

DEREK PRINCE
MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Sermon

The Roman Pilgrimage (Part 15)



Part 15/20
The Roman Pilgrimage
By Derek Prince

This is the third session of our series on Romans 9–11. It embarrasses me to think that I haven't really got to the end of chapter 9 yet, and I'm left wondering just exactly what's going to follow. I have to go back to the latter part of chapter 9 because I went over it so quickly that I don't think some of you have got all that was there for it.

Going back to Romans 9:27, Paul says:

> "And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, 'Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; for the Lord will execute His Word upon the earth thoroughly and quickly.' And just as Isaiah foretold, 'Except the Lord of Sabaoth [or the Lord of Hosts] had left to us a posterity [a seed], we would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah.'"

So those prophecies of Isaiah indicate very clearly that it's only a chosen remnant of Israel that will ultimately come into the fulfillment of God's purposes.

In verse 27 it says "the remnant." Not "a" remnant which is the old version of the Old King James, but "the" remnant, the chosen foreknown remnant. You understand, this theme of God's choice and God's foreknowledge goes all through these chapters. Unless we can grasp that, we won't really get the message.

And then Paul tries to explain why Israel missed it. I think it's important for all of us because it could happen to you and me. You need to understand that in Paul's perspective, 19 centuries ago, it was still an amazing thing that the Jewish people rejected their Messiah. We've got so used to the fact 19 centuries later, that it doesn't surprise us. But it takes Paul a great deal of explanation and a great deal of quotation from the Old Testament to convince, first of all, himself, I think, and then those who read that really, this was the way it was going to be. See, we look back on nearly 2,000 years when, in a certain sense, the Jews had been displaced from their position. We're so used to it we don't really expect an explanation. But, you have to go back

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to Paul's time and realize for him and for many other like him, it was a baffling mystery, that he had to go to the scriptures to find an answer. And, this is his answer, though Israel be multiplied and become exceedingly numerous, it's only the remnant that ultimately will be saved.

When we come to the end of chapter 11, it says all Israel will be saved. But we have to put those two scriptures together, all Israel by then will be the chosen remnant. So, those two scriptures explain one another.

And then he says:

> "Why did this happen? The Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? [Here's a burning question for Paul—Why?] Because they did not pursue it on the basis of faith, but as though it were on the basis of works."

They tried to earn God's righteousness. But God's righteousness, on the standard in which He offers it can only be received by faith. Because they tried to earn it, they didn't receive it by faith.

You see, the same applies to many church-going Christians. They still think they've got to earn God's righteousness. And if you think you've got to earn it, you won't receive it by faith. See? Because they're mutually exclusive. If you've got it by earning, you don't need it by faith. If you've got it by faith, it's because you couldn't earn it. Of this, Israel is the pattern, but it's developed the same way in the church. I think probably the majority of professing Christians think they've got to do something to earn God's righteousness. The truth is it cannot be earned.

And then he comes to the closing verse, verse 33:

> "...just as it is written, [and again, it's a quotation from Isaiah] 'BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME [is a much better translation than disappointed].'"

So the stumbling block over which the Jewish people fell was the Messiah. In Isaiah 8:14, that also was predicted. Isaiah 8:14, speaking about the Lord, the Messiah:

> "Then he shall become a sanctuary for those who believe, but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

So, Jesus is either a sanctuary if you believe and receive by faith, or He's a stone that you stumble over and fall. That's still true today. He's always that way. Either you enter by faith into the sanctuary or you stumble over the stumbling stone. And the real essence of the stumbling block or stumbling stone is you cannot achieve God's righteousness by your own effort. And that never suits religious people. Religious people never really want to hear that because somehow we think we can do something to earn it.

There are two other scriptures which we could look at. 1 Corinthians 1:23. Paul is speaking about his message:

> "But we preach Christ [or the Messiah] crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness..."

So again you see the crucified Messiah is the stumbling block.

And just one other scripture along that line, Galatians 5:11:

> "But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?"

In other words, if I preach you've got to do something that you can earn it, then I won't be persecuted.

> "Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished."

Always bear in mind the cross is always a stumbling block. Because, it abases all human pride and self righteousness. It leaves us with no claim of our own but only to trust in the undeserved mercy of God. And it's not sufficient to make that decision once when you get saved. Really, we need to make the decision afresh every day. "I am trusting in God's undeserved mercy. My righteousness does not come from what I do, it comes by faith from God."

Now we'll move on to chapter 10, of which the theme really is, and follows naturally on, "Righteousness based on faith versus righteousness based on law." Paul begins by a plea for Israel's salvation. We need to bear this in mind, although it's very exciting, what is going on in the land of Israel today and the many prophecies that are being fulfilled, let us bear in mind that the one thing that can meet the need of Israel is salvation. Without that, the land and all the other exciting things are ultimately—and so Paul goes on:

> "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them [that is for Israel] is for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge."

You can realize if you know the Jewish people, how unpopular that statement would make you with them. If there's one thing they don't want to hear, it's that they don't know. See? But you can understand why Paul was not only ?persona grata? with all of them.

> "For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God."

Notice that phrase "they did not subject themselves." What was the problem that that phrase indicates? Pride, that's right. But don't just point at the Jews and say they're problem was pride, because for every one of us it's a very humbling thing to have to acknowledge "I have no claim on God except His undeserved mercy and the fact that Jesus took my place and died on the cross." See, that's the problem.

Now we come to a very significant statement in Romans 10:4:

> "For Christ [I prefer to say the Messiah in this context] is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes."

That statement applies to all believers, Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant, Baptist or Methodist, it makes no difference.

Where this translation that I read says "the law," the word "the" is put in, as they acknowledge in my particular text. For Christ is the end of law for righteousness to every one who believes. Primarily it speaks about the law of Moses, the Law. But the law of Moses is merely a pattern of any law. Christ is the end of law as a means of achieving righteousness for every one who believes. That's a very far reaching statement. If you believe in Jesus, then the death of Christ on the cross has terminated law as a means of achieving righteousness with God.

Again, everything religious in us revolts against that statement. You mean I can't do anything? The answer is absolutely nothing but believe and trust God. Rely upon His mercy.

Now, I want to take a few moments to consider this statement because it's extremely important and becoming more and more important as more and more Jewish people are turning to their Messiah. I don't know whether you're aware of this but a number of Jewish people who are turning to Jesus as Messiah is increasing every month. Not only in the United States, but even in Israel—although it's not a large movement, it's very significant. And certain questions come up which are dealt with in Romans, partly in this part, partly in the next part of Romans.

Some people will tell you that Christ is the goal of the law but not the end, because of the meaning of the word that's translated "end." I believe in finding out the way a word is used in the Bible, because that's the best guide to what it means. I'll give you benefits of a little research. The Greek word, for those who are interested, is ?telos?. And it occurs altogether 37 times in the New Testament. It's used as end only 11 times, as goal only 3 times, and as end and goal 23 times. So, out of 37 times it's used as goal only 3 times, which is less than 8 percent. In other words, and again we come to this principle, if you want to translate it goal only, you've got to have very strong objective outside reasons, because it's not the normal translation of the word.

Actually, in this case I personally believe it's both. Christ the Messiah is both the goal and the end of the law as a means of achieving righteousness. The whole law looked forward to Jesus, He is the only one who kept the law perfectly. In Him the law was perfectly fulfilled and in Him the claims of the law were settled so that we can be free from those claims through His substitutionary, sacrificial death on our behalf.

However, it is very, very important to understand that that's the end of the law only on that particular issue. And, I want to give you seven other purposes of the law which still apply for you and me today. I'm not going to dwell on this at length but it's very important to see. I will just go down, they're in your outline if you want to follow.

First of all, the law, or what is called in Hebrew, Torah, uniquely reveals God's righteousness, holiness, wisdom and justice. It's a unique revelation, there's nothing else that can be set beside it. And interestingly enough, when I want to teach on holiness, the place I always go to is the tabernacle of Moses. For me, the tabernacle of Moses is the most challenging, compelling call to holiness there is. I can't take time to explain that, I can recommend you to my tapes on the subject but I just mention that. It's unique, there's nothing else anywhere in the world that has the same challenge to holiness and righteousness and justice as the law.

Secondly, the law diagnoses man's basic problem, which is sin. Apart from the law we really don't know sin. Romans 3:20 says:

> "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

And Romans 7:7 says:

> "If it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin."

You see, when you go to the doctor, the first thing he does it not pull out certain pills and give them to you. He sticks a thermometer in your mouth and puts you through all sorts of elaborate tests to find out what your problem is. Only when he's discovered your problem does he seek to cure it. The same is true of God's dealing with humanity. The first thing we need to know is what is our basic problem. The answer is sin. But the only thing that diagnoses that problem adequately is the law. It's only when we're confronted with the law that we discover our problem is sin.

I could say this on the basis of studies in philosophy because all sorts of philosophers have tried to analyze man's problems and find the solution, but without the revelation of scripture they never arrive at the diagnosis of sin. The scripture is the only source of diagnosis.

Thirdly, the law reveals man's inability to save himself. At the end of Romans 7, which deals exclusively with the law, Paul cries out:

> "Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me?"

He's come to the realization he cannot deliver himself.

Fourthly, the law predicted and prefigured the Messiah. Not only did it diagnose the problem, it pointed us to the remedy. The remedy is not in ourselves, it's in another. It's in Jesus the Messiah, and His sacrificial atoning death. In Luke 24, after His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples that everything that was written in the law of Moses, in the prophets and in the Psalms had been fulfilled in Him. So He is the fulfillment of the types and shadows and predictions of the law of Moses. They all pointed to him. In fact, I would venture to say every sacrifice in the law reveals something about Jesus, some aspect of Jesus.

Fifthly, the law kept the Jewish people shut up to Messiah. I think we better look at that scripture, it's in Galatians 3:23:

> "But before faith came, we [that's the Jewish people] were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed."

So the law kept the Jewish people for nearly 15 centuries shut up to the revelation of the gospel which was to come.

This became so vivid to me when I was talking to a large congregation of nearly two or three thousand Chinese in Singapore. As I looked at them, I thought to myself, "There's hardly one person here who doesn't have ancestors that were idol worshippers." And very often, it's the father or the grandfather. Then I thought to myself, "Jesus could never have come to the Chinese people because if He'd obeyed His parents, He would have had to been an idolater." That was a staggering realization. I thought to myself, "It took God a long while to produce a people to who He could trust His son Jesus, so that He was right in His relationship with His parents, right in His relationship with the authorities, and right in the relationship with others." There never has been another people in human history of whom that was true.

All right, the next is the law is the basis of righteous legislation for many nations, including both Britain and the United States. Just one scripture in a prayer of Nehemiah, chapter 9. Nehemiah 9:13, praying to God he says:

> "Then thou didst come down on Mount Sinai and didst speak with them from heaven, thou didst give to them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments [just ordinances and true laws]."

See, there's never been another set of such laws ever offered to humanity anywhere. And basically, as a general

statement, the nations that have lived by those laws have prospered and risen to the top. And nations that have begun to reject those laws have begun to slide down again. Unfortunately, that's true of the United States and Great Britain, and the Scandinavian nations and other nations. So, we can never measure the benefit to humanity of those pattern laws that God gave through Moses.

And finally, and in some sense one of the most exciting, is the law is an endless theme for edifying meditation. Turn to Psalm 1:2–3. How many of you know Psalm 1 by heart?

> "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!"

So there's three negatives that you've got to lay hold of if you want to be blessed. You must not walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers. And notice, it's a slowing down process. First of all, you're walking, then you're standing, and then you're sitting. That's when you are in danger.

But, the person whom God blesses:

> "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night."

You can never spend too much time meditating on the revelation of the Lord. But, when the meditation of the Lord becomes really effective is when you know the Messiah, because then everything in it, in one way or another, points to Jesus.

So, let me recapitulate those seven purposes of the law which still stand. It uniquely reveals God's righteousness, justice, wisdom and holiness. It diagnoses man's basic problem: sin. It reveals man's inability to save himself. It predicted and prefigured the Messiah. It kept the Jewish people shut up to the Messiah. It's the basis of righteous legislation for many nations. And, it's an endless theme or edifying meditation.

There's just one thing for which it is no longer acceptable, and that is as a means of achieving righteousness with God. The death of Jesus on the cross set that aside.

Now let's look at a contrast, going back to Romans 10, a contrast between righteousness that depends on law and righteousness that depends on faith. Romans 10:5–7:

> "For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness."

If you keep the whole law entirely all the time, you don't need any other righteousness. But the fact of the matter is no one ever has. So we can't depend on that. And James says if you break one commandment, you're guilty of the whole law. You can't split the law up into little sections and say, "Well, I'll keep this part, but that part..." because it's one single system. You either observe it all all the time or you do not achieve righteousness by it.

And then he goes on:

> "But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, [now he's quoting from Deuteronomy, but rather freely, and he says:] 'DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN? (that is, to bring Christ down), or WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).'"

So, what Moses said and what Paul takes up is that the righteousness of faith depends not on something that's got to be done, but on something that has been already done. You don't have to go up to heaven, you don't have to descend into the abyss. Christ came from heaven, He went down into hell, He's finished the atonement, it's settled, you don't have to do it. And it doesn't have to be done again.

And then Paul goes on, how do we receive this righteousness on the basis of faith? And these are some of the most important verses in the New Testament. As I pointed out, it's ridiculous to call these three chapters a digression when the key to achieving righteousness by faith is right in the middle of the middle chapter.

All right, what is the message? Verse 8 and following:

> "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching...

So, this righteousness comes through a word, the word of the gospel. The message of the gospel is the only key that opens to you the door to the righteousness of faith. Think how important that makes it. Until this message is proclaimed, people even if they long to attain to

righteousness cannot. What an obligation we have to proclaim it to the whole of the human race. Not just sit in church on Sunday mornings and sing a few hymns. That doesn't discharge our debt to humanity. What does it say?

> "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART'—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching...

Notice in achieving righteousness by faith there are two parts of the human personality that must be involved. The mouth and the heart. And in these three verses, Paul uses each of them three times. The first few times it's the mouth and then the heart, the last time it's the heart and then the mouth. I think that's very significant. It's not exactly easy to know what's in our heart. In fact, the only person who really knows the heart is the Lord. So if you want something in your heart, how do you get it there? By saying it with your mouth. By repeating it. It may seem as though nothing is happening, but after awhile, it happens. It's very interesting because when we say in English "to learn by heart", Hebrew says "to learn by mouth". How do you learn by heart? By repeating with your mouth the same phrase again and again until it's got to where? Your heart. Then you don't have any more effort. That's why it's so important to memorize scripture, because when you've memorized it, there's no more effort. Ruth and I've got probably 50 passages of scripture we memorized. It's no effort to us. I could call her up here and we could say them together. Because we have repeated them so often, they're in our hearts. So, if you believe the Bible, if you receive the message, then the way to get it into your heart is by way of your mouth. Do you understand? This is a real important key.

Let me just read those words, verse 9:

> "...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved..."

That's the clearest single statement in one verse of how to be saved. You confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. Notice, if you don't believe in His resurrection, you cannot be saved. I said that in the previous session.

And then the third time Paul changes the order.

> "...for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

We need to know the meaning of the word confess. The English word is derived from a Latin word which means to say the same as, and that's the meaning of the word in the Greek text. It means to say the same as. So, confession for us as Bible believing Christians means we say the same thing with our mouths as God has said in His word. Now, you're not free to add to the word and you should not take away from it. You don't immediately believe it. "Like Jesus Himself took our infirmities, bore our sicknesses, with His wound we are healed." You say, "But I'm sick." Well, that's true, it's perfectly correct, you are sick. But it's not what the word says. So you have to make a decision whether you're going to side with the word or side with the symptoms. And this is not a quick, easy decision. It's something that has to be worked out. You see?

As a matter of fact, my dear brother here has got a wonderful testimony of how he was healed of—what do you call that thing? Sugar diabetes. He was diagnosed, that's Terry there, he was diagnosed as having diabetes in an acute stage. Of course, he should give this testimony but I see him there, it comes to mind. He said, "Doctor, I don't receive that. With His wounds I'm healed." And here he is totally free from diabetes. That's just a rather dramatic example.

Now, this is not a system, you can't make it work; it has to come from the heart. See? You've got to believe in the heart. It's one thing to believe in the mind, it's another thing to believe in the heart. How do you get it to the heart? By way of the mouth. See what I'm saying? You've got to do two things: confess Jesus with your mouth as Lord, believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. That's the basic requirement of salvation. And if you're not sure whether you believe it, but you're sincere and you believe the Bible is God's word, just keep saying it with your mouth.

I'm looking at my wife here in front of us. We have been doing this for three years, and it's taken a lot of guts—to use a rather vulgar word—but we've held onto it. You see? We have not let go. And it's working. It's working. It's not been easy. Nobody says it will be easy. But, that's God's way. We can't substitute some other way. I'm just talking about healing of sickness because the word salvation is the all inclusive Biblical word for everything that was accomplished by the death of Jesus on the cross. And if I were to start into that subject now I would not get back, so I have to redirect myself.

All right. Let's go on with Romans 10, Paul goes on to point out in verses 11 and following that this plan of salvation is open to everybody. It's not restricted to Jews but it's for whosoever. He says:

> "For the scripture says, 'WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.' [That's Isaiah 28:16.] For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek..."

In this respect that we're all sinners and God has provided the same remedy for all of us.

> "...for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon him; [and then verse 13:] 'FOR WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'"

So you believe in your heart, confess with your mouth, call upon the name of the Lord and it works for whoever.

It's marvelous when one has the privilege of dealing with people who have no religious background or no Christian background. You simply explain it to them this simply and they do it, and it works. They don't have any idea about church or hymns or things like that, but they just lay hold of this one fact, you've got to believe in your heart and confess with your mouth, call on the name of the Lord and you will be saved. Millions and millions have been saved that way, isn't that wonderful? This is not some abstract theory, this is something that works. Like everything that God says, it works.

I've come to one of my favorite scriptures which is Romans 10:17. I'm skipping out 16 because I'm going back to it.

> "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ [or the word of God]."

Either is possible. See, if you don't have faith, you can get it. This is a word of encouragement. During my military service, I was one year on end in a military hospital in Egypt —and Egypt is not the place to choose to be in hospital— with a condition that the doctors were not able to cure. I had just come to know the Lord, been baptized in the Spirit, but had no kind of religious context. As I lay there in the bed, I said to myself day after day, "I know if I had faith, God would heal me." But the next thing I always said was, "But I don't have faith." When I said that I was in a long dark valley of despair. One day a glorious ray of light shone into that darkness. Do you know where it came from? Romans 10:17: "So then, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." If you don't have faith, you can get it. Listen, it comes, it comes, it comes. You don't have to sit there in despair and say, "I've no faith." There's a way to get faith.

I want to explain the way because it's important. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by rhema, the proclaimed word of God. The first stage is not faith, it's hearing. But when the word produces hearing, out of hearing faith comes. I saw such a vivid illustration of this early in my ministry. Some of you might not picture me this way but I used to be a street preacher in the streets of London. For 8 years I preached on the streets of London. I'm very used to open air preaching. In fact, it's a good way to learn to preach because you don't have any notes and you don't have a concordance. And, you've probably got a lot of opposition, and you really come out with what you've got and that's all you have!

Anyhow, I was preaching one evening and there was quite a crowd of maybe 100 people gathered around listening. It was a fine summer evening in London and a young man came sauntering past me. He wasn't really going anywhere, he was just wandering along. I saw a look of scorn on his face and he said to himself, "What's that idiot talking about?" But, he stopped. And he began to listen. And all the time I spoke, for another 10 or 15 minutes, I was watching his face. And gradually the smirk disappeared and a look of real intense interest came in his eyes. So when I got to the end I did something I often did, I said, "Now, if anybody here wants to be saved, I'm going to pray a prayer out loud in the middle of this ring, sentence by sentence. You can pray the same prayer after me in your heart. And if you really mean it, you'll be saying it." So I prayed a simple prayer asking for salvation, opened my eyes and looked at that young man, and his face was changed. I walked straight up to him and said, "You've just prayed that prayer, haven't you?" And he said, "Yes, I did." And what a demonstration it was to me because he came past 20 minutes earlier as a complete unbeliever, but he stopped and he began to hear, you see? And out of hearing faith developed and he could be saved.

One problem with many of us as Christians is we don't take time to hear. We open our Bible, read a chapter, close the Bible and go off to work or the kitchen or wherever. It takes time for faith to develop. You need to spend time in front of your Bible. It's not my job to tell you how to make the time but let me tell you this, people find time for the things they consider really important. If you consider it important enough, you'll find time for it. So, that's it. Out of that faith

you can fulfill the requirements for salvation, you can call upon the name of the Lord and you will be saved.

Now Paul comes back to a thing which was a great problem for him, you can see him struggling with it. "Why didn't my Jewish people believe?" And so we're going to look at that for a moment. Going back to Romans 10:16, going back one verse:

> "However, they did not all heed the glad tidings..."

Well, we should have looked at verse 15, because he's quoting that beautiful passage:

> "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"

He said this is the picture of the people carrying the message of the gospel. Then he says:

> "However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, 'LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?'"

Do you know where that quotation is taken from? It's the first verse of Isaiah 53, and Isaiah 53 is the most complete prophetic unveiling of the atonement of Jesus Christ. But, there's a warning: Not everybody is going to believe. Do you understand that? The problem is not that God hasn't provided the solution, the problem is we don't accept it with faith. And so, Paul wresting with this issue, "Why didn't my Jewish brothers believe?" goes back to the scripture and says, "Isaiah warned us, Who has believed our report? Not everybody." And then he goes on to say, and we're going to verse 18, we're missing out verse 17 because we've already dealt with it:

> "But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have..."

It's not because they didn't hear. And then he quotes Psalm 19 about the testimony of the sun and the moon and the stars, but he applies it to the message of the gospel.

> "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."

So he said it's been proclaimed. See, when Jesus said to His disciples in Mark 16:15, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to every creature", from that time it was proclaimed. Jesus had released the word into all the world. That still means you and I have got to take the word, but it has been released. Until Jesus spoke those words there was no authority for anybody to go and do it. So, Paul says now the word has been released.

And then he says in verse 19:

> "But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? [And then he answers his own question.] On the contrary, Moses [the great authority] warned us."

And he quotes from Deuteronomy 32. I'm not going to turn to Deuteronomy 32, I'm just going to read the quotation here:

> "Moses says [to Israel], 'I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING I WILL ANGER YOU.'"

Now, it's a good question, what is the foolish nation? You and me. The Gentiles, you see? We are a foolish nation by comparison with Israel. Because, Israel had had 15 centuries of God's instruction, they were set apart. But God is going to—and He has done—anger the Jews by accepting a people who they despise. I mean, we have to face that fact. Even today in the Hebrew language, to a lot of people the word goy is a term of contempt. Goy is the Hebrew word for Gentile nation. So God took the silly Gentiles to provoke the religious and clever Jews. And He warned them that He was going to do it.

In Deuteronomy 32, Moses said, "they provoked me to jealousy by that which is not a God, by their idols. I'll provoke them to jealousy by that which is not a people." You have to understand there are two words in Hebrew, one is am, the other is goy. Am is people, goy is nation. Am is a nation that has a covenant relationship with God. There was only one am in the world until the gospel, that was Israel.

Now we also are a people that have a covenant relationship with God. Not the Americans, the British, but the church of Jesus Christ. We are a people. And that was designed by God to provoke the Jews to jealousy. One thing that's tragic to me is really over the centuries the church has done so little to make the Jews jealous.

I have a friend, Larry Tomczak, known to many of you. I was with him in ministry just a week ago. And in his book that tells his life story he tells how he was working for a very intelligent and influential Jew who was a head of the AFL-CIO in Washington. And Larry, a new believer with enthusiasm, was witnessing to this man with wisdom and tact, and the man didn't reject his witness but he said, "When I find something in Christianity that's better than what I have as a Jew, I'll accept it." And that is the attitude of many Jewish people. Honestly, if you were a Jew and you looked at the church from the outside as presented in the media and as in the lives of some people, why would you want to change? Basically, the Jewish people take much better care of their own than the church does.

I happen to know that because of the experience of my wife Ruth. I don't think it's appropriate for me to go into this, but she converted to Judaism, was a practicing Jewess for more than 20 years. And when her marriage broke up and her family fell apart, the whole synagogue rallied around her. They didn't leave her. How many times does that happen in Christian congregations? See, there's a real challenge. We're supposed to be making the Jews jealous. And you know, I'm not Jewish. But you know, Jewish people, when they see something that works, they want it. They say, "Show me if it works, I'll buy it." Well, they can't buy this but they'll get it.

Then, we're still in this theme of how come Israel didn't believe, and Paul always goes for an answer to the Bible, he doesn't go anywhere else, to the prophets. And so he quotes in verse 20 something that's found in Isaiah 55. The Lord says:

> "I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO SOUGHT ME NOT, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME."

Who were those who did not ask seek, did not ask? The Gentiles, that's right.

> "But as for Israel He says, 'All the day long I've stretched out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.'"

So, Paul says—and I mean, he's really got his Jewish brothers in mind, he says, "We were warned. We couldn't say that it would never happen to us because our own prophets told us, our own Moses said God's going to make us jealous by a people that really aren't the people, by people that are on a different level from us spiritually and even intellectually." And then through Isaiah the Lord said, "I've stretched out my hands to you all day long and you've not obeyed me, but I've been found by a people who weren't even looking for me."

So you see, to sum it up, the difference between the righteousness of faith and the righteousness of law: the righteousness of law says "I do this, I do that, I keep this, I keep that, therefore I am righteous." And Paul says earlier in Romans, and we looked at it, boasting is excluded by the law of faith. What does that imply? That if you're righteous by keeping a law, you've got something to boast about. And what is the motive that makes you want to boast in one simple word? Pride. You see, the root problem is pride.

Let me ask you this question. In the history of the universe, what was the first sin? Pride, that's right. And when the devil comes to tempt you and me, he can't do anything more than what brought about his own disaster. That's where he always aims. And what is the greatest single factor that creates pride in human beings? Now, we have many possible answers but I'll tell you want I believe, religion. Religion is the single greatest source of pride.

I never believed that Communism would hold a grip on the Russian people for very long because I know the soul of the Russian people. But believe me, brothers and sisters, there's a much more dangerous alternative coming which is religion, religiosity. I personally believe we just got a short interval between the demise of Communism and the rise of a religious system which will be much more enslaving than atheistic Communism. I mean, the devil will use anything. He'll use Communism but it's not his number one weapon. His number one weapon is religion because it appeals to human pride. You see that?

I'll also say this, it's just a little extra. If you ever fall into deception or erroneous teaching, your root problem will be pride. The only thing that opens the way to deception in a believer is pride. And you'll find almost all errors appeal to pride. "If you join this group you'll be more spiritual. This is the group of overcomers. We're the ones who've got the answers. Join us and you'll be right." My comment is if you join them you can be sure of one thing, you're wrong. This is the motive behind almost every cult, "We're the right people. We are better than others, we have more knowledge than others, we have a higher revelation than others." But the same thing permeates the church. "I've got this doctrine, therefore I am more righteous than the people that don't have this doctrine."

The only solution is humility, we have to humble ourselves. Humility and faith go together. Pride and unbelief go

together. See, God's method of salvation through faith undercuts all human pride. It leaves us nothing to boast about except as Paul said, the cross.

Let's move on into Romans chapter 11 which we will not be able to go very far. But then Paul raises this crucial question which keeps coming up and is one of the primary questions in the church today, Romans 11:1:

> "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He?"

They have in Greek a form of a question that expects the answer no. And Paul uses that. God has not rejected His people, has He, expecting the answer no.

> "May it never be!"

?Haleva? in Hebrew. When we were going through the first part of Romans, you remember what I suggested? Perish the thought. How can we entertain such a thought.

> "God has not rejected His people, has He? Perish the thought. For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."

So Paul says, "I am proof that God has not rejected the entire Jewish people."

> "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew."

Do you understand? We come back again and again to that decisive factor, those whom God has chosen and foreknown are His people. I don't believe there are going to be any surprises for God in eternity. There may be a lot of surprises for us. "Well, brother, I never expected to see you here! You didn't have the right doctrine and you didn't belong to the right group. I don't know how you made it!" But the most shocking surprise of all would be if we didn't get there. So, God has numbered the elect, that's my personal conviction. He knows exactly how many seats to put around the table for the banquet for the marriage supper of the Lamb. And there will be a place card in each place. All you have to do is walk around until you find your place, it's already appointed. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.

And then we come back to this period in the history of Israel when Elijah was the main prophet:

> "Do you not know what the scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?"

The Old King James says "he makes intercession against Israel. That's always gripped me. Here's a prophet of God making intercession against God's people. I believe it was a weakness in Elijah, I don't believe we should ever make intercession against the people of God. I can understand, I've often felt like doing it myself but I think it's a weakness, we should not yield to it.

What did Elijah say? He said:

> "LORD, THEY HAVE KILLED THY PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN THINE ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE."

And he had to go all the way to Mount Sinai and back to where the law was given and have a personal interview with the Lord. You remember, it was a dramatic interview, he was there on the mountain and a wind passed by and tore the rock but the Lord wasn't in the wind. And then there was an earthquake but the Lord wasn't in the earthquake. And then there was fire but the Lord wasn't in the fire. And then there was what used to be called a still, small voice. The modern translations say a sound of gentle blowing. And that was more impressive and more authoritative than the wind, the earthquake and the fire. It was just the voice of God.

You see, when you hear God's voice, He doesn't have to shout. He can shout but when you hear God's voice, in a way, the most precious experience, it's just to have that quiet, authoritative voice that tells you just how things are.

And so, the Lord corrected Elijah and said you've got your pictures wrong. What was the divine response to him?

> "I HAVE KEPT FOR MYSELF SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."

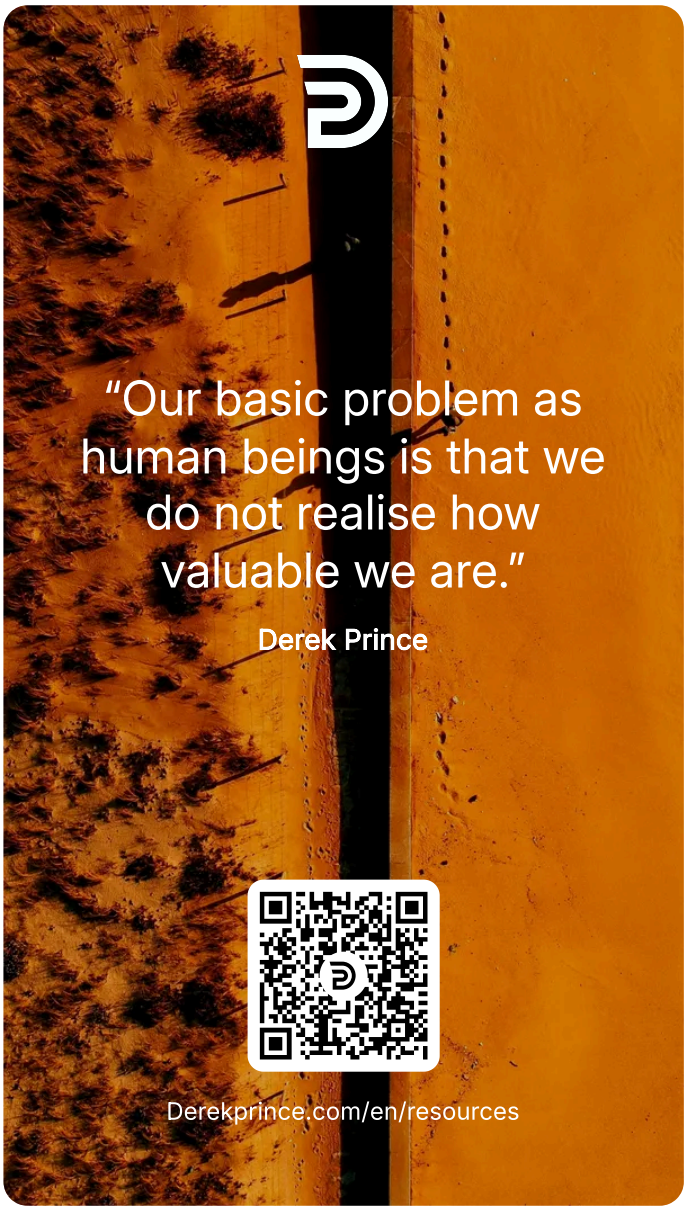
Notice again the emphasis on God's grace. "I have kept for myself. They didn't keep themselves, I have kept them. They are my reserved remnant."

And then Paul goes on to say:

> "In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice."

That's the translation here but the literal translation is "according to the choice of grace". So we come back to this theme, it's grace that makes God's sovereign choice, and God's choice is what settles who His people are to be. God has a remnant both in Israel and in the church. Can you accept that? I believe the same principles apply, that's why it's so important we study the facts about Israel, because they apply in principle to us. So, God helping us, in the next session we will complete Romans chapter 11, with help from God.

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