand years. There is no earthly Kingdom. There is no millennium. So this view is called Amillennialism...Amillennialism. They are confident, the advocates of this view, that there is no future earthly reign of Christ in Jerusalem fulfilling the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, Davidic Covenant, New Covenant, no millennium. So they call themselves Amillennialists.

To support their denial of the Kingdom, they reject the plain sense of Scripture. They do injustice to the nature of election and they interpret Israel as meaning other than the Jewish people. You have to change the meaning of Israel, you have to change the nature of election and reject the plain sense of Scripture. Now to do that, you'd have to have a very strong mandate from God but none appears in Scripture. So what we've been saying is, promises to Israel are to Israel. When you read about Israel, it means Israel, it doesn't mean the church. Eschatology becomes clear if you get Israel right and interpret Scripture in a normal fashion.

Now that's what we've been saying by way of introduction all along. And in order to kind of dig in a little deeper, we have posed a few questions. Question number one, "Is the Old Testament Amillennial?" Where does this view come from? Does it appear somewhere in the Old Testament, this Replacement Theology?

Well we answered that, the answer is no. The Old Testament is millennial. The Old Testament believes that Christ will come and establish His glorious Kingdom, and that that Kingdom will be the one promised to Israel. And I pointed you to Zechariah 12, 13 and 14 among many other passages.

So, this Amillennial idea did not originate in the Old Testament.

Second question: Were the Jews of Jesus' day Amillennial? Did it arise in the Intertestamental period between the Old and the New Testament? Was it a message somehow from God that caused them to come up with the idea that the promises to Israel in the Old Testament don't mean Israel?

The answer is no. The Jews of Jesus' day, as we saw in detail, were millennial. They believed in the coming Kingdom promised to Abraham and to David and the promise of salvation to the nation through the coming of Messiah and that the Messiah would come and establish His glorious Kingdom. We saw that in Luke 1. We saw it in Luke 17. We saw it in Luke 19.

So if it wasn't in the Old Testament, this Amillennialism showed up, and it wasn't in the Intertestamental period, that is to say the Jews living after the Old Testament into the time of Jesus, it wasn't some revelation they received, was it...a third question...something Jesus instituted? Was Jesus the original Amillennialist? How did Jesus understand the Old Testament promises to Israel?

The answer we gave you simply last time is Jesus was not an Amillennialist, Jesus was Millennial. Jesus believed in, taught, propagated the coming Kingdom for Israel. And we took you to Acts chapter 1 verses 3 through 7 to show that.

So, this idea of Replacement Theology didn't come from the Old Testament writers. It didn't come from the Jews in the Intertestamental period. It didn't come from Jesus. Therefore we can safely say through the ministry and teaching of Jesus, it didn't exist. Okay? It didn't exist. You can't find it in the Old Testament. You can't find it in the eschatology of the Jews of Jesus' time. And you certainly can't find it in the teaching of Jesus.

That takes us to question number four, that's our question for tonight...Were the Apostles Amillennialists? The Apostles and those associated with the Apostles who wrote the New Testament, are they the ones who hatched this idea, or to whom this new idea was revealed by God? Let's find out.

Open your Bible to Acts chapter 3...Acts chapter 3. This is very straightforward uncomplicated and suits our purpose very, very well because it's going to be crystal-clear to you what the Apostles taught. All we're looking for is an Apostle to say, "Israel is out, the church is in." All we're looking for is some Apostle to say there's no coming Kingdom, there is no earthly Millennium, there will be no reign of Christ on earth, there will be no national salvation for Israel. That's what we're looking for, Israel is replaced by the church.

First of all, let's consider Peter, the leader of all the Apostles, Acts 3 verse 13. Peter speaking, actually the middle of verse 12, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Why do you gaze at us as if by our own power and piety we had made him walk?" They had just made a lame man walk...Peter and John had. Peter then says in verse 13, "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered up and disowned in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release Him, but you disowned the holy and righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you but put to death the prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses." You killed the Messiah and you can't deny it. We're all witnesses to the fact that you did it, the very one who has come from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the one who is the holy and righteous one and the prince of life and you killed Him.

Did this thwart the plan of God? Was this an interruption in the purpose of God? Was this a breach that God had not expected or planned for? Not at all! Verse 18, "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled." This is right on schedule. This is not leading God into Plan B. This is in the plan from the beginning. Verse 19, "Repent therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,"...times of refreshing...that is a promise of the future Kingdom, refreshed by peace and righteousness and salvation. "And that He may send Jesus the Christ appointed for you."

In other words, if you repent and return to God, your sins will be wiped away and the Kingdom will come because Jesus the Christ will return. Verse 21, follow Peter's words. "Whom heaven must receive." He had just ascended. "Whom heaven must receive until...not forever, but...until the period

of restoration of all things." What's that? That's the Kingdom, when all things are restored to a condition similar to what they were before the Fall. He is going to send the Christ from heaven when it is time for the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. And He goes all the way back to Moses who said, "The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like Me from your brethren, to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you." Nothing has changed.

You rejected Christ. You killed the Prince of Life. You disowned the holy and righteous One. But if you repent and when you repent and return, your sins will be wiped away, the promised times of refreshing will come because Jesus Christ will return who is only in heaven until the period of restoration, the very period spoken of by God through the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

Now drop down in to verse 25. Peter closes out his sermon by saying this, "It is you who are the sons of the prophets," now listen to this, "and sons, implied, of the covenant which God made with your fathers saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" What is he saying? He is saying you disowned the holy and righteous one, the Messiah. You rejected the Messiah. You killed the Prince of Life. But you are still, verse 25, the sons of the Abrahamic Covenant which He restates, in which God said to Abraham, "In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed," and so forth, "For you first God raised up His servant and sent him to bless you by turning everyone of you from your wicked ways." You are still the sons of the prophets, you are still the sons of the Covenants, you are still the people of promise, you are still the ones that God will turn from wicked ways."

Peter is not talking about Replacement Theology. Peter is affirming that nothing has changed in terms of God's Covenant promise. Christ will come because He was appointed to come for you...you Jews, verse 20...He will come and bring the time of refreshing, the period of restoration which was promised by God through the mouth of the prophets from ancient time. He will come and you will give heed to Him. He will come because you are the sons of the Covenant, that means you belong to that Covenant, that Covenant belongs to you and everything promised to Abraham originally will come to pass. God will raise up His servant. He will send Him. He will turn you from your wicked ways. I cannot emphasize how important this is appearing in the third chapter of Acts after the Jews have already crucified Christ, already fully rejected Him, after the church has already been established in chapter 2, yes the church is established but that does not cancel God's promises to Israel.

Chapter 15 of the book of Acts, chapter 15 of the book of Acts and we come to another opportunity for somebody to introduce Replacement Theology. Peter could have said, "God is finished with you,

the Kingdom is cancelled. There will be no times of refreshing, there will be no period of restoration. There will be no future salvation for you, you are now blended into the church of Jew and Gentile. There's no future for the nation." He doesn't say that, Peter doesn't say that. You're still the sons of the prophets. You're still the sons of the Covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant is still in place. It will be fulfilled. Christ will come. He will do all that He's promised and turn you from your wicked ways. That's Peter's message here. We hear from James in Acts 15, pick it up at verse 13, Paul and Barnabas have just come back from visiting the Gentiles and seeing how God had brought salvation to them. After they had stopped speaking, James answered saying, this is James, the brother of our Lord, "Brethren, listen to me. Simeon...that's the old name of Peter...has related how God first concerned himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name." Now we could say this is an indication, James could say, that it's over for the Jews. There is no future for this nation. All the promises are cancelled at this point. God has moved to the Gentiles and He has now taking a people from them because you have been so stubborn and obstinate, recalcitrant, and unbelieving and even hostile toward His own Son. You're finished.

That's not what he says. God has taken from among the Gentiles a people for His name. This is true. The gospel is now being preached to the Gentiles. It is going to the end of the world, Jerusalem, Judea, the uttermost part of the earth. That is true. Verse 15, however, "And with this the words of the prophets agree. The words of the prophets agree." The prophets always said God would save the nations. That's not new. The prophets always said that God would save the nations. Israel was never the end of God's salvation work, they were the means. It was through Israel that the world was to learn about the true and living God and put their trust in Him. That's why Jonah, for example, was sent to Nineveh. With this the words of the prophets agree, Gentile salvation...that's not a new idea, the prophets saw that. But listen to this, "Just as it is written," and we start in verse 16 to see language that comes right out of several Old Testament passages. This is what James says. "After these things I will return and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen. And I will rebuild its ruins and I will restore it."

What is the tabernacle of David? It is the house of David. What is the house of David? What's another name for the house of David? Jews, Jewish people, the messianic Kingdom. "I will rebuild the tent, the tabernacle of David which has fallen." After what? "After these things." What things? "After taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name." After God has gathered out from the Gentiles a people, after that He will return, rebuild the tabernacle of David, fulfill all messianic promises with regard to the Messiah as David's greater Son and King, rebuild its ruins, restore it in order that...verse 17...the rest of mankind may seek the Lord.

And all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.

In other words, there will be Gentile salvation, there will be a rebuilding then of the house of David, the Jews, with their King, with their Messiah, with the Kingdom, and from that Kingdom again salvation will extend across the nations of the world. That's what happens in the Tribulation when Israel believes, a hundred and forty-four thousand Jews are saved, twelve thousand from every tribe, they spread over the earth and they preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and an innumerable number of people are saved from every tongue and tribe and people and nation. God has not set them apart or aside permanently, but only until He has gathered His Gentile church.

This is what our Lord says in Luke 21:24, that Jerusalem is trodden down only until the times of the Gentile is complete. So we hear from Peter, we hear from James. Turn to Hebrews chapter 6, we're not sure who wrote Hebrews, but we do know what the writer of Hebrews says about this issue. If Peter didn't invent Replacement Theology, and James didn't invent Replacement Theology, was it the writer of Hebrews who invented it? Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 13, "For when God made the promise to Abraham since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself saying, 'I will surely bless you, I will surely multiply you.'" When God made the promise in Genesis 12 and then repeated it in 13, 15, 17 to Abraham, God swore by Himself. Remember we talked about that. God promised with Himself to fulfill all His covenant. He bound Himself cause He could swear by no one greater. And thus having patiently waited, He obtained the promise for men swear by one greater than themselves and with them an oath as a confirmation as an end of every dispute, in the same way God desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise, listen to this, the unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed it with an oath. This is speaking directly to the issue.

When people want to bind their word, they swear by something greater. I swear to God. I swear to heaven. I swear on my mother's memory. I...people use all kinds of things. God could not swear by anyone greater than Himself and so God swore by Himself, guarantying His promise with an oath so that, verse 18, "By two unchangeable things." What are the two unchangeable things? God's promise and His oath. His promise and His oath. "In which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us."

Remember, he's writing to Jews, he's writing to Hebrews, that's why it's called Hebrews. He said God doesn't lie. God may promises and God swore to keep those promises, promises made originally to

Abraham which would then extend through all of the promises repeated to the patriarchs, all the promises repeated to David, promises repeated to the prophets and expanded and God made the promise, made the oath, cannot lie, we can have strong encouragement that God will do He says He will do. We have this hope then solidly, verse 19, like an anchor of the soul. It is a hope sure and steadfast which enters within the veil where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Jesus the High Priest is in heaven securing this promise...this promise of salvation originally given in the Abrahamic Covenant. It is not just for the Jews, we too have the fulfillment of this promise. We too will participate in the blessings to Abraham and David in the Kingdom. We too participate now in New Covenant salvation. But that does not cancel out God's promises to Israel anymore than in the Old Testament when God made those promises, Gentile proselytes who came to believe in the true and living God and were baptized and entered into the fellowship of the Jews and worshiped the true God, had a place there. So we will have a place in God's future fulfillment.

Well did...did John introduce this Replacement Theology? Maybe it's John. No...no, John wrote the Revelation and John in chapter 7 describes the hundred and forty-four thousand, twelve thousand from every tribe. And John describes salvation hitting the city of Jerusalem in chapter 11 under the power of two witnesses. And John describes the establishing of the Millennial Kingdom in the great vision of chapter 20. Peter didn't introduce Amillennialism. James didn't introduce it. The writer of Hebrews didn't introduce it. John didn't introduce it. Maybe Paul introduced it. Believe it or not, there are people who say he did. Let's go to Romans and find out.

Romans chapter 3, we just want to establish briefly a very important issue here that was just affirmed in Hebrews. Chapter 2 talks about the sinfulness of the Jews. They were Jews outwardly but not inwardly. Circumcised spiritually but not spiritually, concerned about praise from men and not praise from God. And so the question comes up in chapter 3, what advantage then is it to be a Jew? What's the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, they were intrusted with the oracles of God. They were entrusted with the oracles of God. What a tremendous privilege that is. They were entrusted, stewards of Scripture. "What then," verse 3, "if some did not believe? Their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?" You couldn't speak more directly to the issue. What if they don't believe? Does that cancel the faithfulness of God? Verse 4, "May it never be. No, no, no, no, let God be found true though every man be found a liar."

Wow! So, they were given the oracles of God. God gave them promises in those oracles. They didn't believe. Did their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God toward them? No, no, no, no.

Let’s get a little deeper into this. Turn to chapter 9...chapter 9. This is a very important section of Scripture. And it gives us good insight into God’s understanding of the apostasy and defection of Israel. In the opening of chapter 9, it is clear that Israel is not saved even though, verse 4, they have the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the temple service, the promises, the fathers and from them Christ has come, humanly speaking, as a Jew. They have all of that, all of those privileges. But Paul has nothing but sorrow and unceasing grief in his heart for them because even though they have all that, they’re not saved. Then you come to verse 6, “But it is not as though the Word of God has failed.” This could indicate to us that all God’s promises have failed and God’s power has failed and everything has gone wrong. No, “For they are not Israel who are descended from Israel, neither are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but through Isaac your descendants will be named.” God makes choices. Not all the children of Abraham are the children of promise. Abraham had a son named Ishmael, he was not chosen as a son of promise. “Only the children of promise, verse 8, are regarded as descendants.” And then he goes on to talk about Isaac. And even when Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau, verse 13 says, God said, “Jacob I loved, Esau I hated.”

So what we’re learning here is the unbelief of Israel is not outside the plan of God. God never included all Jews as children of promise...never. Even among twins, one was loved and one was hated. And so we say in verse 14, “Is there injustice with God?” No, no, no, no, no, He’s God. Said to Moses, “I’ll have mercy on whom I have mercy, I have compassion on whom I have compassion,” in that sixteenth verse, “it doesn’t depend on man who wills, or the man who runs but on God who has mercy.” Verse 18, “He has mercy on whom He desires. He hardens whom He desires.” Can’t tell you how important this is.

If you look at the unbelief of the nation Israel, if you look at the rejection of Messiah from a human viewpoint, the Bible says they are absolutely responsible. If you look at it from a divine viewpoint, they were not the people of promise...they were not the people of promise. They were not chosen by God. Therefore, they’re not believing cannot cancel the promises of God because they were never chosen to be the people of God. That’s why I say, to believe in divine election, divine sovereignty and divine choice and come up with Replacement theology is a bizarre twist. And God has every right to choose whomever He wills. He did not choose the generation of Jews living at the time of Jesus. They did not believe, He did not show them mercy. Therefore their unbelief could not have the power to thwart His plan to cancel His promises.

More importantly chapter 11, and we could spend a lot of time digging into this chapter in great detail. In fact, many years ago I did just that. I spent a year in chapters 9, 10 and 11. So much that is here is important. At the end of chapter 10, there is a reminder that salvation, according to verse 13, is for anyone who calls on the name of the Lord, and we're back to human responsibility there. There is a reminder of human guilt in verse 21, "As for Israel, all day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." This is part of the incomprehensible nature of election. People are not saved because God did not choose them. They do not believe because He did not grant them mercy. And yet, all day long He stretches out His hand to them and they are guilty of disobedience and obstinate unbelief. And whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. How do you harmonize all of that in your mind? You don't. It's impossible. But all of those things are true. The sinner is culpable. The sinner is guilty. Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. And yet God is completely responsible, for whoever is saved is whomever He chooses and to whom He gives mercy.

That leads us in to chapter 11 verse 1. Has God rejected His people? Has He? No, no, no. Chapter 10 ends that they are a disobedient and obstinate people. Is that the end? This is a perfect place to inject Replacement Theology, right here. Has God rejected His people? Yes...yes, it's over. Israel's out. Paul's answer, "No, no, no, no. Never...never."

Go down to verse 8. "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not, ears to hear not, down to this very day." This is sovereign. God has done this. And then in verse 11, "I say then, they didn't stumble so as to fall, did they?" This doesn't mean that because they stumbled, because they were obstinate, hard-hearted and disobedient, because God had given them a spirit of stupor so they couldn't see, and they couldn't hear, is this the end of them? Did they stumble for the moment so as to finally and permanently fall? Again he comes back with me genita(?), may it never be...no, no, no, no. What in the world was God doing?

Verse 11 tells you, "By their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles." In God's purpose God gave them a spirit of stupor so they would not believe in order to turn to the Gentiles to gather His church. But that's not the end. End of verse 11, "To make them jealous." To make them jealous. Jealous of what the Gentiles have. Jealous of what true believers have. Some day that will happen. Verse 12, Paul says, "If their transgression be riches for the world," and that's true, it is their unbelief that caused God to turn to the church and the world and redeem His church from every tongue and

tribe and people and nation, if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be?" What does that tell you? What does that word "fulfillment" tell you? That God is not finished with them at all. If so much good can come out of their unbelief, what is going to come out of their belief? Yes, verse 17, "Branches were broken off and you, the church, the Gentiles, like a wild olive branch were grafted in to the stock of blessing. But don't be arrogant...verse 18...don't be arrogant." Verse 19, "You will say then, branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right. They were broken off for their unbelief and you stand by your faith. "But don't be conceited but fear, for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you."

You know what's going to happen to the church? The church in the end is going to become apostate and God is going to save Israel and graft them back in. Verse 23, "If they do not continue in their unbelief, they will be grafted in for God is able to graft them in again." Now go down to verse 25, "I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation that...here's the key word...that partial hardening...partial hardening has happened to Israel." Why does he say partial? Because Paul himself is a Jew. The Apostles were all Jews. The early church was Jewish. There are even now thousands and thousands of Jewish believers. Hardening has happened partially to Israel only until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. Exactly what Jesus said in Luke 21:24. "And...verse 26...thus all Israel will be saved, just as it is written in the Old Testament." Isaiah 59:20, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob and this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins." Nothing has changed.

The Covenant is still in place. This Covenant being referred to here is the Covenant made to David, the Davidic Covenant, of a great King who would come and deliver them. It is also the New Covenant given to Ezekiel and to Jeremiah, a Covenant of salvation when God takes away their sins. Nothing has changed. Peter says it, James says it, the writer of Hebrews says it, John affirms it and here Paul is unmistakably clear. Verse 28, "From the standpoint of the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. They are enemies so that you would be given the gospel, but from the standpoint of God's election, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers." Who are the fathers? The patriarchs to whom the promises were given.

Why? Verse 29, here's the key verse, underline it, "For the gifts and calling of God are...what?...irrevokable...irrevokable." Cannot change, cannot change. God is even the one who ordained that Israel would be rebellious and unbelieving. Why? So that salvation would then go to the Gentiles to make them jealous and one day God will show them mercy in their jealousy and bring them back.

The setting aside of Israel is partial. It is passing, temporary. It is purposeful. It is indeed purposeful to bring about salvation through the church. And so this great section ends in verse 33 to 36 with this magnificent doxology. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments, unfathomable His ways, for who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor, or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again, for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things to Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

This is a celebration of the fulfillment of God’s purpose. Nothing is changed. They’re still the sons of the prophets. They’re still the sons of the covenant. They’re still the people of the promise. They’re still headed for the Kingdom, the fulfillment of all the promises given to Abraham, given to David and given in the New Covenant. As Gentiles now who have been brought to salvation by the mercy of God, we will inherit with them all the promises to Abraham and to David and have already begun to inherit the promises of the New Covenant because our sins have already been forgiven, the Holy Spirit has been planted in us, stony heart has been removed, we have been given a transformed nature, a heart of flesh.

The fact that these promises were given in the Old Testament to Israel was never to isolate them to Israel and Israel alone. There was always the purpose of God through the salvation of Israel to save the nation. Listen to the vision of Daniel, we’ll close with this, Daniel 7. “I kept looking...verse 19...in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming,” He’s seeing the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. “He came up to the Ancient of Days, God the Father, and was presented before Him.” Listen to this. “And to Him was given dominion, glory and a Kingdom.” This is the Son receiving His Kingdom from the Father. Listen to the next line. “That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, His Kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.” Here is Daniel’s vision of the Messiah coming to take His Kingdom and it is a Kingdom that involves people of every nation and language.

To say that God has made promises to Israel is not to say that the ultimate Kingdom is isolated to Israel, it is the place where those promises will be fulfilled to His people but they will also embrace all who belong to God. We’ll all be there.

I hate to end on a negative note. With all that in mind, I read the other day in a book that Rick Holland gave me about John...the writings of Jonathan Edwards. This is what Jonathan Edwards said. “Promises that were made by the prophets to the people of Israel concerning their future prosperity and glory are fulfilled in the Christian church.” Really? Then he adds, “According to their proper intent,” end quote. Just exactly where did he find that? Not in the Old Testament. Not in the eschatology of the Jews in the Intertestamental period, not in the teaching of Jesus, not in the teaching of the Apostles. Where did it come from? Maybe since nobody in the Bible taught that, maybe it happened in that fifth category, the generation right after the New Testament that we call the early church fathers. Did they invent this? We’re going to find out next week and we’re going to find out the implications of this theology in evangelism, Christian living, all aspects of our understanding of the purposes of God. This has massive, massive implications. I’ll give you just one hint, you’re evangelizing a Jew and you say to the Jew, “Jesus is your Messiah.”

“Really?”

“When Messiah comes, He brings a Kingdom. Where’s the Kingdom?” If you’re an Amillennialist, this is what you say, “You’re in it. This is as much of a Kingdom as there will ever be.”

“You mean this is the Kingdom promised in the Old Testament and the Jews are being slaughtered, bombed, tortured, murdered, living in fear, no peace? Jews all over the world are unrighteous? This is the Kingdom?”

“Well, I hate to tell you this, that got cancelled.”

“Really?”

If I was a serious-thinking Jew, my conclusion would be Jesus isn’t the Messiah because this isn’t the Kingdom. You better have a better explanation than that. That’s a hard sell. There is a better explanation and I’ll give it to you...next time. Let’s pray.

Father, again we thank You for Your Word, we thank You for its consistency. What a treasure it is...what a treasure of marvelous consistency no matter how deeply and diligently and thoughtfully

and carefully we assess its glorious truth. It always stands firms, magnificent, consistent, faithful. Lord, bless these dear folks whose hearts hunger to know Your truth and may the things they learn cause them to love You more, worship You with greater joy and gratitude, and may these truths help us as we carry the gospel of a faithful God to Jew and Gentile. Bless us as we go our way with thankful hearts, in Christ’s name. Amen.

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