

ROMANS 10:16 - 11:1 "Did God Reject His People Israel? By No Means!"

Isaiah 52:7 "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Those are the words we want to hear from our Savior. To know that our Lord personally calls us to be His ambassadors, so that we can bring this good news to the world, should encourage us to consider how we may accomplish such a beautiful task.

Evangelism programs have come and gone. Some are good, others are less than good. But as I've stated before, evangelism programs are designed to give you a tool to sharpen your skills to actually know what to share regarding Christ and His redemptive work.

Evangelism programs in and of themselves do not necessarily give you the motivation to share that good news. As I've said on various occasions, you or I can teach an unbeliever how to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, but we can't give that unbeliever the motivation to actually share it from the heart.

The same holds true for a Christian. You or I can teach another Christian how to share the gospel, but we can't give other Christians the motivation to actually have them share their faith in Christ.

But what we can do is encourage God's people to look closely at what a great love Christ has given us so that as we look to Christ in thanks and gratitude our hearts desire will be to please Him in everything, and part of what pleases Him is to talk about Him to a lost world.

If our love for Christ is growing then our love for the world will grow as well, and in turn that love will reach out to them with the truth of God's word. This must be at the root of our Christianity. God's word tells us that we should love the Lord our God with all of our heart, all our souls, and all of our minds. A second commandment like unto it is to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Our neighbor is the world as well as the church and the implied progression of thought is that if we are loving God above all we will in turn love our neighbor. The opposite can also be seen in that if our love for Christ grows cold, or becomes complacent, our love for people in general will grow cold and that motivation to share the love of Christ found in the gospel will be quenched.

A.C. Hervey in the Pulpit commentary series makes a similar statement. He says, "If love to Christ be chilled by worldliness, no place will be found for love of souls."

Therefore, our love for the lost is the not the initial motivation to share with the lost. Our love for Christ is. But when we're loving Him above all it necessarily follows that our love for souls will follow. Love for the lost is something we need to pray for daily. Unfortunately the lost are not very lovely. If you doubt that think back on your lost days.

But if you remember how Christ loved you even while a sinner and a rebel, as Paul speaks of in Rom.5:8 and Eph.2:4-5, then out of gratitude our attitudes should be: 'Lord whatever you desire of me I will do because you first loved me, while I deserved nothing from You.'

But what if we share with the world and they reject our message of hope found in Christ? 'Yeah, I tried giving someone the gospel once and they just laughed. I'll never put myself in that humiliating situation again.'

Think how the world would be if the apostle Paul had given up simply because of the world's rejection. Not only did they laugh at him, they persecuted him, they beat him, tried to kill him and most of those people were fellow Jews.

And yet he can still say, "I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel...." (Rom 9:1-4)

Paul never gave up on the Jews because God never gave up on him. And yet the reality is that, whether Jew or Gentile, many people will not embrace the truth that Messiah Jesus died for the penalty of our sins so that we don't have to pay the penalty ourselves, separated from God for eternity.

I don't know how anyone would want to pay for their own sins when the Creator has made a way of escape to love and serve Him. But even Paul understood this when he wrote in Rom 10:16 "But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" [Isaiah 53:1]

The prophet Isaiah pleaded with Israel to turn back to Jehovah for their salvation, but his words fell on deaf ears. "Lord, who has believed our message?" By the way it is this passage in Isaiah that speaks about the suffering Servant to come to redeem men of their sin. That suffering servant spoken of is none other than Jesus Himself being foretold to the Jews that He would come in this way.

But Paul's point here in Rom.10:16 is not to suggest that since some will not believe the message, we give up on them. The next verse would have us continue to tell them about our Savior.

Rom 10:17 "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."

The NAS and the KJV would put it, "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ." The message of the gospel is implied. So the idea is that if people are going to be saved they must hear, and we must be the ones to bring this glorious news, of which God says, 'your feet are beautiful when you bring My gospel.'

A side note here to the word hear..... The ear doesn't necessarily have to be involved. For example those who are deaf can still hear from God through the written word. We can share with the lost and allow them to hear the gospel through tracts we send them or give them. Now, none of this is meant to give us an excuse not to actually talk with people, but we certainly aren't limited to just the spoken word.

To give you an example of how people are reaching the lost for Christ we, along with thousands of churches and ministries, are using the Internet to reach the world with the gospel, and to bring the truth of God's word around the globe.

Other ways we've spoken to our community about the Gospel of Jesus Christ is through gospel tracts sent to this community through a mailing campaign, and if you desire you can still use this means to get the word out. I have the letters and the tracts and the envelopes as well as the mailing labels. Just ask me for the materials and you can use this as a means of having beautiful feet to take the message out to this lost world.

So, Paul says, the world needs to hear and you have the privilege and responsibility to give them this glorious news of Christ. Now, in the case of the Jews whom Paul is addressing in our text, he

speaks of those Jews who may have used the excuse that they hadn't heard this special news or had it fully explained to them, therefore they can't be blamed.

Rom 10:18 "But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." [Psalm 19:4]

The Jews had the privilege to know the mind and will of God as they walked with Him and heard His word spoken through His prophets. The problem was that their ears were dull as they chose not to walk after God in their rebellion.

To drive his point home about the Jews' access to this good news, Paul quotes two O.T. prophets; Moses and Isaiah.

Rom 10:19-21 "Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding." [Deut. 32:21] 20 And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." [Isaiah 65:1] 21 But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." [Isaiah 65:2]

The words of Moses are found in Deu 32:21 "They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding."

Charles Hodge makes the comment: [Here] "the sacred writer recounts the mercies of God, and the ingratitude and rebellion of the people. In verse 21 he warns them, that as they provoked him to jealousy by that which is not God, He would provoke them to jealousy by them that are no people. That is, as they forsook him and made a choice of another god, so He would reject them and make a choice of another people."

Of course, that other people would have been all of the heathen peoples whom Israel hated. If Israel would not be that light, that God called them to be as the chosen people, then God would go to the people who did not seek Him and reveal Himself to them with the express purpose of making Israel jealous.

But, don't confuse God's rejection of Israel with a "getting even attitude". They violated the clear covenant that God made with them and they knew the consequences, but it was this rejection that

God used to extend His mercy and the good news to the Gentile nations which includes you and me.

We'll talk more of this next week as Paul points this out in Rom 11:11 "Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious."

This is glorious news for the Gentiles and it once again shows how a just God is also merciful and loving. For the Gentiles, like Israel, deserved nothing from God but His wrath, and yet He allows them to partake in His mercy.

And that's when Paul quotes Isaiah.... "And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." [Isaiah 65:1]

Like the Jews, the Gentiles fall into the same category that Paul outlined earlier in this letter.

**Romans 3:11-12** <sup>11</sup> THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; <sup>12</sup> ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

The Gentiles were content in their unbelief and ignorance of the one true God. They weren't looking for or asking about Jehovah. But, God goes to them and reveals Himself and His gospel to them. Praise God!

But did Israel get a fair shake? Were they rejected on a whim from God? Paul puts it this way in Rom 10:21 "But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

It wasn't as though God didn't come to Israel and urge them to turn back to Him. The language of our text is taken from Isaiah.

Isa 65:2-7 "All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations-- <sup>3</sup> a people who continually provoke me to my very face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on altars of brick; <sup>4</sup> who sit among the graves and spend their nights keeping secret vigil; who eat the flesh of pigs, and whose pots hold broth of unclean meat; <sup>5</sup> who say, 'Keep away; don't come near me, for I am too sacred for you!' Such people are smoke in my nostrils, a

fire that keeps burning all day. 6 "See, it stands written before me: I will not keep silent but will pay back in full; I will pay it back into their laps-- 7 both your sins and the sins of your fathers," says the LORD. "Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains and defied me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment for their former deeds."

The Jews were not ignorant of what they were doing. They knew what God desired of them and yet they chose to rebel to fulfill their own selfish ambitions, which in part was not to be dictated to, even by their Creator and Savior.

That's pretty bold, and so God tells them that if they will not follow Him He will go after others whom He will reveal Himself to. Now, does this mean that the Jews will never have the opportunity to return to God?

Paul answers the question that may have been on the minds of both Jews and Gentiles.

Rom 11:1 "I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin."

But, wait a minute, I thought God had said He would reject His obstinate people. In fact, we read in Amos 9:8 "Surely the eyes of the Sovereign LORD are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it from the face of the earth--"

If we were to stop there we might get the idea that God's anger was unquenchable and irreversible towards the Jews. But in that same verse of Amos God goes on to say.... "yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob," declares the LORD.

What we see here is what we see all throughout the Old Testament where God declares that He will call out a people and they will be His people and He will be their God. But it is always conditional. The condition is based on faith, the same faith that Abraham employed as God covenanted with him and called him out of Ur of the Chaldees.

The confusion many Christians have is that they look at language like in Amos and surmise that the same nation Israel that was stiff necked and rebellious and rejected by God will be the same nation that God will plant again in Israel.

And this is why it is essential to understand which Israel God has in mind when He makes such promises. Because if we don't understand what God is saying regarding the remnant that Amos speaks of as the house of Jacob, then we will limit the remnant to the nation of Israel only.

**Amos 9:11-12** <sup>11</sup> "In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, And wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins And rebuild it as in the days of old; <sup>12</sup> That they may possess the remnant of Edom And all the nations who are called by My name," Declares the LORD who does this.

Here it appears that Amos is speaking about restoring the nation of Israel to its former glory. But look closely at what he says.

**Amos 9:11** <sup>11</sup> "In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, And wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins And rebuild it as in the days of old;

The first question we should ask here is what is the day in which God will raise up the fallen booth of David? Because depending on how we answer this will tell us what God will rebuild as in the days of old. Well, we don't have to search too far to get the answer. And James, the half-brother of Jesus, making a declaration at the council of Jerusalem as the disciples and apostles debated the phenomenon of the Gentiles coming to Christ, said this.

**Acts 15:12-18** <sup>12</sup> All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. <sup>13</sup> After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. <sup>14</sup> "Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. <sup>15</sup> "With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, <sup>16</sup> 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, <sup>17</sup> SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,' <sup>18</sup> SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO.

James is quoting Amos, the very text which describes the fallen booth of David being rebuilt as in the days of old. But notice who it includes. It includes the Gentiles. James is identifying what groups are a part of the booth of David, that is the Gentiles and the

Jews, and he is stating that the common thinking among Jews that their nation will be rebuilt in the future is simply not the case.

The house of Jacob that Amos speaks of is the none other than the house of Israel and the days in which this house will be rebuilt is a direct link to the last days in which David's throne will be reestablished with the son of David reigning on that throne.

We know who that descendant is and it is the Messiah who has come to tabernacle among His people, Immanuel.

The Israel that Amos addresses is the same Israel that Isaiah, Ezekiel and all the rest of the O.T. Prophets address and that is the house of God whom He has chosen among all the nations, both Jew and Gentile and this is the same Israel that Paul addresses.

**Galatians 6:15-16** <sup>15</sup> For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. <sup>16</sup> And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon *the Israel of God*.

The Israel of God is not a present or future nation set up in the Middle East awaiting the return of Christ to sit on David's throne for a thousand years in this cursed and sin-filled world. The Israel of God is the same Israel that Adam and Even belonged to along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who all longed for a better country and nation as they sought the Kingdom and city whose architect and builder is God.

In other words, the physical descendants of Abraham served God's purpose of delivering the Messiah Jesus from the line of David through the nation of Israel. But the true Israel always has been and always will be the people of the faith of Abraham.

**Galatians 3:7-9** <sup>7</sup> Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." <sup>9</sup> So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

And this is precisely what Paul has already taught in the letter to the Romans.

**Romans 9:6-8** <sup>6</sup> But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; <sup>7</sup> nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but:

"THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." <sup>8</sup> That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

So, when Paul says in **Romans 11:1** <sup>NAU</sup> "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin", he is saying that the people whom God has not rejected is not a nation called Israel, but a people called Israel that would include both Jew and Gentile who are the children of the promise who are regarded as descendants of Abraham.

It is essential that we understand this, otherwise we'll always be looking to events in Palestine instead of the word of God, for our answers regarding the coming King who is coming to set up His eternal kingdom on the new earth, not the present earth for a thousand years.

You and I in Christ are the Israel of God and we should glory in that name that describes the Israel that was brought up out of Egypt, the true Israel who came to save us and whose name we bear. This Israel is the Messiah Jesus Himself.

**Matthew 2:14-15** <sup>14</sup> So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. <sup>15</sup> He remained there until the death of Herod. **This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."**

And what prophet is being quoted here and what name is given to this son who is the child of Mary and Joseph?

<sup>NAU</sup> **Hosea 11:1** When *Israel* was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

This Son is the true Israel and all who belong to Him are the Israel of God.

In Christ, you and I are Abraham's offspring in the spiritual sense, which is what was always meant. Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. You and I believe God and trust Christ for our salvation and His righteousness is put to our account.

But, again the question begs itself. If the offspring of Abraham are those who believe the promises of God and not trusting in the law for salvation, where does that leave the Jews? It leaves them with

the same decision all Gentiles are faced with. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

This is exactly what Paul points out with his own life. And in verse one of chapter 10 he takes a logical argument to this question of whether or not God has entirely forsaken the Jew.

He says, may it never be that God has forever rejected the Jews. In fact he says, if that were the case how could I stand before you as a Christian? And lest you forget, he says, I am a Jew. Not some Gentile convert who came to the Jewish faith, but a Jew born to the nation of Israel, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Paul was saying that a Jew, through and through, has received the salvation promised to the Jews for centuries and therefore the Jews cannot be totally rejected otherwise Paul would still be lost.

In fact, he goes so far as to give some of his credentials. He doesn't do this for his own benefit but for those who would look on such credentials as special, and who may have needed such confirmation that, yes, even Jews can receive Christ.

Paul mentions that he's from the tribe of Benjamin. Hodge makes the comment that there were two predominant tribes in Israel, especially after the exile, when these two were the chief representatives of the theocratical people. These two tribes were Judah and Benjamin.

Speaking of Paul, whose birth name was Saul, F.F. Bruce says, "It is not surprising that parents who have traced their descent from the tribe of Benjamin and cherished high ambitions for their newborn son should give him the name borne by the most illustrious member of that tribe in the history of Israel - Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin (to quote Paul's reference to Israel's first king)"

But again keep in mind Paul isn't boasting in his physical heritage as though that gave him an advantage to the Kingdom of God. Rather he's simply making the point that being a Jew and being a Christian can be very compatible. God has not forsaken the Jew, but has called every Jew, as He has called every Gentile, not to place any confidence in the flesh but to trust Christ alone for your salvation.

This was the very point Paul was making when he wrote to the Philippians.

Phi 3:3-7 "For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh-- 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. 7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ."

Paul was proud of his heritage as all of us should be of ours. But no physical heritage will ever earn us brownie points with God. Only trusting Christ alone for salvation will count for eternity.

The nation of Israel today is still in darkness as a nation. Their official stance on the Messiah is, He is yet to come. But there are many Jews who have embraced Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. I've known numerous Jews over the years who have embraced their Messiah.

For a time I was involved in a ministry in Fort Lauderdale called Beth Yeshua. In Hebrew that means House of Jesus, and we would often go to Miami to the Jewish districts to share the Gospel of Yeshua. The ministry, Jews for Jesus has been around since the 1960's.

A Jewish friend of mine, Mitch Friedstat, who was with the Fort Lauderdale Calvary Chapel is a beautiful Christian man, whose mom and dad and the rest of his family doesn't understand him, but he continues to lift up the name of Christ is now presently assisting Billy Osegen, another friend of mine who is the Pastor of a Calvary Chapel in North Carolina.

Jews for Jesus once published some statistics which showed that, per capita, there are more Jewish believers in the world today than Gentile believers, which means that for the relatively small Jewish population in the world there are more Jews who are Christians compared to the vast Gentile numbers who have Christians.

God hasn't forgotten the Jews. But the message for you and me is that God has ordained for His people, both Jew and Gentile, to put our faith into action to the extent that we live and speak to this new life we have in Christ.

Just as Isaiah bore witness against the Jews of his day to the fact that God, "All day long has stretched out His hands to a disobedient and obstinate people", He continues to stretch out His hands to people all over this world who remain obstinate and rebellious.

Our God continues to extend mercy and love. And the way He does that is by sending you and me to be His hands and mouth, in a sense, as we deliver God's personal message of hope and life found in His Son, Jesus Christ.

May we, like Paul, be able to put our own salvation into perspective and have such an appreciation, and thankfulness of the eternal life we have been freely given, that we may say with him, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (Rom 1:16-17)

Seek Christ daily and live by faith in His love and mercy and the promises He's given us in Christ and in His word. Stand fast and do not be shaken for God is at work and He desires to use you and me in His work to the glory of God the Father, who sent His Son into this world to purchase with His blood our very lives.

Let's give Him our lives in thanks and gratitude and ask Him on a daily basis, 'Lord how can I be used of you today?' He'll honor that attitude by making us fit vessels for furthering His Kingdom.