

What About The Jews? (4)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 August 2017

Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

- [0 : 0 0] Now, as we continue in our progress through the subject that Paul is dealing with, really, in these verses 9 to 11 of the letter to the Romans, which we've sort of informally titled, What About the Jews? Where do they fit in now in God's scheme of salvation?
- And it's a regret that this has become so disjointed with so many weeks in between, and it's not been a continuous series that wasn't envisaged at the outset.
- But if we take up at verse 12, Paul is making clear there is no difference, no difference in value to God between the Jew and the Greek or Gentile. For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.
- If anybody cries out to the Lord God of Israel, then they don't have to be Israelites in order to be saved by him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- And again, this is the first of many quotations in this section that Paul makes. This one is from the prophet Joel in chapter 2 at verse 32 there. And remember that all these quotations Paul is making, he is making without a concordance or without, you know, probably the Old Testament scriptures in front of him.
- [1 : 1 0] And most of these he will be making from memory. He is writing to the Romans sort of on the hoof, on the move as he goes. He may have some parchments, some scrolls with them.
- He will not have a complete library of the scriptures in the way that we have in our bound versions of the Bible with all their 66 books or even with all the 39 books of the Old Testament.
- What he is quoting, he is quoting from memory. And of course, chapters and verses didn't come into it until hundreds of years later. So he's quoting from Joel. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- And this is something which Jews and Gentiles alike could recognize. This is the Old Testament scriptures. This is the same God when it was still just his people Israel making clear that whoever it was that approached him, that came to him, that trusted in him, whether it is Ruth the Moabitess or Rahab the harlot from Jericho or whoever it should be that comes under the protection of the wings of the Almighty, they too shall be received.
- As Jesus says in John's account of the gospel, him that cometh to me, I will no wise cast out. And he goes on to, how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in whom they have not heard?
- [2 : 2 6] How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? And you think, okay, this is a message for evangelism. We're spreading the word around the whole world.
- But then he anchors it back in again with Old Testament scripture. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace. And bring glad tidings of good things.
- And again, here he is quoting the Old Testament with Isaiah 52 verse 7. How beautiful are the feet of them that bringeth good tidings.

Now good news is literally what gospel is. Good spell, the old Anglo-Saxon term. It's good news that is being brought by those who are heralds of God.

That bringeth good tidings of good. That publisheth salvation. That saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth. So this is a message that is to go round all the world.

[3 : 21] How can they preach except they be sent? But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah said, Lord, who hath believed? Thou report. Isaiah 53 verse 1. And again, he's talking in an Israelite context.

As ye have they not all heard? Verse 18. Yes, verily, they're sound wounded to all the earth and their words to the end of the world. Now that's quoting Psalm 19. Psalm 19 at verse 4.

But the context of that psalm is of creation. The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament showeth his handiwork. Day of the day after his speech. Night of the night showeth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. It's a reference to creation proclaiming the greatness of God.

And this is a recognition, of course, that there are two kinds, in a sense, of revelation. There is that which God reveals of himself through the work of creation.

[4 : 18] Through that which he has done himself. And we see in chapter 1 of Romans, for example. The invisible, verse 20. The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen.

Being understood by the things that are made. That's the purpose of creation. To declare through the visible things. The truths of God which are invisible. Which are spiritual. So the things that are made.

Even his eternal power and Godhead. So they are without excuse. Because when they knew God. They glorified him not as God. Neither were thankful. But became vain in their imaginations.

And their foolish heart was darkened. But in verse 2 of chapter 1. He makes reference for what was promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

So there's the two levels of revelation. Creation. Which leaves us without excuse of the knowledge that there is a God. And scripture. And the prophecy through which God explicitly reveals what he himself is like.

[5 : 16] There's two levels. And the Jews had had them both. And the history of the Jews indicated of course. That they had often rejected God's message.

I say did not Israel know. First Moses said. I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people. And this is in Deuteronomy 29. At verse 4 there.

He is made up. By the point. Verse chapter 32. Verse 21. He's saying that the Lord is going to reveal himself to more people than just the Jews. By them that are no people.

By a foolish nation. I will anger you. I was found of them that sought me not. Says Isaiah. He's going on and on. Quoting Deuteronomy. Quoting Isaiah. Quoting the Psalms. He's pulling in scriptures from all over the place.

To indicate not only that the comparative unbelief of the Jews is a historical fact. It's a historical fact which you know Stephen makes reference to just before his martyrdom in Acts 7.

[6 : 16] Verses 51 and 52. He says. You stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears. You do always resist the Holy Ghost. As your fathers did. So do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?

And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the just one. Of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers. Who have received the law by the disposition of angels. And have not kept it.

In other words. Amongst all the people of Israel. Down all the generations. There was always. What Paul goes on to make reference to now in chapter 11.

There was always a believing remnant. But a disbelieving majority. And this he goes on to make reference to. With Elijah. And he says.

You know. Elias says in verse 2. Now chapter 11. And you know. Which of the prophets have they not killed? Lord they have killed thy prophets. Dig down thine altars. And I am left alone. And they seek my life.

[7 : 13] And once said the answer of God. I have reserved to myself 7,000 men. A thousand times the perfect divine number. Who have not bowed their knee to the image of Baal.

When Elijah thought he was the only one left. God says. No. I have got my people. Scattered throughout the nation of Israel. I know the ones that are mine. So there was always a remnant.

There was always a believing. Tiny remnant. Throughout salvation history. It was ever thus with the people of Israel. There were those who may have been. What you might call.

Cultural believers. In the sense that they recognized Jehovah. As being the God of Israel. And they may have paid him lip service. In the same way as. Until comparatively recently.

Most people in the land of Scotland. Would sort of acknowledge themselves. To be nominally Presbyterian. But it doesn't mean they were born again Christians. So there were Israelites.

[8 : 09] Who acknowledged. Yes this is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is technically the God of our fathers. But you know. They weren't born again. In the sense of. Truly worshipping him in spirit and truth.

But those who were the remnant. Were saved by grace. It was always by grace. And it was always a remnant. In other words. There was nothing special.

In the fact of the race of Israel. Save that from amongst them. God chose his elect people. They weren't saved.

Because they were Israelites. They were saved. Because of their relationship. To Jehovah. God had given them. So many of them. The spirit of slumber.

Verse 8. Eyes that they should not see. Ears that they should not hear. Unto this day. And David said. Let their table be made a snake. And a trap. And a stumbling block.

[9 : 06] And a recompense unto them. Again the Psalms. So Deuteronomy. Psalms. Isaiah. It's all being brought in here. It is a consistent message. So then.

Where does that lead? That we might say. Has God cast away his people? Paul says. Well God forbid. If he cast away his people Israel. I couldn't have been saved. He said. Because I'm an Israelite.

I'm an Israelite. You know. Try to go. Benjamin. God has not cast away his people. Don't you realize what Elijah says? Don't you realize what Isaiah says? If God was no longer dealing with.

And no longer saving. From amongst his people Israel. I wouldn't be saved. But here is the route. That it is because. Of Israel's rejection now.

Of the Messiah. The majority rejecting the Messiah. This is what has caused. The gospel to be spread out. To the Gentiles.

[10 : 04] And we see this. In the Acts of the Apostles. We see how when Paul. You know. Conscientiously goes. To the Jew first. And then to the Gentiles.

And he always begins in the synagogue. If there is a synagogue. If there isn't a synagogue. As in Philippi. He gathers with those. Who have gathered to pray. In that instance. By the riverside.

He seeks out the devout first. Those who are historically. The people of God. And where they accept. And receive. The scriptures. And the gospel. Are then rejoicing.

But usually. There is a fair number of them. That won't. Whether it is. By jealousy. Because as it says. In one place. You know. The next Sabbath. Came almost the whole city.

To hear this. And some of the Jews. Were jealous. They were envious. Because they thought. Probably. Well we've been coming to this synagogue. You know. For so off and on. Of 40 odd years.

[10 : 58] And we only have tiny little crowds. And then. This person comes in. Out of nowhere. And suddenly the whole city. Is coming to hear. Who does he think he is? And you can see. How very easily. Human emotion.

And jealousy. And you know. Base. Sort of envy. Would work its way in. And lose sight. Of the actual message. He's bringing. Because he's bringing. The message. Of the fulfillment.

Of the scriptures. The whole reason. The Jewish people. The whole reason. The whole reason. Why they met. In the synagogue. Was to look for. And wait for.

The coming of the Messiah. The fulfillment. Of all their scriptures. And Paul was bringing. Precisely. That good news. But of course. They couldn't. All of them see. Beyond that.

They couldn't see. That this is. What they were in the world for. To be the vessels. Through which. This good news. To be spread. Spread. Throughout the whole world.

[11 : 52] So the majority. Of Jews. Did not accept. The gospel. Just as. We can't be proud. The majority. Of Gentiles. Don't accept it.

Either. But here. Is the key. I would suggest. To you. In the following verses. 11 to 15. Here. Of course. We'll deal. With the remainder. Of chapter 11. Lord willing.

When we get a chance. Just to sort of. Conclude this subject. But I'd like you. To recognize. These verses. 11 to 15. If you like. As the key. Have they stumbled. That they should fall.

God forbid. But rather. Through their fall. Salvation is come. To the Gentiles. For to provoke. Them to jealousy. If the fall of them.

Be the riches of the world. And the diminishing of them. The riches of the Gentiles. How much more. Their fullness. And again. In verse 15. If the casting away.

[12 : 45] Of them. Be the reconciling. Of the world. What shall the receiving. Of them be. But life. From the dead. Now. Some people. Take these verses. As being.

Well. This is the proof. God has. Cast off the Jews. He's finished with them. Because look. It says. You know. The casting away. Of them. Or the diminishing. Of them. You know. That's what he's talking about.

Right. They're fall. And they're casting away. And they're diminishing. That's. That's proof. He's finished with them. But rather. Remember what Paul says. Verse 1 here. If God had cast away.

The Jews altogether. Then he. Paul the Jew. The Benjamite. Wouldn't be able. To be saved. And the evidence. Of the acts. Of the apostles. Is. That the first Christians.

For almost. Not quite. The first generation. But certainly. The opening years. Possibly. The opening decade. Of the gospel. For all we know. Of the active church.

- [13 : 40] For all we know. All the first Christians. Were Jews. This means. That it is through the Jews. That the gospel. Came. To the Gentiles. So. This is the context.
- In which we should understand. Their fall. What does their fall mean? It doesn't mean. No Jews are going to be saved. It means. Rather. That of all.
- Who heard. The gospel. Only a tiny proportion. Adheered. To Jesus of Nazareth. As the Messiah. A tiny proportion. Of all those that heard.
- Only a tiny fraction. Believed. And accepted. Christ. As the Messiah. All the rest. Didn't. This. Is what we must understand.
- By. The fall of them. The casting away of them. The majority. Not accepting. The majority. Being cast away. A tiny little remnant.
- [14 : 35] Believing. A remnant. According to grace. A remnant. According to election. Just as there. Had always been. But in the past. That believing remnant.
- Had been. If you like. A born again. Few. Amongst. A culturally. Indifferent. Israelite nation. Now. It was a born again. Few. Israelites.
- In the context. Of a much wider. Gentile world. Where there were also. Believing. Gentiles. Two. Gentiles. Who. Outnumbered. Very soon. The Jewish believers.
- By thousands. And thousands. To one. This is what we should understand. By the diminishing. That casting away. It's not God dispensing. With his people.
- It is rather. That. If this. Tiny. Fragment. If this. Tiny. Proportion. Of believing. Jews. Is what.
- [15 : 30] Brought. This. Gospel. To the rest. Of the world. And spread it. As far. Around the world. As it did. Because remember. All the apostles. Were Jews.
- All the apostles. Were Jews. And how far. Did the gospel. Get. Within the. Apostolic. Age. Now. What do we understand. By the apostolic. Age. It's reasonable. To take it. As being.
- In the. Lifetime. Of until the last. Apostle. Was dead. Traditionally. The last. Apostle. Is taken. As being. John. Who lived. To. We think.
- An old age. Probably. To about. The turn. Of the first. Century. Possibly. Into his. Eighties. Or nineties. We don't know. Exactly. It is tradition. To an extent.
- We have. The evidence. Of what Jesus. Says. At the end. Of John. 21. It would be. My will. That he. Tarry. Till I come. What is that. To thee. And this has caused. Some people. Well John.
- [16 : 23] Wasn't martyr. As far as we know. He lived. And died. In his. Normal. Old age. Albeit. Perhaps. In exile. Perhaps. In persecution. But.
- He. Wasn't. Martyr. But. John. Then. If we take him. As being the last. Of the apostles. That's into the sort of. Nineties. So. The turn. Of the first century. So. Let's take it.
- As. To the end. Of the first century. As being the apostolic age. By the end. Of the apostolic age. All the apostles. Being Jews. All the first generation. Believers. Being Jews.
- And then. Spreading. During the time. Of the acts. Of the apostles. Out amongst the Gentiles. First of all. You're reaching the proselytes. That is Gentile people. Or people of Gentile race.
- Who had converted to Judaism. So they would still have been kind of accepted. Even within the synagogue. And when I say converted. You know. The whole. The whole conversion process. Circumcision and everything.
- [17 : 18] They had become Jews. In terms of their conversion. Although they would be racially Gentile. So reaching out to them. Then reaching out to the God feeders. That is Gentiles.

Who worshipped in the synagogue. Probably separated from the Jews. Perhaps through the equivalent of sitting in the gallery. Or whatever. And then through them. Out to the unbelieving Gentiles.

Who then became Christians. Without any initial contact. Through the synagogue. All of this. This explosion. Is from the bomb.

If you like. Which were the first Jewish believers. It is that tiny remnant. Which has been the source. Of the explosion of the gospel.

Throughout the world. In the first century. This is what I believe. We should understand. By the fall of them. Let's say that. The 90% plus.

[18 : 13] That didn't believe. But look what the 10% achieved. Look what the tiny portion. Of believing Jews. Has achieved. Look. See how much.

Salvation. Came to the Gentiles. Through this. Tiny remnant. That was left. But Paul goes on. To speak then. The fall of them. Be the riches of the world.

The diminishing of them. The riches of the Gentiles. How much more. Their fullness. And what if the. If the casting away of them. Be the reconciling of the world. What shall the receiving of them be.

But life from the dead. Now this. Clearly. Implies. And suggests. A time. When. Jewish people. In general.

Throughout the world. Will turn. In great numbers. To their own Messiah. And that. That their doing so. Will constitute.

[19 : 08] At least in part. A vehicle. For the conversion. Of vastly. Greater numbers. Of Gentiles. Throughout the world. That is what is clearly implied.

In these verses. That there will come. A time. Of ingathering. Of. Perhaps a majority. For all we know. Of the Jewish people.

Throughout the world. Recognizing. Their own Messiah. Recognizing. Jesus of Nazareth. As being the fulfillment. Of the scriptures. You know. Paul talks about. Provoking them. To jealousy.

You know. As if. Sort of. Finally. Waking up. After 2,000 years. And realizing. Wait a minute. This is our Messiah. This is. This is the fulfillment. Of our scriptures. Of our tradition.

Our culture. Our heritage. These guys. Have sort of. Written. Written on the back of it. It's almost as though. You know. Somebody discovered. Oil at the bottom. Of your croft. And they were quite happy.

[20 : 05] You know. And you said. Yeah. I'll take a couple of hundred pounds. A year. Rent for that. It's no bother. A hundred pounds. A couple of hundred pounds. A year. You didn't have before. So you're quite happy. But they're drilling away. For the oil.

And raking in millions. Every year. And you're. Meanwhile. Taking in your two hundred pounds. Thinking you're really. Really quite jacked the lad. Because you've done this. And because you've got this extra. A couple of hundred quid.

You've never had before. But they're raking in millions. And somewhere along the line. Somebody wakes up. Wait a minute. The millions they're getting. That should be at least. Partially mine.

It's my land. It's my opportunity. I should be sharing in that. And it is as though. Paul is prophesying. A day when the Jews. Will finally wake up.

And recognize. By God's grace. By God's spirit. This is our Messiah. This is our scriptures. This is our heritage. We should be getting a piece of this.

[20 : 58] Not just all these non-Jews. And as the Jewish people. Are then in gathered. And that's what he talks about. For if there.

For all of them. Be the riches of the world. How much more their fullness. What can he be talking about. In terms of the fullness. If not a majority. Or vast numbers at least.

If not an outright majority. Coming to know their Messiah. Or a majority of those. Who are left. If by any means. I may provoke. To emulation. To imitation.

Then which are my flesh. And might save some of them. If the casting away of them. Be the reconciling of the world. What shall the receiving of them be. But life from the dead.

The ingathering. The receiving by God. Of his ancient people. According to the flesh. And this is the implication. Of these verses. That there will come such a time.

[21 : 54] When God will then. In gather these vast numbers. Of Jewish people. And these then. As born again souls. Right.

And infused with this. Missionary desire. Will repeat. As it were. That seems to be what he's implying. Will repeat. The explosive outreach.

That we see in the acts of the apostles. Remember. That all of the initial outreach. All of the initial missionary endeavor. Is entirely. Carried out by Jews.

It is entirely. A Jewish mission. To the rest of the world. Until gradually. Gentiles begin to come in. And if this then. Is repeated.

But on a vast. Worldwide scale. Remembering that there are. Jewish communities. And people now. Throughout the entire world. And far more of them.

[22 : 50] In the world. Than there would have been. In the first century. That if this then. Is repeated. In the same proportions. That such an ingathering. Of the Jews. Such a fullness.

Will be. To the explosive. Final ingathering. Of vast multitudes. Of Gentiles. Perhaps. That which you know.

The kind of. Post millennialism. As it was called. That Christ. Will only come back once. You know. There's been this. Golden age. Of ingathering. Of his people. I don't want to get into. All the details of that.

But this. Certainly. Seems to be. What Paul is implying. The missionary. Explosion. Which would occur. With. The ingathering.

Of the Jews. Now. Obviously. If the Lord. Were going to. Use. The racially. Jewish people. In this way. As such.

[23 : 43] A vehicle. Almost like. A grand finale. Of mission. And evangelism. Throughout the entire world. As a vehicle. For a final.

Harvesting. An ingathering. Of Gentiles. As well as Jews. If that were the case. Then it follows. That he must. Preserve. The identity.

And preserve. The. The nationhood. And by that. It helps me. The political state. Of Israel. I mean. The nationhood. Of the Jewish people. Throughout the world. It means that.

His purposes. Must include. The preservation. Of their culture. Their racial identity. Their traditions. Their customs. Their preservation. Of much.

Of the Old Testament. Teachings. And laws. And so on. Obviously not sacrifice. And the temple. And so on. But much else. That is there. That their identity.

[24 : 38] Within the mass. Of the rest. Of humanity. Is to be preserved. By God's own. Decision. And that they be preserved.

Even the unbelieving ones. Amongst them. Who. Even if you know. They go in. For lost eternity. But they continue. To preserve. The Jewish identity. Until such a time. As a generation arises.

Who are. If you like. The evangelizing generation. The born again generation. That comes up. And are then this vehicle. For the ingathering. Of the Gentiles. Until that time arises.

God will have. A vested interest. A purpose. A plan. In preserving. His people. And their identity. His people. According to the flesh.

In the meantime. Yes. The mission. Goes on. To the Gentiles. And Jews alike. Throughout the world. But this. In gathering. And when the time comes. Of necessity.

[25 : 33] Requires. That the Jewish identity. Be preserved. It cannot then. Be the case. Enough. Well. God's got no more purpose. For this people. No more purpose. For Jewish identity. They should all just be homogenized.

Within the rest of the world. And just be like us. And just dispense with all their old customs. And all their old ideas. And so on. And when they become Christians. They should just become de-Judaized.

In a sense. Of course. Some things. They will need to let go of. Any idea of justification. By works. They need to let go of. But. But the traditions. And the heritage. And the identity.

They can't be expected to let go of. They can't be expected to stop being Jewish. Any more than we can be expected to stop being Scottish. Or English. Or whatever we may be. This is how we should.

I would suggest. Understand these verses. Eleven to fifteen. And this is. In many ways. The key. To these entire three chapters. Nine to eleven.

[26 : 29] As to where Paul sees. The identity. The purpose. And the place. Of the Jewish people. Amongst whom he numbers himself.

In God's great scheme. Of salvation. Now. In the Lord's mercy. When we get a final chance. We'll bring this. Matter to a conclusion. Going on to the end of chapter eleven.

But for now. I'd like us to just recognize this truth. God has a purpose. God has a plan. In continuing the identity. And nationhood of his people.

Even amongst those. Who will not accept. Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Because he has a plan. For the fullness. And the finality of time.

And the ingathering. Not only of the Jews. But of the Gentiles. As well. So let us pray. Gracious and beloved. Lord bless us.

[27 : 25] This portion of thy word. And in it.