

## What About The Jews? (2)

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[ 0 : 00 ] So we'll continue this evening then where we left off a couple of weeks ago, which is Paul examining the situation of his own people according to the flesh, the people of the Jews, the people of Israel.

And we saw at the beginning of this chapter 9, and we saw at the beginning of this chapter 9, this great opportunity.

It's as though a child or a young person, for example, begins the world having inherited a billionaire's fortune, and they just fritter it away.

They just waste it gradually on the things of the world and do not see that that which they have inherited is precious, and so much good and blessing can be done through it and with it.

And that into which the Israelites, according to the flesh, have entered is the greatest privilege of all, belonging to the Lord's people. And Paul says he laments for them.

[ 1 : 51 ] He has great heaviness in his heart. But does that mean that God has failed in his plans or has cast off his people? Verse 6, Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.

They are not all Israel who are of Israel. And we concluded at verse 16 a week or two ago. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

Now race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. It is of God's great mercy. And then we take up with this verse 17. For, because the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Now, the reference that Paul is making here is what we find in Exodus chapter 9, at verse 16, where it says, And we might think instinctively, well, that's a bit rough, isn't it?

I mean, it's not very fair I'm a Pharaoh, is it? I mean, if the Lord is raising him up just so that he can destroy his greatness and all of this, well, that doesn't seem a very loving thing to do, does it?

[ 3 : 17 ] I mean, that's not very fair, isn't it? If he doesn't have any say in it, then surely that's not the kind of God we believe in. But there are two things we need to, two or three things we need to recognize here.

First of all, that everything God does, whether by judgment or by mercy or all the shades in between, is first and foremost for his glory.

All that God does is for his glory. We enter into that benefit as we enter into what he freely offers and we receive his great grace.

But it is for his own glory that he justifies sinners, that he has gone to the cross, that he has created all the heavens and the earth, that all should glorify his name.

That is the first thing and most basic building block we must understand. God alone is God. God alone is glorious and all that he has done is to glorify his name.

[ 4 : 15 ] Of course, there's a sense in which we instinctively go, Yes, but it's got to be fair. It's got to be just. How can it be just that God has simply raised somebody up in order to cast them down?

How can it be just that God has raised up Pharaoh just to destroy him and his kingdom in this way? How can that possibly be right? Well, a number of things again here.

First of all, nobody made Pharaoh oppress and enslave the Israelites. Nobody made him do it. No doubt it was all part of God's providence and plan.

But, you know, whilst Pharaoh was the Pharaoh who welcomed Joseph and who exalted him and promoted him and welcomed his family into Egypt, gave them the best of the land, the land of Goshen, and they multiplied and so on.

Were the Pharaohs, were the Egyptians anything less than welcoming, anything less than blessing, the children of Israel? I know. Did God smite them down for that? No, of course not. As long as they were honoring God's children, God's people, God blessed Egypt.

[ 5 : 19 ] God made Egypt abundantly wealthy through Joseph in that time of famine. People came from all countries to buy grain and corn over them. Pharaoh became the great king of the ancient world.

And this is one of the things we must also recognize. God himself has exalted the kingdom of Egypt. God himself has raised it up and made it, in that sense, the world's first superpower.

There is no kingdom at this stage in history greater than Egypt when God works there with his people of Israel. It is a superpower that nobody else can compete with.

Their sophistication, their level of civilization, their power, their buildings, their maturity, their levels of organization and technology. Nobody even comes close.

As far as human achievement is concerned, Egypt is the pinnacle, the zenith. It is as high as mankind has yet achieved up to that point.

[ 6 : 20 ] And perhaps not surprisingly, when men become this exalted in the eyes of all the rest of the world round about, they begin to think of themselves as gods.

When they don't know the true God, they invent other ones. So the pharaohs themselves were considered gods. The River Nile was considered a god. A hundred other different pretend deities were considered gods in Egypt.

The Lord had allowed this accumulation of power. He had raised them up. And yet, of course, in the fullness of time, Egypt would be destroyed and cast down.

They always that very fair. Well, if you were to say to most people, if you were to say, well, you know, in ten years' time, you're going to lose all your wealth. But hey, before that, God's going to make you a multimillionaire.

He's going to give you wealth and power and homes and cars and bank accounts and all the things you could possibly want. And he moved, well, that's quite tempting. But then I would lose it all in ten, fifteen years.

[ 7 : 21 ] So I don't know if I want to, ah, yes, yes, come on, let's just do it. Let's have the good times while we've got them. Almost anyone on the face of the earth, particularly fallen human beings as we are, sinful human beings, offer the chance of worldly glory.

Are not going to turn it down just in the possibility that in the future we might lose it all. God is not doing, Pharaoh, any disadvantage or any sort of abuse in this sense.

He is not doing Egypt any abuse or harm. He has built them up. He has made them the greatest superpower on the face of the earth. And it is precisely for this purpose so that when he delivers his own people who have nothing and who at this stage are nothing, because any nation in the world at that point, they would have a number of factors.

They would be with clearer geographical boundaries, either belonging to a particular island or a particular geographical area, bounded by rivers or mountains or whatever. They'd probably all speak the same language.

They'd all possibly be racially connected in some way. They'd have a homogeneity. They'd have a coalescence that would bind them together. And they would know that they were a nation.

[ 8 : 38 ] They would know that they were a country. Israel didn't have that. They were effectively just one huge big extended family, tribes that had grown out of families. And these 12 tribes of Israel that were dwelling in a land that wasn't their own, didn't have a nation to call their own, didn't have any real possessions or heritage or anything, and now they were slaves.

God was taking this bunch of nobodies, this bunch of foreigners within the greatest superpower of the world, and going to take them out, not by military strength, not by anything they could do themselves.

They had nothing. They had no military power. They had no capability. They had no wealth. It had to be seen that when they came out and when the greatest superpower of the world was humbled and effectively destroyed, nobody did this but God.

The Hebrews did not do it. Moses did not do it. The people did not do it. God did it. It was for this purpose that he made Pharaoh and Egypt so great that he might demonstrate that nobody but he would be able to bring them down.

Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might show my power in thee and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

[10:00] Now, as I say, there's always a bit of a tendency for us to think, well, yeah, but, you know, if God was casting Pharaoh down, he doesn't really have a choice in it. If we go back to this great sort of symbol of free will versus predestination sort of thing, this struggle between God's will and man's free will, if you go back to the early chapters of Exodus, this whole business about Pharaoh's heart being hardened.

Who hardened Pharaoh's heart? Was it himself or was it God? Well, if we go back, and if you want to turn back, feel free, you know, to Exodus, beginning in chapter 7 where we have the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

You'll see in chapter 7 at verse 3 that the Lord predicts that he is going to harden Pharaoh's heart. I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

But he hasn't done it yet. He's going to, but he hasn't done it yet. So, first of all, we have the instance of Aaron's rod that becomes a serpent, swallowing up the other serpents and rods of the Egyptian magicians in that sense.

We read in chapter 7, verse 13, He, that is God, hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them as the Lord had said. So, one, God hardens Pharaoh's heart.

[11:23] But at the same time, the Lord said, verse 14, that Pharaoh's heart is hardened. There are three categories here that we will find as we go through these chapters. One, God hardening Pharaoh's heart.

Two, Pharaoh hardening his own heart. And three, the neutral statement that Pharaoh's heart was hardened. So, we've got two of them already. We've got God hardened his Pharaoh's heart, 7.13, and Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

But it's the same incident being referred to in 7.14. And then in chapter 7, verse 22, we've got the business of the river of blood, and we read again that simply, Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

Again, we read in chapter 8, at verse 15, with the frogs, we've got Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them as the Lord had said.

Then we have chapter 8, verse 19, with the lice. And we have again, simply that Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He hearkened not unto them. Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

[12:29] Then in chapter 8, again still, with verse 32, we read it with the flies. Pharaoh hardened his heart, at this time also. Now, I don't really let the people go.

Into chapter 9, and we've got chapter 9, at verse 7, where we read again, Pharaoh sent that the whole, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites, dead, this is the plague upon the cattle, and the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.

Neutral term. Then in chapter 9, at verse 34, after the healing fire, we've got Pharaoh hardened his heart again. Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart.

Now, this is the only instance where all three aspects come into play. It's the same incident, it's after the plague of hail and fire, 9.34, and hardened his heart.

Pharaoh hardened his heart. But chapter 9, verse 35, the very next verse says, the heart of Pharaoh was hardened. Neutral says. And in chapter 10, the very next verse, verse 1, the Lord said unto Moses, going unto Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart.

[13:37] Now, no other verse, verses you could say, perfectly encapsulates this factor, that you've got both, Pharaoh hardened his heart, but in the neutral term, it was hardened, and God said at the same time, I have hardened Pharaoh's heart.

Again in chapter 10, verse 20, God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Again in chapter 10, verse 27, and so on. So we have, let's say, four or five instances where God hardens Pharaoh's heart.

We've got three or four instances where Pharaoh's heart simply was hardened, and we've got three clear instances where Pharaoh hardens his own heart. There's not a contradiction between these. It's not like Pharaoh says, I really want to let the children of Israel go.

I want to. I want to, but God won't let me. It's just not fair. Rather, Pharaoh hardens his heart, or God hardens Pharaoh's heart, or simply his heart was hardened.

There is not a contradiction here. It is the same cooperation going on that God is simply enabling and allowing Pharaoh to do what comes naturally.

[ 14 : 41 ] One thing that might be noticed in passing is that, well, you wouldn't notice in passing, I suppose, but if you really look, then you'll see that those occasions when Pharaoh himself hardens his heart are those occasions where he sees relief, where he thinks, that's it, okay, it's all right, we've done that.

When the frogs have died out of the land, when the flies have ceased, or when the hail and fire has stopped, we read that Pharaoh hardened his heart. After the lights, or after the plague on the cattle, and so on, we just read that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, likewise with the blood in the river. When it comes to the plague of boils, or when it comes to the plague of locusts, or the plague of darkness, there's this sense of the fact that Pharaoh, he's seeing the harm, and he's seeing the danger, but he is just not going to give it.

He is just so stubborn. God, you could say, is making him harden his heart, that's what it says, or his heart simply was hardened, but when he thinks, there's a bit of relief, I'm going to get away with this now, this will be the last time he hardens his own heart.

Nobody is making anyone do anything they don't do by nature. Rather, God is simply enabling that which comes naturally to fallen man to do what comes naturally.

[ 16 : 09 ] He raises him up, and Pharaoh thinks, great, I'm powerful, I'm big, my Egyptian kingdom is the most powerful in the world, and God brings him down. God sends the plagues, and then God gives relief, and Pharaoh hardens his heart.

And other times, God hardens Pharaoh's heart. And other times, silly read, Pharaoh's heart was hardened. These three, none of them are contradictory, the one to the other.

God's perfect will is always sovereign, but our will, when we seek to go our own way, is not going against God's will.

Rather, we think we are the ones in command, but in fact, we are simply fulfilling God's sovereign purpose. But we are determined, I'm going to do this, I'm going to do it my way, I'm going to do what I want, all the while.

Not realizing, not acknowledging, God. The God of the Hebrews, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is ultimately in control. There is no contradiction, but ultimately, God is sovereign.

[ 17 : 15 ] Therefore, have he mercy, on whom he will have mercy, and who he will, he hardeneth. Now, say then unto me, why did he have fine fault? For who hath resisted his will?

And then, of course, we've got this next verse 20, he's neighbor, O man, who art thou that replies against God? Shother thing formed, Satan that formed it, why is there a maid need us? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, another to dishonour? All of this is true. There is a sense in which, with no disrespect intended to God's word, Paul, it's not really a satisfactory answer.

It doesn't intellectually satisfy us, when we say, but wait a minute, why does God still find fault? I say, oh well, who are you to argue with God? You just shut up, and you just pierce your toll, because God's the one in sovereign control.

It's not really satisfactory, but rather, when we think about the potter and the clay, when we think of Jeremiah, of course, in the instance in chapter 18, when he goes down to the potter's house, and we, behold, he wrought a work on the fields, and the vessel that he, that is the potter, made of clay, was marred in the hand of the potter.

[ 18 : 29 ] So he made it again, another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you, as this potter, saith the Lord.

Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. Now, remember the context in Romans. Of whom is Paul writing? He is writing of his fellow Israelites. He is using the illustration of the potter and the clay. Okay, that makes us think of Jeremiah. Of whom is Jeremiah writing? To whom is he referring? He is referring to the house of Israel, the people of the Jews.

What is the potter doing with his lump of clay? When the lump of clay is marred, the vessel is marred, does he chuck that bit out? Or does he rather squish it all up again, and start again with the same piece of clay?

What we have here as instance, not of God saying, Oh, well this one's a sinner, chuck that one. This one's rotten, chuck that one. Oh, this is a good person here. I'll make them my child. No, what we have rather than what we may know from our own experience, if we know ourselves to be born

again of Christ, is not that God looked in us, and said, Oh yeah, what a fantastic saint.

[ 19 : 50 ] What a sweet nature. What a good heart. Oh yes, they are worthy to be mine. But rather from the same lump of clay, which under the potter's hand was marred, and rotten, and turning out all wrong, and all cantered, and distorted, which is what we are, and were under our own selves by nature, he crushes down into a lump again, and he makes a new vessel, fit for holy use, and to the same lump of clay.

That is what he has done with each of us who are saved and redeemed. It was nothing we did. It was what the Lord did, what the potter did, with the same lump of clay that we are.

He took us, he refashioned us, he remade us, and we were born again by his grace, by his work. The clay didn't say, Oh, wait a minute, I don't like the way I'm turning out. I think I'll just squish up and turn myself on the wheel into a new vessel.

He can't do the thing. This is the sense in which Paul means, the clay cannot answer back to the potter. If the potter makes a new vessel with what is unsatisfactory, it's not the clay which has gone wrong, it's the vessel.

So he squishes it all back down to the beginning, and he starts again, and he makes something new. That is what he does in the life of every soul who's redeemed. He takes the same raw material of our life and soul and body.

[ 21 : 23 ] He may crush it down to the place where we have nowhere else to go, and show us our sinfulness and our unworthiness, and then he makes a whole new person.

He makes a whole new life, and we begin again, being born again. And what is true for the individual is true whether that individual be Gentile or Jewish.

And what is true for an individual is true likewise for a nation. Because the Lord goes on then, in Jeremiah 18, he says, At what instance I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it.

If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant it.

If it do evil in my sight, and it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good. Wherewith I said I would benefit them. Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord.

[ 22 : 38 ] Behold, I frame evil against you. There's an evil coming, if you don't recognize it, and devise the vice against you. Therefore return ye now, everyone from his evil way.

Make your ways, and your doings goods. They said, There is no hope, that we will walk after our own devices. Now, why would God say, Turn, come back to me, return and make your ways good, and return ye now, everyone from his evil way.

Make your ways, your doings good, if there was no hope. God's not going to say, Come this way, come this way, and then destroy them. Ha ha, sorry, I fooled you all. God is not a liar. If he says, Look, there's judgment coming on you, you're going to be destroyed, you have to turn, you have to come back to me.

Then there is hope. And this hope, ultimately, is in his Messiah, his only begotten son. That is the ultimate hope, that he freely offers, to his people of Israel, and to the Gentiles at large, if they will turn, and repent, and believe.

And of course, if we don't, of course, that is us exercising our will, but our will, is not contrary to God's will. If we turn away from the Lord, we have no one to blame, but ourselves.

[ 23 : 51 ] If we are redeemed, we have no one to thank, but God. What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction, and that he might make known, the riches of his glory, and the vessels of mercy, which he had aforeprepared, unto glory, even us, whom we have called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

Now, here's a key little word, that we would miss perhaps, in verse 24. What is Paul talking about, when he talks about his people Israel? He's not saying, oh, I long for the old days, when we were all just Jews together, when there was none but us Israelites, all circumcised, and redeemed of the Lord, and these Gentiles, we didn't have to mix with them.

We know from Galatians, when he speaks about, how Peter was to be blamed, and we would stood into his face, because he separated himself, and they just had a wee huddle, of Jews together, and

even Barnabas was carried away, with their deception at that, we know that Paul doesn't mean this, we know that he's not saying, oh, wasn't it a great, we were all just Israelites.

But rather, what he's saying here is, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also, of the Gentiles.

Not, but rather, of the Gentiles. It's neither, let's go back, they're just all being Jews. Not as it, oh, well, stuff for Jews, now it's just the Gentiles, that are coming in.

[ 25 : 19 ] Now it's, it's all a new set of nations, we can dispense for the Jews, we can forget about them. No, but it's rather, but also, of the Gentiles. It is as though, and the river, as it continues to flow, down its course, widens.

It gets more water in it, it gets a bigger volume, it gets a faster pace, because more and more, is being added to it, of the little burns, and tributaries, that are coming down the hillsides, and flowing into it, from different angles, and different directions.

The people of God, is still the same river. It is still flowing, but it is being added to. It is being increased. It is all being made one.

The Jews are not being thrown over, but nor can they be redeemed, by any means other, than their Messiah. In other words, by the means, which God intended, all along.

All the preparation, all the promises, all the sacrifices, all the prophecies, were all leading up to this event. They might say, ah, yes, but they killed their Messiah, didn't they?

[ 26 : 26 ] They rejected him, therefore, they shouldn't have another chance, they shouldn't be accepted. Well, who crucified Jesus? Actually, it wasn't the Jews. It was the Romans. The Romans crucified Jesus.

Gentiles. people like us. Ah, yes, but the Jews sold him to them. The Jews, they betrayed him, so it's really, it's really their fault, isn't it? Well, if that is the case, and if they had sinned so fearfully in betraying the Messiah, and let's not, you know, it's not very good, it's a major crime.

It's the ultimate crime against God, the killing of his son. Maybe the Jews sold him to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles put him to death, in which case we all could death. But what does Jesus pray from the very cross itself?

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. They do not understand what they are doing here. They do not understand the enormity of their crime here.

And how could the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin, the chief priests, be expected to know when the disciples themselves did not grasp the enormity of Christ's death and the promise of his resurrection.

[ 27 : 41 ] But rather, it says, as he said, it was he, also the Gentiles, I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God.

He's not making this up. He's quoting the scriptures. He's quoting the Old Testament scriptures. Hosea chapter 2, verse 23. I will say to them which were not my people, thou art my people, and they shall say, thou art my God.

Hosea chapter 1, verse 10. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured, no number. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God. Now this can apply equally to Gentiles and to Jews. There was a time when we Gentiles were not the people of God. But now we have the opportunity to be so, how?

Through the Messiah, through Christ. And there's a time when the Jews, if they reject their Messiah, will cease in that sense to belong to the church of the living God.

[ 28 : 50 ] But there will be opportunity for them, likewise, to turn and repent and believe. And to those who are said, you're not my people anymore, they say, yes, come back and be my people again.

No, Paul's not making it up, it's the scriptures. It's the Old Testament scriptures. Esaias also cried concerning Israel, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.

Again, Isaiah chapter 1, chapter, chapter 10, verse 22 there, but again, he's quoting, though the people of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return, the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

However many they may be physically, there will only be a certain number who will elect. It was everlasting. You know, even when the Lord's people were just one family, you had Esau, who wasn't regenerate, though he was the eldest, and Jacob, who was saved, despite being such a rascal.

And you had Ishmael, who was the eldest, and Isaac was the one who was saved. And amongst the 12 tribes of Israel, there were such a lot of charlatans there, but there were always those who truly loved the Lord amongst them.

[ 30 : 02 ] And as the Messiah said before, and again he's quoting chapter 1 and verse 9, except the Lord of Sabaoth had left, and his Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we had been a son, and been made light unto Gomorrah.

Now what is significant about these two cities, when they were destroyed in Genesis at the time when Lot was taken out of them, is that they were destroyed never to rise again.

When they were destroyed, they were destroyed once and for all. They never resurfaced. They never were rebuilt. They never came back. And Isaiah says, except the Lord had left us a man. We should have been like Sodom and Gomorrah. We would have been destroyed without choice. We would have been completely lost. But there is a man at every stage in history.

There have been some, however few, of the Lord's people according to the flesh, Israelites according to the flesh. Christian Jews who have recognized the Messiah who have held fast to that truth.

[ 31 : 08 ] What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, they didn't used to believe in the Lord at all, they have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, had not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.

Now you might think, well, wait a minute, if they were doing what was right, surely they're going to be accepted. Well, think back to that first sacrifice of which we read in Genesis. Cain and Abel, they both bring of the fruits of their own job, the flock on the one hand or the fruits of the ground on the other, and to the one the Lord has respect and to the other he doesn't.

Why is that? Hebrews tells us, chapter 11, we are told, at verse 4, by faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead, yet speaketh.

It's not that God would say, oh, lamb, isn't that nice, that's sweet, oh, and blood, that's symbolic and that's so good, but, you know, wheat and corn and the fruit of the ground, ah, no, no thanks.

[ 32 : 20 ] Cain brought the outward offering. He offered, he went through the right motions, but he didn't have faith with it. Abel offered his land by faith.

By faith, he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. And this is the thing that God is saying here through Paul. He is saying that, yes, Israel was going through all the right motions.

They were doing everything the law said. They were going through all the sacrifices, but it was just outward. It wasn't reaching above the top of their heads because there wasn't faith in it.

wherefore, because they saw it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone as it is written, behold, I lay inside a stumbling stone and rocked over fence and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Now that's a kind of combination of two references in Isaiah chapter 8, verse 14 and chapter 28, verse 16 there. And these two combined make the fact, what is the rock of offense?

[ 33 : 26 ] The rock of offense is the Messiah. It is Jesus, whom when they look upon there is no form or comeliness that they should desire him. There's nothing to make them say, oh yeah, this is the Messiah.

Come on, we'll all go after him. There is nothing which by nature will make us desire Christ. There is no advantage to us here that will glorify ourselves or build us up as God built up Egypt in the olden days.

That will make us say, yes, this is to our advantage. Let us follow Christ. There is nothing that by human nature will draw us to them. If we are to be drawn to this Messiah, it is only by the work of God's sovereign grace.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. And this great grace he continues to pour out upon the Gentiles, yes, but of the Jews also.

Back to verse 24. Those whom he hath called not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As we said, this both eliminates any idea that we should all be Jews first, as the concern was in Acts 15.

[ 34 : 41 ] Also, it completely throws away the idea, oh, that's the Jews, you've tossed them over now. We are the new church of God. There is no virtue in being Gentile of itself anymore than there is in being Jewish.

It is Christ who deems this stone of stumbling, this rock of offense. If we will put our trust in him, then whether we be Gentile or whether we be Jewish, there is equal opportunity to enter in and to be saved.

Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed because he has borne the shame for us that we might have the glory instead.

Let us pray.