Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

An Explanation of the Sovereign Gospel
Scripture: Romans 9-11
Code: TM11-9

I want to go back to our theme in this section, how do we harmonize the issue of divine sovereignty, human responsibility with our evangelistic duty…with our evangelistic duty. We are, after all we've learned, ambassadors for Christ, we have been given the ministry of reconciliation. We have been given the Word of reconciliation, the message about a reconciling God who has provided a way for sinners to be reconciled to Him. We are controlled, constrained, compelled, motivated and ruled by the love that Christ has for us which love goes to all those for whom He died. We are to go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature. We are, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:11 to persuade men because we understand the terror of the Lord, divine judgment, eternal hell, all of that. so we know it has been laid upon us to be faithful in our evangelistic responsibility.

At the same time, sometimes we struggle with this reality of divine sovereignty and what it is that we can do when everything is predetermined by God and worked by the Holy Spirit.

Well, the simple answer to the question is God has not only ordained whom He will save, but He has ordained that we in our faithful evangelism would be the means by which He would save His own. To be useful to Him is the purpose in the fulfillment of His sovereign plan, to be an instrument that He can use, to be a vessel unto honor, fit for the Master's use. To be obedient because that brings, of course, blessing, reward in this life and eternal reward as well.

But in trying to harmonize this issue of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, which seems to me to be the number one issue that people who study the Bible grapple with, trying to harmonize that. My answer to that through the years has simply been to clarify the issue because the Bible doesn't really give us a resolution to that because this is something that is beyond us. It is a transcendent reality that is perfectly harmonized in the mind of God but a dilemma for us. Our responsibility is to give God the glory for salvation, and to give our lives to calling sinners to repentance in the ministry of reconciliation.

Now a great illustration of how these two things are juxtaposed against each other, will be found for us in the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapter of Romans. And I have been sufficiently mocked this week for covering only a few verses. So let's see if we can cover three chapters.

And as Jonathan said, one of the things that I love to do is simply show you what the Bible says. And there's a certain self-evident nature in Scripture, it is its own best explanation and sometimes just

read thoughtfully becomes clear and I think we're going to see that in this text. We don't have a lot of time to dig down into individual verses and things, going to get the big picture here. In chapters 9 to 11, the Apostle Paul unbars his heart over the application of the gospel…over the application of the gospel to sinners. And especially those that are closest to his heart, namely the Jews.

Does Paul understand the gospel? Absolutely, we've seen that. Does he understand his responsibility? Absolutely, we understand that. Does he understand that it is a sovereign work of God, clearly He has unpacked that for us? Does he understand that the sinners are responsible and must repent and believe? He understands that.

Having given us a look at the gospel in chapters 1 through 8 in Romans, that is really the full unveiling of Paul's understanding of the gospel.

In chapter 9, he makes an application…an application. This is a great way to kind of wrap up our week looking at the gospel of Paul. We'll do something on it on Sunday morning, but for this part of it, this is a good place to wrap it up. Here is the Apostle Paul's concern over the application of this glorious reconciling sovereign gospel. Chapter 9 verse 1, "I'm telling the truth in Christ. I'm not lying. My conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit." All of that is simply to tell us that we cannot question Paul's motive, we cannot question his passion, we cannot question his integrity. This is a bleeding heart section of Scripture. He is so passionate about the salvation of sinners, he wants everyone to understand the truth of that passion, it is not fraudulent. His conscience on that issue is clear in the Holy Spirit. And here's what he wants you to know. 'I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart."

You know, I just have to say this. That there are a lot of people who embrace Reformed Theology that don't appear to me to have that. Where is the grief? Where is the unceasing grief? Where's the sorrow? Where's the agony? Where's the pain over the lost condition of people?

You can be so confident and comfortable with the doctrine of sovereignty that you completely abandon this heart passion. How deep is this passion for Paul? Verse 3, "I could wish that I myself were damned, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh."

I don't think I've ever heard myself say that to God. Damn me if by damning me you could save someone else. Send me to hell if me going to hell would bring someone else to heaven. This is a passion that is so overwhelming in the life of Paul that he actually contemplates the possibility that he could wish himself to be damned if in some way that could bring salvation to the people that he is so heartbroken about.

There certainly would be no one who better understood the doctrine of divine sovereignty than the Apostle Paul, right? And at the same time, he had this deep passion for the lost. And in particular, he says in verse 3, “My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service, and the promises whose are the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, from whom is the Christ, the Messiah according to the flesh who is over all, God bless forever, Amen.”

You know, this is a man who just burst into doxology at random. That’s a doxology, he just says the name Christ and he bursts out into doxology who is over all God blessed forever, amen. This is a man who knew sorrow and unceasing grief over the lost condition of the people that he loved.

Look at chapter 10 verse 1. “Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.” You might ask Paul, if it’s already predetermined who is going to be saved, what are you praying for? What are you praying for? And he would answer you by saying, “My passion motivates my prayers because I care, because I’m so deeply burdened, because I’m so profoundly grieved. Because I know that I have been commanded and called to pray.” Paul himself even told Timothy to pray for all men regarding their salvation. Paul was so passionate about the salvation of sinners that he gave everything that he had in that effort in his life, both by way of public ministry and by way of private intercession on their behalf. And his prayer to God for them was for their salvation.

Look at chapter 11 verse 1, “I say then,” he writes, “God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be, *me genoito*, the strongest negative in the Greek language, No, no, no, no, no. “I am sorry,” he says, “over the condition of my people. I pray for their salvation and I know that God has not finally rejected them.”

This is really the full range of necessary attitudes for an effective evangelist. You have to be sorry over the condition of the lost. You have to desire their salvation to the degree that you pray for them and you have to believe God that He has salvation in mind for some of them.

Now in these three chapters, 9, 10 and 11, he reveals the passion that moved him, passion for the salvation of sinners. And they were both Jew and Gentiles, we know because though he had this particular desire for the Jews, he was the Apostle to the Gentiles. As these chapters unfold, they disclose, I guess you could say, four essential components, four realities, four truths regarding evangelism. They are all necessary and yet they are apparently paradoxical. They…they…they are putting their sin in a position of tension. So let’s just take them one at a time.

Chapter 9 emphasizes divine sovereignty. Chapter 9 emphasizes divine sovereignty. Pick it up in verse 6. The fact that Israel has not believed, the fact that Israel is not saved, the fact that they had rejected Christ, verse 6, it is not as though the Word of God has failed. Why? Because they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel. You know what that means? God never intended all Jews to be

saved. That's what He's saying. The explanation establishes divine sovereignty, nor are they all children, verse 7, because they are Abraham's descendants. That is, children of God. But through Isaac, your descendants will be named. That is it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. This is the word of promise, at this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son, and not only this, there was Rebecca also. When she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac, for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her by God, the older will serve the younger and it is also written, "Jacob I love and Esau I…what?...I hated."

You know, the first five verses here might make somebody think that everything had gone wrong, that God had in the beginning intended to save all the Jews and the plan had failed and Paul's answer is, "The unbelief of Israel is perfectly consistent with God's sovereign purpose and promise. God's promise did not fail, God's power did not fail from the beginning God was making choices, as seen even before Jacob and Esau were born."

Verse 14 then assumes the immediate criticism is going to come, "What shall we say then? There's no injustice with God, is there? This doesn't seem fair. It's not fair that God chooses. That's not just. So do we say there's…there's injustice? No, no, no." Psalm 119 says of God, "That your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, or your justice is an everlasting justice." Psalm 7 verse 9 says, "You are the righteous one. You are the just one that God defines justice."

And he answers with sovereignty, verse 15, he said to Moses, "I'll have mercy on whom I'll have mercy. I'll have compassion on whom I have compassion." So it doesn't depend on the man who wills, or the man who turns, but on God who has mercy. The Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up to demonstrate My power in you and that My name may be proclaimed throughout the whole earth, so then He has mercy on whom He desires and He hardens whom He desires."

Wow! That is…that is clear as it can be that God makes choices. You say, "Is that fair?" Fair would send everybody…where?...to hell. You want fair? I don't think so. There is no equivocation in Paul's understanding of the sovereignty of God…none.

Verse 19 then, another criticism will be levied against this, "You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who will resist His will?'" How in the world, if this is all decided by God, can you blame me if I don't believe? How can you do that?

And here's the answer, verse 20, "Who are you, O man, who answers back to God?" Shut your mouth. Don't call God's justice into question. "A think molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this? Will it?" "Or does not the potter have a right over the clay to make from the same

lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?”

Can’t the potter do what he wants? Isn’t God absolutely sovereign? Why are you asking Him? Why are you questioning Him? In fact, verse 22 says, “What if…” it’s like saying, “So what.” What’s it matter to you? Why should you think you need to weigh in if God willing to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known, His judgment power, endured with much patience, vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?” And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy which He prepared beforehand for glory. You don’t have a right to tell God what He can do, what He can’t do. What if God was willing to demonstrate His wrath? Does He not have a right to put His wrath on display? Does He not have a right to put His holy justice on display?

There’s an interesting use of the verb here. He endured with much patience vessels of wrath, passive verb, passive verb. Endured those prepared for destruction. God is not the active agent, the verb is passive. This is not double predestination. They are prepared for destruction by their sin. The agent is not named in the process of the destruction. There is not a subject for the passive verb. But obviously the agent is the person, the agent is the sin that indwells the person. Whereas in verse 23 and 24 the verbs are active and God is the one doing it. He is the one prepared who has prepared beforehand glory for those whom He called from the Jews and from the Gentiles. So what you have here is this strong, strong statement on salvation being a work of God based upon His divine sovereign, uninfluenced and eternal choice.

Now Paul wants to prove this from the Old Testament, so in verse 25 he borrows language from Hosea and Isaiah. As he also says in Hosea, “I will call those who were not My people My people, and her who was not My beloved, beloved, and it shall be that in the place where it was said to them you are not My people, there they shall be called sons of the living God.” Verse 27, “Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, though the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved, for the Lord will execute His Word on the earth thoroughly and quickly.

And just as Isaiah foretold, unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity or a remnant, we would have become like Sodom and would have resembled Gomorrah.” He borrows from the prophet Hosea and the prophet Isaiah Old Testament texts that saw the unbelief of Israel in the future and also saw the salvation of the remnant, the salvation of the remnant. Verse 17 is the key one, though the number of the sons of Israel be like the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved. God saves a remnant, reminiscent of the sixth chapter of Isaiah where Isaiah sees the vision and God says who will go for us? Right? And Isaiah says, “Here am I, Lord, send me.” He has been cleansed with the fiery coal touching his lips and now he’s going to be sent by God to the nation of Judah to proclaim the coming Babylonian judgment, the wrath of God is going to fall and God says, “Who’s going to go and tell this people?” And he says, “Here am I, you can send me.” And then God says to him, “Their ears are going to be stopped, they will not hear. Their eyes are going to be blind, they will not see. They will not turn, they will not repent.”

And then Isaiah asks the question I would ask…How long do I do that? I mean, how would you feel at your ordination if somebody said, “Now you’re ready to go, and, by the way, nobody’s going to listen to anything you say.” So how long do I do that? And the Lord says to Isaiah in that sixth chapter, “Until there’s nobody left to do it to. Until all the people are gone.” And then he closes the chapter by saying, “There will be a tenth, there will be a holy seed, there will be a stump.” That’s the doctrine of the remnant.

It has always been so. Even the future in the eschatological day when Israel comes to faith in Christ, it will only be a third of the population of the Jews. Two thirds will be designated Old Testament prophets say is rebels, they will be purged out. A third will be saved. They’ll look on Him whom they’ve pierced. They will be redeemed. A fountain of cleansing open to them and they will receive the Kingdom promised in the Old Testament.

It cannot be mistaken what he is saying. Did Israel have no human responsibility in this? Of course they did. Look at verse 30, “What shall we say then? That Gentiles who didn’t pursue righteousness attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith? But Israel pursuing a law of righteousness didn’t arrive at that Law? It would be better off to be a Gentile.”

Here are all these Jews that had been working their heads off pursuing righteousness by the Law, and they are eliminated and Gentiles who pursued it by faith receive the salvation that the Jews couldn’t find by pursuing it through the Law. The reason is, they didn’t pursue it by faith but as though it was by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone who was Christ, just as it is written, back again in Isaiah, “I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

The statement is unambiguous. Gentiles attained righteousness by faith. Israel did not attain righteousness because they sought it by works…they sought it by works. So, on the one hand, it is a sovereign decision of God who will be saved. On the other hand, people are condemned because they sought salvation in the wrong way.

Are you getting this? Israel did not attain the righteousness that comes by faith because it is only possible by faith not by Law and it is only made available through Christ and they stumbled over Christ. Right? The gospel according to 1 Corinthians, we’ll look at this Sunday morning, was to the Gentiles foolishness and to the Jews a stumbling block.

In John 8:24 Jesus said, “When you believe that I am He, when you believe that I am He, everything will change. Unless you believe…He said…that I am He, you will die in your sins.” You have to believe.

Gentile, Jew had to believe. Salvation was going to be by faith, always by faith, and faith had to be placed in Christ Jesus. The Jews refused to do that. They stumbled over Christ. They are therefore lost. Does that mean the plan of God failed? No. God never intended that all Israel would be the true Israel, but that there would be a remnant. And if God determines to put His grace on display in a remnant, He has a right to do that, if He determines to put His judgment and His wrath on display, and His holiness on display in condemning sinners, He has a right to do that. So there you have the issue of divine sovereignty.

Come to chapter 10 and in chapter 10 there's a dramatic change here…just a dramatic change because the subject now is human responsibility. We got a hint of that at the end of chapter 9. "Brethren, my heart's desire, my prayer to God for them is for their salvation." This desire, *axisis* in the Greek, means pleading passionate kind of begging desire. He's not thrown in to indifference by the doctrine of sovereignty in chapter 9, he just wrote the chapter. He's not thrown in to indifference by the doctrine of election, predestination because he understands the parallel truth of human responsibility. It unfolds magnificently in chapter 10. I mean, it's just shocking really that these are just placed against each other and they aren't adversarial, they're parallel.

What's the problem? What is the issue here? I want them to be saved, he says, verse 1, I want them to be saved. My heart cries out for their salvation so that I could almost wish myself damned if they could be saved. What's the problem?

Well, verse 2, he explains it. He doesn't say, "Oh they're not elect." He says, "They have a zeal for God but not in accordance with…what?..." The first problem is they lack knowledge…they lack knowledge.

They lack knowledge about what?

Verse 3, "Not knowing about God's righteousness." The first thing, this is very important, that they lack is that they have an inadequate understanding of God, and particularly of the righteousness, the holiness, the absolute perfection of God. They think, listen, God is less righteous than He is. They think God is less righteous than He is.

How do you know that?

Because "They are seeking to establish their own righteousness." It kind of works like this, they think God is less righteous than He is so that they can be as righteous as God requires. Did you get that? They think they can muster up sufficient righteousness to satisfy the righteous requirement of God. They have therefore an inadequate knowledge of God in His righteousness, and they have an utterly inadequate knowledge of their own sinfulness. They think God is less righteous than He is, they are

more righteous than they are and therefore they think they can establish their own righteousness before God rather than subject themselves to the perfect righteousness of God and cry out for mercy. They lack the knowledge of God. They lack the knowledge of sin. They lack the knowledge of Christ, verse 4. They don't understand that Christ is the end of the Law. Christ is the only one who fulfills the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

In other words, we're right back…we're right back to the active righteousness of Christ, the character of Jesus Christ. They don't understand that the only one who can and has fulfilled the Law perfectly is the Lord Jesus Christ and it is His perfect righteousness imputed by God to the one who believes in Him. They don't understand that. They don't understand the character of God. They don't understand the nature of their own fallenness. They don't understand the righteousness of God that comes by Christ. They also don't understand that salvation is by faith, end of verse 4, "Everyone who believes." And then he goes on to talk about that in verse 5. "Even Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on Law shall live by that righteousness." Okay? You want to come by the Law? Then you will be held accountable to the perfect keeping of the Law and you're damned by that.

But…verse 6…the righteousness based on faith, that's what Paul wants to communicate. "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" That is to bring Christ down, or "Who will descend in to abyss that is to bring Christ up from the dead?" Who do you think you are? You think you can pull Christ down out of heaven? You think you can bring Christ up from below and bring Him to your rescue and your aid because of some self-generated righteousness? You don't get it. You can't go into heaven and bring Christ down. You can't go into the abode of the dead, as it were, and bring Him up. This is the language of self-righteousness. The sheer perversity of this view is the sinner thinks God is less righteous than He is, thinks Himself to be more righteous than He is, and therefore believes that it is possible for Him to bring God into His world so that God can give Him righteousness. This is the impossible odyssey. This is a spiritual Don Quixote, the Impossible Dream.

What have we been preaching…he says in verse 8? "The Word is near you, in your mouth, in your heart." It's not any new message, that's borrowed from Deuteronomy 30. The Word of faith which we are preaching, this is what we preach. Here it comes. "If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Now there's no sovereignty in that. This is calling on the sinner to confess with his mouth Jesus as Lord, believe in his heart that God raised Him from the dead. So after THE singular strongest statement made in holy Scripture on the doctrine of absolute divine sovereignty in salvation, chapter 9, you have chapter 10 in which the Apostle says that the sinner who confesses Jesus as Lord believes in his heart that God raised Him from the dead which is the divine affirmation of the perfection of His life and work, will be saved. "For with the heart," verse 10, "a man believes, resulting in righteousness. With the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation." You want righteousness. You can't achieve it. You can't pull it down from above. Bring it up from below. It is a gift of God to the one who believes.

And he even goes beyond that. Look at verse 11. “Whoever believes…whoever believes…whoever believes will not be disappointed,” which is an echo of verse 33 in the last chapter. “Whoever will call upon the Lord will be saved.”

Now every evangelist has to believe that, right? Every Christian has to believe that. We can’t get caught up in extrapolating out an understanding of the sovereignty of God a kind of indifference toward the lost. Here is a man whose heart bleeds and aches and weeps and is in constant turmoil and sadness over the condition of the lost. He doesn’t see any man on the surface…we saw that yesterday. And he doesn’t see any man externally, or any woman externally, he sees them in their lost condition. His heart aches for them. He’s experienced the love of Christ, he knows Christ has died for all who will believe in Him. He wants to bring the message to them. This is a passionate heart of an evangelist. And here is the whosoever, “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

And then comes this very important portion of Scripture, starting in verse 14. It takes us to the third point that I want you to see this morning. First Paul talks about divine sovereignty. Then he talks about human responsibility to believe. And here he talks about gospel duty…gospel duty.

Look at verse 14. Does he say, “How will they call on Him if they’re not elect?” What does he say? “How will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in whom they have not heard? How will they hear without a preacher?” Wow, how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they’re sent? Just as it is written, back in Isaiah, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things.” Don’t you feel that way about whoever brought you the gospel? We don’t deserve the credit. But nonetheless the hearts of the one who has been reached is full of joy and love toward the one who reached him.

They didn’t all heed the good news, verse 16 says. Not everybody. What went wrong? Well some were skeptical like Isaiah says, “Lord, who’s believed our report?” But verse 17 sums it up. Why didn’t they believe? I mean, why didn’t they…why didn’t they receive salvation? Because faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ.

Now we’re not talking about simply audio, we’re talking about heart hearing. The problem is they didn’t listen deeply. They didn’t listen deeply. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of Christ.

So that clears it up for us in terms of gospel duty. Yes we understand divine sovereignty. Yes we understand human responsibility as we’ve seen it laid out in the opening part of the tenth chapter. And now we understand gospel duty that they can’t call on one they don’t believe in. They can’t believe in one they don’t know. They can’t know without a preacher. They can’t preach unless they’re sent. Because faith comes by hearing the truth concerning Christ. It comes from hearing the truth concerning Christ. “But I say…verse 18…surely they have heard, have they? Indeed they have. Their

voice has gone out into all the earth and their words to the ends of the world. May I say, ‘Surely Israel did not know, did they?’ First Moses said, ‘I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation. By a nation without understanding will I anger you.’” And Isaiah is very bold and says, “I was found by those who didn’t seek me. I became manifest to those who didn’t ask for me. But as for Israel…he says…all the day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”

What’s that all about? That’s all about the fact that Paul is saying, “All of you Jews refuse to hear…who refuse the message of Christ, the message that was gone out into all the world, and the Gentiles are hearing it and believing it. You heard it first and you have rejected it.” So Paul has set for us this evangelistic duty, this gospel responsibility right in the middle of these great truths of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

As we come to chapter 11, just briefly, a couple of comments. We go back to the issue of divine providence. And I can’t go through this chapter, we don’t have time to do that, with much other than just kind of a general look at it. I say then, verse 1, “God has not rejected His people, has he? May it never be.” And here we go back to divine sovereignty. “For I too am an Israelite.” That’s proof that He hasn’t rejected His people because individual Jews are being saved during the church age. “I’m a descendant of Abraham. I’m of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? Lord, they have killed Your prophets. They have torn down your altars. And I am alone left and they are seeking my life.” And what is the divine response to him? “Are you kidding? I kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the need of Baal. In the same way then there has always…there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice.”

So, the answer is this. Ultimately we see Israel’s unbelief. But that’s not the end of the story. And I guess a fourth point we could throw in here would be divine promise…divine promise. There will be a future salvation for Israel and that is the promise of chapter 11, it is unmistakable, it is unequivocal, you really can’t get around it. You can’t get around it. It is, verse 5, a remnant according to God’s gracious choice.

He has to answer the question, “What about Israel?” You’ve just closed chapter 10 by saying the Jews have rejected and the Gentiles who came lately to the party, as it were, of the gospel are believing and the church is growing and flourishing. And the Jews are continuing to be hostile rejecters.

What about Israel? Is this the end of Israel? Is this the end? Well there are people who would tell us that, that the church is the Israel of God and there is no future for Israel. A little hard to explain what’s going on in the land of Israel today. If God isn’t going to do something for the Israelites in the future, then what are they doing in the world? Have you ever met a Hivite, Jebusite, Amorite, Hittite? I never

have. They got amalgamated, and blended a millennia ago. The Jews are as pure as they were in Bible times and even in Old Testament times. What's God doing?

There will come a time. There's a remnant now. Our church, by the way, is populated by many, many, many Jewish folks, the remnant, part of the remnant today for which we're very grateful. But there's a future day when salvation will come back to Israel as a people.

Go down to verse 11, "I say, did they not stumble so as to fall? No, may it never be. By their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles." So what happens is by the rejection of Israel, God goes to the Gentiles. Then he goes on to explain, the salvation of the Gentiles is intended to make the Jews jealous and that the Jews becoming jealous will come back to receive the promises originally given to them.

If their rejection, verse 15, is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead. You know, if the rejection of Israel…Israel's rejection of Christ…ended up in the gospel going to the whole Gentile world, if their rejection effected Gentile evangelism so massively, what will their acceptance be? I'll tell you what it will be. Read the book of Revelation. First a hundred and forty-four thousand of them, twelve thousand from every tribe will become evangelists. They'll go across the globe and they'll preach the gospel everywhere. And there will be so many people saved that it will be the greatest period of revival in the history of the world. And then the Lord will return to establish the Kingdom He promised to them. They were just temporarily broken off, right?

Verse 17, "The branches were broken off the stock of salvation blessing. The Gentiles called a wild olive tree were grafted in. You became partakers with them of the rich root of the olive tree. Don't be arrogant toward those branches that are cut off. If you're arrogant, remember it's not you who supports the root but the root supports you. Branches were broken off, verse 19 says, so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief. "But you stand by your faith. Don't be conceited but fear for if God didn't spare the natural branches, He'll not spare you either."

You know, the church can have a sad end. We see a false church that could be in reference there. You could be cut off, he says in verse 22. But the day is coming when Israel will be saved. Verse 25, "I don't want you brethren to be uninformed of the mystery. You'll not be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel." It's only partial because there's a remnant. "Until the fullness of the Gentiles come in." That means the church is complete. "And then so all Israel will be…what?...saved. Just as it is written, the Deliverer will come from Zion and remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Why is this going to happen? Verse 29, "Because the gifts and callings of God are…what?...irrevocable." God's promises cannot be canceled…cannot be canceled. God will save ultimately His people Israel.

So it all comes back to God’s promise. Not all comes back to God’s power and in the end that comes back to His glory. When it’s all said and done, here is the conclusion. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways.”

Do you know what that means now? Hum? Beyond our ability to fully understand. “Who has known the mind of the Lord.” You don’t think you could, do you? Who became His counselor? He has no advisors. Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? He owes you no explanation for anything. “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.” And everybody said, “Amen…Amen.”

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