

What About The Jews? (3)

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[0 : 0 0] Now we've been looking in past weeks about something that we could say, what about the Jews? Where do they fit in to God's scheme of salvation now?

Now that clearly they are no longer the unique people of God in the way that they once were. They're still to a certain extent unique in that respect.

But not in terms of the privileges that were at one time confined to that particular nation. And our study has been slightly disjointed by the fact there's always two or three weeks in between each one.

So just briefly to recap, if we look back at chapter 9, we can see that Paul's burden is for his own people. The people of Israel, his kinsmen according to the flesh.

And the rich heritage that is theirs, as we see in the first part of chapter 9. Whose are the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came.

[0 : 5 6] And we've got the descent of Christ's genealogy. Both in Luke's account of the gospel and particularly Matthew chapter 1 there as well. Who is over all God blessed forever.

Not as though the word of God had taken none effect. They are not all Israel which are all Israel. In other words, mere biological descent does not confer grace. We cannot simply say, oh yes, we have Abraham to our father.

And as long ago, it was the time of John the Baptist. You know, he was warning people against that. Don't think that you're saved simply because of your biological descent. Don't think that anything which is purely of the flesh can redeem that which is a spiritual problem.

And this is that which he spells out in this chapter 9. And he talks about, in it, he talks about, for example, Ishmael was the child of the flesh.

Hagar's a son through Abraham, yes. And a child of Abraham, but not the child of promise. That was the one through Sarah. Isaac through whom the covenant was to continue.

[2 : 0 0] And God deals with his people by way of election. We saw that with the example of Pharaoh. And how the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart sometimes.

And other times, Pharaoh hardened his own heart. And other times, simply, Pharaoh's heart was hardened. But there is no contradiction between God's overruling grace and man's subordinate will.

Because man thinks he's exercising his will as a little God himself. Whatever he does, he thinks, my decision. I have done this. I have decided. I, me, mine. And does not realize that all the time, God, he that sits in the heavens, shall laugh.

And man is simply following through God's sovereign plan and purpose. But God does not compel people to do that which they don't want to do. Rather, they do with defiant delight that which they are convinced is purely their decision.

Which, in a sense, it is. But God leaves them to that decision rather than intervening with his electing grace. So God has mercy on whom he will have mercy.

[3 : 08] And whom he will, he hardeneth also. And if we are not, by God's grace, moved to turn, then we will be lost. But God, in his mercy, as we see at the end of chapter 9, always leaves a remnant.

A testimony to the fact that, of course, it's not that he's not able to say it. Because look, you say this. You say this little remnant. Whether of the Jews or of the Gentiles.

Because we should also understand that just as it may only be a small portion of the Jews, which at the moment believe in their Savior. It's only a tiny fraction of the Gentiles across the world who believe in their Savior as well.

So we continue into chapter 10 here. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel as they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. These three verses set the scene again.

[4 : 11] He's back to this burden that he has for his own people of the Jews. And he tells them, yes, of course, they're zealous for God. Or they think they are. But they do not see that their zeal is placed in the wrong thing.

Now these opening three verses, these are almost the only verses, not quite, but almost the only verses in this entire chapter which are not themselves quotations from the Old Testament.

Because it would be quicker to pick out the ones in this chapter that aren't. Almost every verse, certainly almost every other verse, is a direct quotation or a reference to an Old Testament passage.

This chapter is just saturated in Old Testament scriptures. And this is demonstrating, Paul is demonstrating here by that not only is what he is teaching perfectly in line on the conclusion of their own Hebrew scriptures, but that it always was, that they have this zeal which refuses to see the truth that is right there in front of them.

And to demonstrate, he brings out text after text after text and passage after passage and quotation after quotation to demonstrate that this blindness, this hardness of heart, this has been typical of Israel throughout.

[5 : 32] But it was hidden to an extent as long as they were the only nation. But if you think of the birth of Jeremiah and Isaiah and all the others, what are they testifying against to how much of God's people of Israel don't humble themselves and accept the teachings of their own Lord Jehovah?

So we have here these opening three verses. They are ignorant of God's righteousness going about to establish their own righteousness. Two things then here, first of all. One is that they have focused, hitherto at the time Paul is writing, on, if we can take an illustration, it is as though in the past there has been an oasis, a watering hole, and the Lord has used a particular pitcher of water.

I think like Rebecca going down to the well to fill up her pitcher and then fill the troughs for all the camels for Abraham's servant. And the pitcher that she uses, she fills it up, sticks it on her shoulder and then pours it out.

It is as though when she went off home. Let's say she left her pitcher at the hand and the servant picked it up and venerated. Oh, this is the pitcher. This is the clay jar in which she brought all that water for my camels.

What a wonderful jar. Let's put it there. And let's just look at it and think what I found. Look, there's still water in it. Isn't that great? And this is the jar that was used for the water.

[6 : 58] And as long as it keeps on being used for the water, then it is fulfilling the purpose for which it is designed. But if the water goes dry and if it's emptied out, then you can venerate that pitcher all you like.

But it won't actually be doing you any good. Israel is like the pitcher. It is like the jar, the vessel in which the water of life was preserved and carried and poured out to the benefit of all who would receive it.

And for a time in the history of God's work of salvation, that work was confined within one particular national body.

But the pitcher, the jar in which that water of life is carried, that is to a purpose. And ultimately the purpose is to be the vessel within which the Messiah is brought forth.

But the vessel itself is simply the packaging. It is simply that into which and from which the actual product, if we can say that reverently, is brought.

[8 : 05] Just like the pitcher of water. While there's water being carried in it, it's doing the job. It was made for. But if you set it on a shelf and venerate it and look at it and gaze at it, oh what a fantastic picture.

This is the picture in which that life-giving water was brought to our accounts. Yes, that may all be true. But you can keep on venerating it until it's got cobwebs and dust and all the rest of it. It isn't actually doing you any good.

There is nothing more holy about Israel and the people of Judah than there is about any other nation. Except that they had been so privileged, so blessed and used of the Lord to be the vessel within which that life-giving water was carried.

But if the vessel goes dry, it is no longer fulfilling the purpose for which it was intended. Now, by God's grace, the vessel has never gone completely dry.

So we saw at the end of chapter 9, there has always been a remnant. There has always been a little water there in the bottom of it still doing some of the purpose for which it was designed.

[9 : 17] That is the first thing. You venerate the picture, you venerate the vessel instead of the water that was within it. God can use any bucket, any jar, any vessel to get that water up from the well.

He can take any nation under heaven. He can take any individual Gentile Jew or anything else in order to become a means of carrying and witnessing this water of life.

He doesn't need any of us. He doesn't need them, Jews. He doesn't need us Gentiles. He could come himself when all the angels in the clouds of heaven say, I'm God, worship me. We don't have to do it.

But he chooses to work through human beings. But that shouldn't cause human beings to venerate themselves as a vessel. Because it is the product within which is most important.

The fact of glory for Israel is not that they are such a brilliant nation. It is that within that holy, in the sense of set apart nation, God preserved the witness and testimony of his grace, his mercy, his covenant of grace.

[10 : 28] The sacrifice that would ultimately be made through himself. If you think about it, the only thing that makes the nation or the people of Israel unique, if you think back then, all the years and centuries of their existence, is their relationship to the Lord God, Jehovah.

Take that out.

In that nation state, there is this heritage stretching back to the beginning of time of this unique relationship with Jehovah.

The Lord God, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And somewhere within the DNA of every Jewish person will be the recognition, however secular they may themselves be, that this is what makes their people special.

They are the people of Abraham. And Abraham is special only because he is the friend of God. Now, this is why the vessel itself should not be over-exalted.

[12 : 00] That's the first thing. The second point here is that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, going about to establish their own righteousness and not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God.

What is their zeal of righteousness here? Their righteousness, as they sought to do in the Old Testament terms and in the days of the Pharisees and the scribes and so on, which were contemporaries of Jesus, is that they sought to praise God largely by virtue of what they didn't do.

It wasn't the case of, oh, we do this, we do that, we do the next thing. It's, rather, if you think of the prayer of the Pharisees, oh, Lord, I thank you that I am not as other men. I don't do this, I don't do that.

Yes, maybe I fast twice in a week and give tides of what I possess, but I am not like other men. Adulterers, extorsions, or even like this tax collector. Adulterers, extorsions, or even like other men.

Adulterers, extorsions, or even like other men. Adulterers, extorsions, or even like other men. The law will not pat you on the head for what you didn't do. We've used examples like this in the past. The police are never going to pull you over and give you a gold star for all the times you haven't been speeding.

[13 : 38] They are not going to pat you on the head and give you a special commendation for all the times you've paid your taxes. It is just expected that you will do it. And no matter how much you do it, you will never get any prizes for being a model citizen.

that you'll soon be prosecuted if you break the law. And if we're honest, all of us know that we've all broken the law at some point. We've all driven 32 miles per hour in a 30 mile per hour zone.

We've all done things wrong. We've all driven little distances without putting our seatbelt on. We've all done a number of little things which if they were rigorously prosecuted we would be criminals every last one of us with a track record and with a criminal record.

All of us. We can't pride ourselves on what we haven't done. It's not enough. Nor is it enough for us if we were to think in terms of the need for ongoing life.

Let's say, for example, that somebody had just, let's say they'd come out of prison and so they didn't have a job, they didn't have any income or whatever and they know where to stay. And somebody says, okay, I'll provide you a place to stay.

[14 : 49] Now, I'll do it up. I'll bring in my mates and we'll do all the painting. I'll put new slates in the roof. I'll wallpaper it. Here's some furniture. And your bills, your heating bills are paid up for the next month.

So here they are in now this lovely fitted furnished house. There's warmth. There's heating. There's carpets. There's hot and cold running waters. Everything you could want. Brilliant.

As far as it goes. Done everything. But they've got nothing to feed themselves with. They can't get any food. They can't get anything they need.

They haven't got a job. So gradually they're just going to starve to death. Not with too dramatic a point in it. You can do so much and it can still not be enough. No matter what we do, it's never going to be enough to meet all the needs that we have.

We can't do it ourselves. Our righteousness will never be enough. They, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

[15 : 57] That which is true for the Jews is true for almost every one of us until we are enlightened by God's grace. I bear them record that they have a zeal of God.

They think they are serving God and doing good. But not according to knowledge. It's like doing all the painting and papering and beautiful decoration of the house and then walking away and closing the door behind you.

That's great, but the guy's going to starve to death. That's lovely the gift you give, but he actually needs something else. Perhaps food and drink was more urgent than having a beautifully painted and papered house.

It's a lovely gift, but he's going to starve. He needs something else in the meantime. We can't give. What human beings and souls need.

They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge of Jesus himself, says John 16. They shall put you at the synagogues. Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God's service.

[16 : 58] They will actually think they are serving God if they kill his apostles. And these things they will do unto you. Why? Because they have not known the Father.

Nor me. They think they are serving God, but they don't actually know him. They don't know who he is. They don't know his laws and commands and what the objective, what the purpose of his law is.

Like general assemblies that may compliment themselves at how inclusive and tolerant they may be. People that don't know the Father. They don't know God.

They will think they are doing God's service. These things will they do because they have not known the Father nor me. These things have I told you that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of that.

And these things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you. I'm telling you in advance. So that when it happened, you say, well, he actually mentioned that before. He told us before. But we forgot.

[17 : 57] This is one reason I would suggest to you why Paul is filling this chapter with quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures. From the Old Testament. So that whenever he is challenged, whether by Jews or Gentiles, you can say, look, this is what it says.

This is what it said all along. This is what the Scriptures were always saying. I'm not making it up, guys, you might be saying. I'm not. This is not some novelty. This is the faith of our fathers.

Of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is what all true Pharisees, like I, Paul, was a Pharisee. This is what it was meant to be leading up to. This was the fulfillment.

This was the purpose of it all. For Christ is the end. The objective, the fulfillment, the target of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

He is the objective. He is the target. He is the conclusion of what the law is meant to be all about. Galatians chapter 3, verse 24.

[19 : 03] Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. Now, if you were to go back whenever you went to school, if you were to go back if it was still functioning and maybe an old teacher that you had before was still there teaching the class.

Oh, here's so-and-so. One of our formal pupils. Come in and say hello to the class. This is what I taught when I was much younger. How are you getting on? I'm doing this. I'm doing that. I'm doing that. Isn't that lovely?

And they'll always be pleased to have you come back and visit the class. But what purpose would it serve if the next morning you turned up with your little satchel and your uniform and said, I want to sit in the back of your class.

And I'm going to say, okay, fine. Why? Well, I want to keep going to school. I want to go and sit in your class every year, every day, and keep on getting everything you teach me. Well, you know, you've gone way beyond that stage now.

You've done your standard grades or whatever it is. How many hires? You've gone to university. Surely you're beyond this stage. No, no, I love school. I want to sit in your class. I've learned so much from you.

[20 : 04] And the ones you're sitting amongst, they get older. They move on. There you are still sitting there. Next class comes in. Another year. There you are still sitting in the class. They do their assignments. They finish. They move up to next class.

There you are still sitting there. Something's wrong, isn't it? The law is our school, master. Not that we sit in class year after year after year making no progress.

It's lovely to go back and revisit where once we were. But it's only lovely with hindsight because we have moved on and can appreciate the benefit that it was there in our past.

The law was our school, master. Not that we sit there ad nauseum forever in the same seat at the same desk learning the same truths over and over again.

But to bring us to Christ. For the fathom, for the perfection of what was taught. And the perfection of what the schoolmaster had to give us.

[21 : 02] The fulfillment of it all was Christ. Jesus of Nazareth. The Messiah. The perfection of it all. Paul, again, writing to Timothy.

Chapter 1, verse 5, verse 2. Now the end of the commandment. The conclusion. The target. The purpose. Of the commandment. The law. Is charity. Love. Out of a pure heart.

And of a good conscience. And of faith. Unfaithed. That's what the purpose of it is. Love. Jesus said. God is love. It is to bring us to him.

The purpose. The end of the commandment. This charity. Love. Out of a pure heart. A good conscience. Of faith. Unfaithed. From which some having swerved. Have turned aside. A conveying jangly. Just making noise.

And going through the motions again and again. Desiring to be teachers of the law. Understanding neither what they say. Nor where of their firm. They don't realize what the purpose of it all is.

[21 : 59] They don't realize where it's going. How can they impart the truth. To those who are meant to be pupils. If they're just going round and round. And round and round. Sitting in the same classroom.

Year after year. Decade after decade. Learning the same things. And never getting wiser. Desiring to be teachers of the law. Understanding neither what they say.

Nor where of their firm. But we know that the law is good. If a man uses it lawfully. The thing is to bring us to Christ. To guide us so that we act.

And behave. And believe. And think. And speak. According to what God would want of us. Knowing this. That the law is not made. For a righteous man. But for the lawless and disobedient.

For the ungodly and for sinners. For unholy and profane. For murderers of fathers. And murderers of mothers. For whoremongers. For them that defile themselves with mankind. For men stealers. For liars.

[22 : 54] For perjured persons. And if there be any other thing. But it's contrary to some doctrine. According to the glorious gospel. Of the blessed God. Which was committed to my trust.

Some people will love the Lord so much. That they desire to do whatever will please him. And they go back to the law. And say. How can I please God?

He's been so good to me. He's been so kind. So merciful. I want every bit of my life to reflect that. What does he say in his word? How can I bring my life into conformity with him?

That sort of love. But for some. The Lord is effectively their enemy. And if there will be no grace. If there will be no gospel. No good news. There is only law. And the purpose of law.

Is to restrain evil. The purpose of the police. And in terms of the traffic act. Is to stop people breaking the traffic laws. And those who do.

[23 : 51] They will bring up short. They will prosecute. If you know everybody who just drives along at the normal speeds. And keeps all the laws. They don't need it themselves. They know it's for their own safety.

They know it's for their own good. But. There are those who must be brought into life. There are those who must be restrained. If we will not have grace. There is nothing left for us but law.

If we will not have the covenant of grace. There is nothing left for us but the covenant of works. We will not have the covenant of grace. And then we are already dead. Then we are already lost. Christ is the end of the law.

For righteousness to everyone that believeth. That is the purpose. That is the true righteousness. Jeremiah chapter 43 verse 6. In his days Judah shall be saved.

Israel shall dwell safely. And this is the name whereby he shall be called. The Lord. Our righteousness. Jesus. We don't have any of our own.

[24 : 45] This is what so many of the Jewish nation. In Paul's day did not get. It is what so many amongst the unconverted. Of the Jewish people still do not get.

They will spend years of their lives. Endlessly studying and debating. The texts. And what the rabbis have said. About this text and that text. But in a sense.

Their holy scriptures are becoming obscured. Obscured. By rabbinic teaching. And opinion. And exposition. Like our own was. Prior to the reformation.

Where the teachings of the church. Had sort of put layer upon layer. Of obscurism. On top of the pure light of God's word. And what Paul is seeking to do.

Is to go back now. To the scriptures themselves. And say look what is there. Opening this treasure house. Moses. Describe of the righteousness. Which is of the law.

[25 : 40] That the man which doeth those things. Shall live by them. He's beginning already. To start quoting Leviticus chapter 18. Verse 5. The man who doeth these things. Shall live by them.

But the righteousness. Which is of faith. Speaketh on this wise. And again he's referring here. To Deuteronomy chapter 30. Verse 19. He says. Who shall ascend into heaven.

That is to bring Christ down from above. Or who shall descend into the deep. But in the original. Let's go across the ocean. You know. To bring Christ up from the dead. And the point in the original. In Deuteronomy.

Is that you don't have to go far. To heal. To understand. What God's law. Is meant to be. It is not in heaven. That thou should say. Who shall go up for us to heaven. And bring it unto us.

That we may heed it and do it. Nigh is it beyond the sea. That thou should say. Who shall go over the sea for us. And bring it unto us. That we may heed it and do it. But the word is very nigh unto thee. In thy mouth.

[26 : 34] For in thy heart. That thou mayest do it. Even in the days of the days. God had not left himself. Without witness. He made his will.

Revealed. And clear to them. And this is what Paul is making reference to. That if thou shalt confess. With thy mouth. The Lord Jesus.

And shalt believe in thine heart. That God hath raised him from the dead. Thou shalt be saved. Now this is important here. Verse 9. As we've been talking in the past. About the resurrection of Christ.

That it was that. You know. See my hands and feet. Handle me. See that it's I myself. For our spirit hath not flesh and bones. As ye see me have. That it was him. That it was his body.

It was a real body. It was a true body. It was in that very body. In which he died. That he was raised. And this is the sense of it. Thou shalt believe in thine heart.

[27 : 29] That God hath raised him from the dead. It's not a spirit. It's not a ghost. It is him that God has raised from the dead. And if you'll confess this with your mouth. And believe it in your heart.

You'll be saved. Obviously you won't say it out. With it in your mouth. Until you believe it in your heart. But you need both. You need to acknowledge. What God has enabled you to believe.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Now we've got verse 10. This word righteousness. That's what's referring to here.

Verse 6. The righteousness which is of faith. We're believing unto righteousness. Who is our righteousness? The Lord. Our righteousness. It's not mine. It's not anybody else's.

It's not one such a good person. Because of all the things I don't do. Because I'm not a drug dealer. I'm not a trafficker. I'm not a murderer. I'm not a wife-beater or abuser. I'm a good person. I'm an upstanding member of my community.

[28 : 26] I do this. I do that. I don't do this. I don't do the next thing. That's not going to cut any ice with anyone. Where's your righteousness? With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.

But at the end of the day. Were we able to do so. We could point to the throne of God. And at its right hand say. There is my righteousness.

And I may fall here. And I may stumble. And I may fall 70 times 7. And repent 70 times 7. And the Lord will forgive me. If I am truly penitent.

Because I'm washed in his blood. And my righteousness is not here. Down amongst the dirt. With me and my miserable attempts. At following Jesus. My righteousness is there.

At the right hand of God's throne. Of glory. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. To the Lord Jesus Christ. Our righteousness.

[29 : 26] You see what we're getting here. We're getting at the actual water of life. In the vessel. Not magnifying the vessel itself. Not the picture. That Rebecca or anybody else may take to and from the well.

It's the water that gives the life. It is the grace that saves and redeems Christ's grace. Christ's mercy. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.

And with the mouth. Confession is made unto salvation. We testify what he has done. That if thou shalt confess for thine own the Lord Jesus.

And shalt believe in thine heart. That God hath raised him from the dead. Thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth to righteousness. With the mouth of confession is made to salvation. For the scripture says. Whosoever believeth on him.

Shall not be ashamed. Now again. This is a reference effectively. To what we've got at the end of chapter 9. Verse 33. And whosoever believeth on him. Shall not be ashamed.

[30 : 26] In actual Isaiah 28 verse 16. That's a quotation from. It says. Whosoever he that believeth shall not make haste. There's a slight distinction there.

But the reason for that is because. The one is quoting from. Paul is quoting here from. The Greek version of the Old Testament. The Greek version of the Hebrew Bible.

The Hebrew scriptures. Had been translated into Greek. For wider distribution. Amongst those in the Jewish community. That could no longer speak and read Hebrew.

It's rather like if you think of. You know. Those who are of Highland or Gallic descent. And scattered throughout the country. Or Canada. New Zealand or whatever. And they know it's their culture.

They know it's their heritage. But they can't actually speak or read the Gallic Bible anymore. So it's translated into a language that they can't understand. And it was a bit like that with the Greek. And the Hebrew.

[31 : 21] And what Paul is quoting here. He's quoting from the Greek. Well the original of course in Isaiah. As the Hebrew is a slight difference. But it means the same thing. When it says you'll not be ashamed. It says you'll not make haste.

In the original. It's in the sense of. Making haste to scurry away. Making haste to flee. Because you've been shamed or defeated. It's to flee from battle.

In shame. In defeat. In ignominy. That's the sense of it. Not making haste to run away. That's the sense of defeat. The sense of shame. And whosoever believeth in him.

Shall never have cause. To be ashamed. We believe in ourselves. And in our own heritage. And our own righteousness. We'll always have cause to be ashamed. But if we put our trust in Jesus.

In the fulfillment of all the prophets. And the Old Testament scriptures. We will never be ashamed. And I think. Well where have the Jews fit into all this? They are the ones still as it were.

[32 : 19] With the picture of water. That picture can be filled at any time. From that oasis of God's grace. It can be lowered into the well and filled. They've got a far better picture than us.

We may be with our little. You know. Enamel mugs. Or our little sort of buckets. Or whatever. That might be cut. Or dirty. Or leaking. They've got the original picture. They can fill it.

They can fill it. It's overflowing. And it can be filled. With that gracious gift again. Their potential. Is so much more rich. And blessed than ours.

But as long as we are still sticking. In our wee enamel mugs. And filling up. Well we are getting water alive. They've got the best vessel. They could possibly have. And not using it. That's the sense.

That's the interconnection. Between us. And them. They are as it were. Poised. If only. They would make use. Of what they have.

[33 : 16] We don't have that heritage. But here we are. I'm going to the water hole. And filling up with whatever we can get. Their opportunity. Their time. As we will see in later parts of this chapter.

And the subsequent chapter. Will come. And in the meantime. The Lord does not leave them. Without a remnant. And by God's grace. He does not leave us. Without a remnant either.

For it is the same grace. And it is the same covenant. And it is the same inheritance. Into which we. Are enabled. And invited to come.

Which was originally. Just theirs. And God said to us. You can come too.