

Four Proofs of Salvation for the Jews (Part 1)

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[0:00] All right, Romans chapter 11.

Romans chapter 11 and starting with verse 1. And we're going to take 10 verses tonight out of this great chapter. Let me read it, verses 1 through 10, Romans chapter 11.

I say then, has God cast away His people? Of course, His people Israel He's referring to. His answer, certainly not.

For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew? Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah?

How he pleads with God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek My life.

[1:13] But what does the divine response say to him? I have reserved for myself 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then, at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

And if by grace, then it is no longer of works. Otherwise, grace is no longer grace. And the rest of that verse, only those who have a King James, a New King James, will have this.

But if it is of works, it is no longer grace. Otherwise, work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks, but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded or hardened. Just as it is written, God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear to this very day. And David says, let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them.

Let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see and bow down their back always. All right? All right, so there's the text that we're going to be looking at tonight.

[2:26] And just by way of introduction, the chapter begins with a question. And already we have seen Paul ask a number of questions along the way.

And he uses that technique to introduce an argument or as a form of argument. And so chapter 11 begins with this question. And the question really represents a continuing theme that has been running throughout these three chapters, 9, 10, and 11.

And we could phrase it this way. Is God through with Israel? Or is God through with the Jews? That's basically the question here.

And it's really put in a very clear way here in chapter 11. But the question has been asked before. And again, that runs throughout these three chapters.

Is God through with Israel? You know, today we hear a lot about Israel, don't we? Especially of late in regard to what's going on in Iran and the threat of them obtaining a nuclear bomb and nuclear missiles and their threats, Iran's threats, of course, to annihilate Israel.

[3:52] We hear a lot about Israel today. And I guess really that's not new because all throughout our lives, if you'll just think about it, Israel has always kind of been right in the mix of all historical events.

And that's not something that we should be surprised about. Now, as Americans, we, of course, are, I would say, Israel's most important ally, aren't we?

Where would they be today without America? Well, I can't say that I know the answer to that because God is sovereign. But we are their allies, and I think we ought to continue to be.

And we should remember that Israel is the key to understanding God's activity in world history. Someone has said that as Israel goes, so goes the world.

And if you just think about it, you'll see how that has played out in history over the years. And we, I think, had better remain friends of Israel.

[4:56] I really believe that with all my heart. We ought to continue to be their friends. Now, does that mean that everything they do is right? Well, no. Does that mean that we should support the Jews in everything they do?

Not necessarily in the sense of agreeing with them. I mean, after all, it was the Jews who crucified Jesus. I think if we had been there then, we should have objected to that.

But Israel is kind of at the forefront and very much on our minds. And so, back to the text, this reoccurring question. Is God through with them?

Is He through with Israel? I mean, look at how unbelieving they are. Have been. Really, have been a rebellious people almost from their conception.

It's kind of interesting when, you know, not very long after, God made them a people and delivered them out of Egypt. And then you get into the book of Judges and you read about Israel rebelling and then coming under persecution because God sent them judgment.

[6:04] They're crying out and God rescues them. And then they rebel again and they cry out. And God rescues them and they rebel again. I mean, it's just a continuing saga, isn't it? And really, as you look at the Old Testament as a whole, we see Israel rebelling and rebelling and rebelling and God judging them and judging them and hauling them off into captivity and on and on and on into the New Testament.

There's the height of their rebellion. Rejection of Jesus. Rejection of the Messiah that had come through them. And since that time, generally speaking, the Jews have been in rebellion and have not believed the truth and have rejected Christ as their Messiah.

And today, they're unbelieving. In fact, Jews are very difficult people to reach with the gospel for that very reason. And so then we come back to the question.

So God's had enough with them. Just forget them. Has God rejected them? Has God cast them out? Cast them away? That's the question.

Is God through with Israel? And what's Paul's emphatic answer? No. God is not through with Israel. And Paul repeatedly argues that throughout these three chapters.

[7:31] This kind of, though I don't think it's a parenthesis, sort of the emphasis is kind of separated from the overall flow of the book of Romans. These three chapters, that's been Paul's argument.

God's promise toward the nation Israel has not failed. Not at all. No matter how unbelieving they have become. In chapter 9, and we're not going to go back there, but just to kind of give you a quick overview of this question, how it keeps coming up, and Paul continues to answer it.

In chapter 9, verses 6 through 24, Paul argued there that God's promise has not failed because all whom God graciously elects to salvation are or will be saved, Jew and Gentile.

That's his argument in those verses. And then in chapter 9, verses 25 to 29, Paul argued that God's promise to Israel has not failed because God never intended to save all of Israel.

And then in chapter 9, verse 30, on into chapter 10, verse 21, Paul argued that God's promise to Israel has not failed because the failure was on the part of Israel because of their unbelief, because they refused to believe the truth.

[8:48] And now here in chapter 11, verses 1 through 10, Paul argues that God's promise to Israel has not failed because even in their darkest times spiritually, there have always been a remnant who've believed.

And that's the point here in these verses that we're going to be seeing. And then looking at it next week in chapter 11, verse 11 through 32, Paul argues that God's promise to Israel has not failed because God will restore Israel.

One day, restore them to belief, and ultimately, it's difficult for us to understand this all-inclusive statement, ultimately all Israel will be saved.

Not all that have ever lived, but all those living then will be saved. And so God's promise to them has not failed. All right, so how does Paul argue this point here in chapter 11, verses 1 through 10? Well, first, he states his position, states it very emphatically, and then he proves it in these verses.

[10:07] He states his position in regard to Israel, and God's promise to them, and then he proves it. He proves it. And so how does Paul state his position?

Well, he states it dogmatically, emphatically, and without any wiggle room, without any exception, strongly.

Look at verse 1. I say then, or I ask then, Paul says. And here's the question. Has God cast away his people? Has he cast them away?

Certainly not. Now, you might remember in the previous verse, and if you have your Bibles open, you can see it, because in chapter 10, verse 21, Paul quoted Isaiah 65, where God says this of Israel.

He says, All day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people. It almost sounds as if God is quite frustrated with them. All day long I just keep my hands out for these people, these disobedient people, these contrary people.

[11:12] And so, right off of that verse, on into chapter 11, we have the question, and so it's very natural to ask, and apparently many were asking, Paul, in that day.

It would be very natural to ask, Has God finally cast away his disobedient and contrary people? Has he finally had enough? And by the way, the words cast away in the New King James, and I don't remember what it says in King James or other translations, but it's two words here in the New King James.

Cast away is really just one word. Some, I think, of your translations may have the word rejected there. Has God rejected his people? The word is from a particular Greek word, and it means to thrust away.

It means to push away, to repel. It's a very, very strong, strong word. And the idea here is not the refusal to receive them.

That's not the point here. So the question is not, has God just simply refused to receive them to himself? That's not the question. That's not the idea. The idea here is to thrust away those whom God has previously received.

[12:34] That he's already received them, and now he's thrusting them away. And so that's the question. And Paul asks then, rhetorically, has God done that with Israel? Is that the problem?

Is that why they're so unbelieving? Is that why they have had so many problems? Has God done that? He's just thrust them away from himself. And his answer is no.

An emphatic no. In fact, in the Greek language, and I'm not going to quote a bunch of Greek here, it is the most, it is the, the words he chose represent the most negative way anything could be stated. The strongest negative that Paul had at his disposal. Now, he's used this before. You know, we've brought this up before. It's the strongest one. We could translate it this way.

Impossible. It's impossible. That's how strong this negative is. Impossible. That's what Paul is saying.

[13:48] and now, there are two Old Testament passages that I want you to see that support Paul's position. His emphatic position on God's unconditional promise to Israel.

The first one is in Genesis chapter 15. I want you to look at it. Genesis chapter 15 and find verse 4. This, this is when the account of when God made his covenant with Abraham, the Abrahamic covenant.

And, uh, Abraham is still called Abram. his name has not been changed. His name will be changed after the covenant to Abraham.

And, uh, by the way, just a note to you. The word Abraham has, is just, has a, a, a slight little addition to the name Abram.

and the addition to the name is, that's it. Do you know, if we could pronounce the name for Yahweh, which we cannot, it's unpronounceable, even though we have come up with a word, Yahweh, and it comes close to that, but it really is not that.

[15:11] in the Hebrew language, Yahweh is a four consonant word, which is unusual in the Hebrew. Hebrew words are all three consonants, with other things added to them.

It's a four consonant word, and it's unpronounceable. It's four, uh, uh, no vowels, and, uh, four letters, and if we could pronounce it, it would probably sound like this.

Ah. And so, when God made His covenant with Abraham and his descendants, the one we're going to read about here in just a minute, after that, He added His name to Abram.

He's no longer Abram, He's Abraham. Covenant with God. Now, listen to what happens here. Verse four, and behold, the word of the Lord, oh, and by the way, Sarai is now Sarai.

Okay. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, that's Abram, saying, this one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your, I don't think this is where I want to be.

[16 : 29] Let me look, let me look, let me look. Yeah, it is too. Verse seven. No, verse five. Then He brought him outside and said, I'm in the right place.

What's wrong with you? Huh? Look now toward heaven and count the stars if you're able to number them. And He said to him, so shall your descendants be.

And he believed in the Lord and he accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur and the Chaldeans to give you this land to inherit it.

And He said, Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it? How am I to know that this is all true? So He said to him, bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.

Then He brought all these to him and cut them in two down the middle and placed each piece opposite to the other, but He did not cut the birds in two.

[17 : 34] Now, skip on down to verse 17. And it came to pass when the sun went down and it was dark that, behold, there appeared a smoking oven or like a barbecue grill.

It's not really that. It's kind of a smoldering pot, an oven. I kind of picture it as a barbecue grill. All right, anyway. And a burning torch that passed between those pieces.

Can you picture this? Now, I've ruined it for you with the barbecue grill. All right. Here's this fire and torch and it's passing between the pieces of the animals that have been cut into two right down the middle.

One piece is on this side, another piece is on that side, rather revolting to us in our culture. But this is what has happened and this fire is passing between the pieces and the fire is the manifest presence of God.

And so, in effect, God is passing between the pieces. All right, you picture that? And on this same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, and then he goes on to detail the covenant.

[19 : 05] Now, what's happening here? You need to understand that the word covenant, covenant, when they made a covenant, and that's how it's usually translated in our English, in fact, I think it says it right here, made a covenant with Abram.

Literally, the language would read cut a covenant. They cut a covenant. And it was kind of a visible kind of thing they did to convey the idea of a blood covenant.

They would cut, and this is what they would do in many cases in the Old Testament, even between individuals, like David and Jonathan, you might remember, made a covenant, they cut a covenant. And though the Bible doesn't describe it there as it does here, they cut an animal and put a piece on one side and the other half on the other side, and in the case of David and Jonathan, they walked between the two pieces, thereby signifying a promise that in effect was saying, if I break this covenant, let happen to me what happened to these animals.

So that's what's happening here in Genesis 15, only God is doing this. And guess what? Abraham doesn't have anything to do with it.

[20 : 43] Abraham didn't walk between the pieces. Now generally that would be the thing you would do. the two of you that are making the covenant, the promise with one another, you would walk together between the two, but here God is doing it all by himself.

And so the idea is that God is making a covenant with Abraham, but he's really making it with himself. And so it is a covenant that will never be broken.

No matter what. No matter what Israel does, the people that are the covenant people, regardless of how unfaithful they may become, this covenant will never be broken because it was God making it with himself.

That's very interesting. And it helps us, I think, begin to understand, though Paul's going to give us some other proofs here, how Paul could be so emphatic.

Certainly not. God has not cast off his people. He's not rejected them. He's not thrust them out. Then there's another passage I want you to see, and it is Psalm 89 and verse 31.

[22 : 14] Or verse 30. We could start there. We really could start a number of places, but Psalm 89 and verse 30. Speaking specifically of David's descendants, but they are the covenant people, Israel.

If his sons forsake my law and do not walk in my judgments, if they break my statutes and do not keep my commandments, and they will and did, then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes.

Nevertheless, my loving kindness, and that's the Hebrew word chesed, that's covenant love, grace. It's a reference to this covenant. My loving kindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow my faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break.

Now we know why, because he made it with himself. Nor alter the word that has gone out of my lips, once I have sworn by my holiness, I will not lie to David.

[23 : 29] His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky. All right, so here's the idea.

Even before we get into what Paul's going to tell us here, we start with this understanding that God will never break this covenant with Israel. Never.

Never, ever. What's important for us to understand, and hopefully we now do understand, and we're going to speak of this some more, is that the covenant was never made with every individual Israelite, but only those God has chosen for himself.

The remnant. We're going to get into the remnant as we go along here. All right? All right, so Paul's answer to his own question, has God cast away his people? And emphatic, certainly not.

Or God forbid, if you have a King James. Or may it never be if you have a New American Standard.

Or not to leave out our ESV people? By no means. And if you have an NIV, certainly not.

[24 : 40] Didn't want to leave anybody out. That's what he says. But literally, he means inconceivable that this could happen. Impossible.

Impossible. Now, what proof does Paul offer? Four proofs. We'll see three of them here tonight.

That is, if I hurry.

And the fourth one next time. Next time. Here are the four proofs. The testimony of God's chosen preacher. He begins with God's chosen preacher.

That's Paul. His own personal testimony. The testimony of God's chosen people. His chosen people down through the ages.

The testimony of God's chosen prophets. What the prophets have said. And then fourth, the testimony of God's chosen purpose. And we'll get to that one next time.

[25 : 40] Alright, first the testimony of God's chosen preacher. Verse 1. Again, for I, or the latter part of verse 1. For I also am an Israelite.

Here's Paul's first proof. Now, he doesn't say anything about being a Christian, but that's assumed, is it? Paul could have said, or what he is implying is, I'm a Christian.

I've been saved by the grace of God, and I'm an Israelite. That's a pretty good answer to the question, has God cast off all Israel because of unbelief?

And Paul says, no. Look at me. I'm an Israelite. I'm of the seed of Abraham. I'm of the tribe of Benjamin. That is, I'm a bona fide Jew by birth.

I didn't just come into this faith, you know, later on in life, wasn't converted to it. I was born this way. I am an Israelite through and through, and I'm saved.

[26 : 44] And so, you see, this is Paul's personal testimony that God is a covenant-keeping God. He saved Paul. And so, this is Paul's personal testimony that God has not cast away all his people, Israel, because Paul is living proof.

And not just that, but Paul is strong proof of the grace of God toward the Jews. Strong proof. How so? Well, do you remember anything about Paul's former life prior to his conversion?

He was Saul. Saul of Tarsus, and as Saul of Tarsus, he was a zealous persecutor of Christians. He was standing there, remember, when Stephen was stoned to death.

It doesn't say that Paul or Saul threw any stones, but he was consenting, and he was holding the coats. But he was taking letters, you know, just before his conversion.

He was headed to Damascus to take letters to have Christians arrested, imprisoned, and most likely executed. That was Saul of Tarsus.

[27 : 54] He was a Christ-hating, Christian-hating Jew. Very zealous at it. And so here's the point. It's really very logical.

If Paul could be saved, then any Jew could be saved. I mean, can you imagine having that kind of testimony if you were Paul? You'd say, listen, you'd be sharing the gospel with a fellow Jew, and you'd say, listen, if I can be saved, you can be.

I mean, if I can be saved, anybody can be. He'd say he was the chief of sinners. And so here's the proof. So Paul's conversion is proof that God had not rejected all of Israel.

In fact, the vast majority of Christians at the birth of the church were Jews, weren't they? thousands of them. And they were nearly all Jews until God saved Paul and commissioned Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

But prior to that, they were nearly all of them Jews. All right, so proof number one that God has not cast away all of Israel, God's chosen preacher, his testimony. Paul, listen, now think about it.

[29:09] This is so logical. Paul would have never devoted his life and risked his life to preach the gospel, a gospel from which he himself was excluded.

We never do that. All right, second proof, the testimony of God's chosen people. And not just any one group of people, but people down through the ages, throughout the centuries, throughout the centuries of Israel's long and difficult history.

And it certainly was. a long and difficult history. But down through all those centuries, God has always had his chosen few.

His Jews that have believed, truly believed, God has always had a remnant. He's always reserved a remnant for himself.

And that is the point from Scripture here. And this was true throughout Old Testament history. And this, of course, has been true throughout New Testament history on into our present day.

[30:16] I mean, from Pentecost to March 4, 2012, that's today, the church has always had believing Jews. Now, we don't have any in our church as far as I know.

They're believing Jews all over the world. There are churches that are primarily Jews. Messianic Jews.

Jews that are believers. Born again believers. God has always had his people. And so, verse 2, God has not cast away his people whom he foreknew.

And specifically, speaking of the Jews. All right? This is God's foreknowledge in regard to those of Israel that he chose for himself.

He has always had them. And God's not going to cast them away. Now, the fact that we don't know who they are always does not change the truth.

[31:19] that God is a covenant keeping God and he has not failed in his promise to Israel. And then he provides the following, for instance.

And it's a familiar one. Verse 2, or do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah? How he pleads with God against Israel saying, Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars and I alone am left and they seek my life.

You remember this story, don't you? It's really one of my favorites. For a number of reasons. You know, Elijah, the prophet, and there he is, you know, challenging 400 prophets of Baal and priests of Baal.

And it's a standoff. You know, it's a, I don't know what you would call it. Whose God is real kind of standoff. And so the prophets of Baal, they erect their altar, you know, and they bring out the wood and they put the sacrifice on there.

And the idea is that, and Elijah did the same, constructed his altar and brought out the wood and put the sacrifice on there. And the idea, of course, being kind of a power play whose God is real.

[32:35] And the God who sends down fire and consumes the sacrifice, that's the real God. That's the one that Israel should follow. All right, that's the story. I don't know why Hollywood has not made a movie out of this, though they'd probably lose, absolutely ruin it.

And you know how it goes. You know, the prophets of Baal are over there cutting themselves and crying. And there's Elijah sitting over there saying, well, maybe he's asleep. You know, you just need to, you know, wake him up or something.

And nothing happens. And then, of course, you know, you remember Elijah says, bring out the water. And they pour it all over the sacrifice. They do that again.

And they pour it all over the sacrifice. Well, go ahead and do it a third time. Pour the water all over the sacrifice and runs down, fills up the trench all around. Can you imagine? And then, of course, he prays and God sends the fire, consumes everything, even the altar.

I mean, it's an incredible story. And almost immediately, word gets to Elijah that Jezebel and Ahab are upset with him and they're going to take care of him.

[33:45] Well, you know, because you know he had all the prophets of Baal destroyed and they're going to do the same to him. And what does Elijah do? He goes out and hides. He hides. And to make the story short, of course, there's a lot more to it.

There's poor Elijah, you know, just confronted and destroyed 400 prophets of Baal. Been a part of a mighty exhibition, manifestation of the greatness and sovereignty and power of God.

And now he's hiding out because of one woman. For most of us guys, that makes perfect sense.

But, you know, and Elijah's out there and he's hiding out.

And he's having a pity party. You know, he says, God, I'm the only one left. The only one. Now, God does a lot of things to assure Elijah, of course, feeds him and speaks to him.

That's still small voice. And then he says this. And this is his response. I have 7,000. I've reserved for myself.

[35 : 02] Chosen. They're my people. There's 7,000. You're not the only one. There's 7,000 who have not bowed their knee to Baal. Can you relate to this story in any way?

I'm not talking about the prophets of Baal part of the story. I don't know that any of us could relate to that part of it. Place ourselves there. But I mean this other thing. And, you know, when you think about it, it's pretty compelling in its application to our day.

Have you ever felt like Elijah in our culture? In Elijah's day, you know, the Canaanite religion had infiltrated Israel.

Totally saturated. And you could characterize the Canaanite religion as obsession over two things. Sexual perversion and materialism.

How would you characterize America today? All you have to do is turn the TV on.

[36 : 20] Watch the commercials. You don't even have to watch the programming. You see what America is obsessed over. These two things. And what's worse is these things have infiltrated the church.

This church. Have you ever felt like you were the only one left?

Have you ever felt that way? Like Elijah? Come on. If you haven't, then you better examine yourself. Because if you feel like you're like every other Christian, then there's something wrong.

I can relate to Elijah. I really can. All right. So what is God's response to Elijah? I have reserved for myself 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

And the point is God has always had his people. He's always had his people. He's a covenant keeping God and he's always kept that covenant. God has always had his people.

[37 : 40] Starting with Adam and Eve. Then their son Seth. Then Noah's son Shem. Then Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David and Elijah and Elisha and Isaiah.

You know, and you can just pick out some of these key characters down through the Old Testament. You see this stream of people who are believing, believing Jews, Nehemiah and Ezra and many other characters you could pull out of the Bible that were not indicative of the nation as a whole.

God has always had his people. And God spoke, by the way, to Isaiah and Isaiah chapter six. He said and he said, verse nine, go and tell this people keep on hearing, but do not understand. Keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull and their ears heavy and shut their eyes unless they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and return and be healed.

Then I said, Lord, how long? And he answered until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant and the houses are without a man and land is utterly desolate. The Lord has removed men far away and forsaken places are many are many in the midst of the land.

[38 : 59] But yet, that's pretty bad stuff. All it just makes you get to thinking. Well, they're just all gone. All hopeless, all unbelieving. And yet a tenth will be in it.

And will return and be for consuming as a terebinth tree or as an oak whose stump remains when it is cut down.

And what's that stump? So the holy seed shall be its stump. No matter how dark things have become for Israel down through their history and and is dark now, God has always had his people. God still has his people. And when the Messiah was born, born into an apostate nation. Israel was. God still had his people.

He has Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth, the father and mother of John the Baptist. He had Joseph and Mary and Simeon and Anna. And later, right after his resurrection, 3,000 Jews were saved at Pentecost.

[40 : 11] 5,000 were saved not long after that. It's very likely that within a year or two of the resurrection that 20,000 Jews made up the Christian population just in Jerusalem alone.

See, God is faithful. No, God has not cast away his people. And look at what he says there in verse 5. Even so, then, at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace or according according to the election that is according to grace.

Literally. Eklatane. It's it's election by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works. Most translations stop right there.

And so we're talking about four proofs that God has not cast away Israel, the testimony of God's chosen preacher, the testimony of God's chosen people. And then third, the testimony of God's chosen prophets.

The testimony from them. And we'll get to the fourth proof next time. The testimony of the prophets is simply this. God will get for himself those whom he has chosen.

[41 : 25] God will do that. That's salvation. And God will grant the rest what they have chosen.

Unbelief. And with it, blindness. That's what these prophets are saying. Verse 7. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks, diligently sought for, but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

Is that what we're saying here? And that's what Paul is saying. They're blinded or hardened. And by the way, the word blinded is, also translated hardened, is a word that means to cover with a thick skin.

Or maybe it would be better to understand it, hardened by a callous. They're calloused. Dull. And we're talking not about physical things, but we're talking about the heart.

The heart is dull. It's calloused. It's hardened. It's blinded. And the form here, the voice of the verb is passive, and it means that God did it.

[42 : 47] God did it. They didn't do it to themselves as much as God did it to them. And yet, it is clear from Scripture that they had already chosen for themselves.

And God gave them, simply gave them what they wanted. What they chose. Unbelief. See, don't misunderstand.

God did not make them unbelieving. Please, don't make this mistake. We have many of you in this room who would say, you know, wholeheartedly, I believe in reformed theology.

I believe in sovereign election. But don't ever, ever let this creep into that theology that God makes people unbelieving.

He doesn't do that. God never does that. They are already unbelieving. As we once were.

[43 : 51] Unbelieving. Like Esau, back there in chapter 9. Like Pharaoh, in chapter 9, back in Genesis. And so God doesn't do that.

He doesn't cause that. Someone has put it this way, the reason why some believe the gospel and are saved by it is that God intervenes in their lives to bring them to faith.

And this is done by regeneration, by new birth. But those who are lost are not made to disbelieve by some act of God. They do that by themselves.

And so, to ordain their eternal end, God needs only to withhold the special grace of regeneration.

And why He does that, that's His purpose. I can't explain that. And so God will get for Himself those whom He has chosen.

[44 : 53] He will do that. And God will grant the rest what they have chosen. Unbelief. Unbelief.

And with it, blindness.

Hardness. And then Paul quotes representatives from the whole of the New Testament. It's interesting. In verse 8, the Law and the Prophets.

And in verse 9 and 10, the Psalms. That makes up the Old Testament. The Law, the Prophets, the Psalms. And He has representatives from all three areas.

In verse 8, He quotes from both Deuteronomy and Isaiah. Deuteronomy represents the Law. Isaiah represents the Prophets. And this is what He says.

God has given them a spirit of stupor, slumber, numbness, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear to this very day. Now again, God hardens only those hearts who have hardened themselves to His grace.

[45 : 59] To the Gospel. And they have done that by rejecting His genuine offer of salvation that goes out to all people. And then He quotes the Psalms.

Psalms 9, verse 9, Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. Now what in the world does that mean? Well, it's an analogy.

It's an analogy. You see, a table represents the place where you sit down and eat. And so it represents food that you need. And so it represents sustenance.

That's one side of the analogy. The other side is, the analogy is the Jews considered God's Word their sustenance. And rightfully so.

Of course it is. But because of their unbelief, the very Word that they treasured as their sustenance became their judgment.

[46:57] Their condemnation. That's what He's saying of the unbelieving Jews. And look at the rest of it. Let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see and bow or bend down their back always.

That's another very vivid picture, very vivid image. It's graphic. Graphic of their deplorable spiritual condition that is the true of the Jews today except for the remnant.

It's like a blind man who bends his back. He hunches his back walking, bent over, groping around to find his way.

That's the picture of it. And this is the picture of Israel spiritually today. Cannot see. They have eyes but they can't see. They have ears. They cannot hear.

And the very thing that they treasure, specifically the Torah for the Jews today, has become the very thing that condemns them. Now, that leads to the next proof which we're not going to get into tonight.

[48:10] tonight. And so we'll see that next time. The testimony from God's chosen purpose. And to give you a heads up, why, why did God harden their hearts?

Why did God allow them to be unbelieving? He had a purpose in that. And we'll see that next time.