

The Unserved Jews

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[0:00] Amen. Romans chapter 10 verses 1-4.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might or may be saved.! For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Alright? Alright, there it is. A number of years ago, I'm not sure what year it was, but I was attending the Southern Baptist Convention. And that particular year, among some of the other resolutions, one of the resolutions during the convention that year read something or went something like this. That our efforts to evangelize the world for Jesus would include peoples of all nations, including the Jews.

[1:20] And it created a firestorm. I don't know if you remember that particular year. Now, I doubt very seriously that that resolution would cause any problems with those of you here tonight.

But it did cause some problems in our convention among the moderates and liberals who thought that we ought not to be evangelizing the Jews because they're going to go to heaven.

You know. They're worshiping the true God and so forth. And oddly enough, there was quite a bit of criticism that came from the evangelical community at large.

That we would, as Southern Baptists, make such a bold statement of commitment to share the gospel even with the Jews. And of course, suggesting, or the implication being, that the Jews are lost.

That they need Christ. Well, they do. Don't they? I never did quite understand. I understood, you know, from the doctrinal side, theological side, and from some of the positions held by some, quote, evangelicals.

[2:29] I understood their argument, though their argument was wrong. Very wrong. But we need to understand, I hope you do understand, something fundamental about the Jewish people.

And that is that they're lost. Most of them. They're lost. They're not saved. Now, I'm giving this as an introduction to the text because that is exactly what Paul is saying.

What he says. Very clearly in plain English. The condition of the Jews, as Paul describes them here in verse 1, is that they're lost.

They're not saved. And that is the condition of any person. That is the condition of any person. That is the condition of all who have not yet come to faith, in faith, to trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

That's biblical Christianity 101, isn't it? Very basic. And yet there are many who do not believe that. And the Jews themselves, the unbelieving Jews, do not believe that.

[3:47] And yet this is what Paul is saying. Now, as Paul describes why the Jew is lost, we must realize that people of all nationalities are dying.

And because they're unbelievers, they are dying and going to hell for the very same reason that many Jews are. Same reason.

Rejection of Christ. And so let's look at what Paul says here about the Jews. And really, I think just four verses, we can divide this into two parts with a few sub points to kind of throw in there.

All right? First of all, and this is a very simple, very simple outline. First of all, Paul just states it outright. The Jews are not saved.

That's the first point. The Jews are not saved. All right, look at verse 1 again. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel.

[4:50] By the way, the word prayer means plea. My earnest plea. And the form of the verb means it's on and on.

Continuous. My constant plea to God is for Israel, that is for Israel, is that they may be saved. Now, that's pretty plain, isn't it?

Pretty clear. We don't have to wonder, you know, what all these words necessarily mean. That maybe saved means something else. It is just simply the word for saved.

It means that they're not Christians in the sense of followers of Christ. They are lost without Christ and without hope in the world.

Now, not all Jews, you understand, because Paul is writing and he is a Jew and he is saved. But he's talking about his brethren at large, his people Israel at large, those living right there, right then.

[5:54] When Paul wrote this, they are lost. And that is primarily their condition today, isn't it? Because they have rejected Christ.

They have rejected the only provision for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. They have done that. So they're unsaved even today. Now, I want you to consider just a few things from Scripture that help us understand maybe the condition of the Jews today.

First of all, in a way, unlike any other people on the face of this earth, the innocent blood of Jesus, their Messiah, our Messiah, the Messiah that came as a Jew, his blood is on their hands.

Now, I'm not making that up. That's not some propaganda from Jew haters. Matthew 27, where Pilate had given into the pressures of the Jewish people and had decided to grant their wishes and have Jesus crucified.

Listen to what it says, what the Bible says in verse 24. Matthew 27, 24 says, What a self-condemnation.

[7:36] The blood of Jesus is on their hands. And so as a nation of people, God's chosen people, yes, they had crucified the Lord of glory.

And now, to be sure, the Romans had a big part in it. Not throwing them out, throwing all responsibility out for Rome. The Romans, they were the instrument of the death.

They certainly are not without guilt. Pilate was fooling himself if he thought that just by washing his hands that that would somehow remove all guilt. I'm not saying that.

But it was the Jews who cried, crucify him. Crucify him. And by that act as a nation, their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, invoked upon them the curse of God.

Now, other than their lost condition spiritually, what has been the result of God's judgment upon them? Well, let's just consider that from both sides.

[8:45] That is, as it was prophesied and as that prophecy has been fulfilled. We could spend hours talking about how this prophecy is fulfilled.

Well, let's just listen to what the Bible says. Luke chapter 19, verse 41. And Jesus, again, is speaking. Or here he is speaking.

And in chapter 19, verse 41, he said, But as he drew near, the Bible says, and he saw the city and wept over it. This is the city of Jerusalem. Saying, and this is what he said.

If you had known, even you, especially, in this your day. Speaking to the Jews. The things that make for your peace.

But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an encampment, embankment around you, surround you, and close you in on every side.

[9:42] And level you and your children within you to the ground. And they will not leave in you one stone upon another because you did not know the time of your visitation.

Now, in the immediate sense, the prophecy concerns the eventual coming of Titus, the Roman general. This is after Jesus died, some 70 years after.

And he would besiege the city of Jerusalem. And he would conquer the city of Jerusalem and not leave one stone standing upon another. But beyond that, the prophecy of what Jesus is saying continues on and on and even on into our day.

That prophecy, in that sense, has been fulfilled. And so, that's the condition of the Jewish nation today. Israel today is surrounded by nations that hate them.

Hate them. I mean violently hate them. And you know that, don't you? Nations that war against them on every border of Israel.

[10:49] Except, of course, the Mediterranean Sea. And I guess they could come from that way. But all these nations are warring against them. Who, if they had their way, these nations, why they

would nuke them into oblivion.

In fact, that's real believable, isn't it? In our day. Currently. And why? Why is this happening to them?

Have you ever asked yourself that question? I mean, what is so bad about Israel in the eyes of these other nations that they would want to absolutely destroy them?

Well, there's a lot to that answer. But the overriding answer is that Jesus says because they did not know, they did not recognize their time of visitation.

The coming of Messiah. Instead of embracing the visitor, the Messiah, what did they do? They crucified Him.

[11 : 53] crucified Him. They crucified Him. And brought upon themselves the curse of God. Can you think of any other civilization that has ever, ever been on this earth that has endured what Israel has endured?

Can you think of one? I mean, starting with Pharaoh. Later the Assyrians. Then the Babylonians. Then Nero. And many other persecuting Caesars.

Hitler. Mussolini. Russia. The Palestinians. Iran. And we could probably go on. And by the way, it's not over yet, is it?

In fact, one day, there will be a time that will come. I don't believe we'll be here to see it. And I'm hoping God won't let us watch from heaven.

But I'm talking about the tribulation. And what does the Bible call the tribulation? The Bible calls it the time of Jacob's trouble.

[12 : 58] That's Israel. That's Israel. Alright, so Paul says, with all compassion and love. I mean, it really does mean this. My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

And today, the Jews are not saved. And they are in rebellion against God because they have not accepted the righteousness God offers to them in Christ Jesus.

And they had and still have a God-given religion. I mean, it's the right one. But they needed to be saved.

Paul is saved. And they had religion, but not righteousness. I mean, you can be religious and lost. I mean, there are a whole lot of people like that today.

Very religious. And I would venture to say that the Jews have historically been the most religious people who have ever lived on the face of the earth.

[14 : 09] And they're lost. They're lost. They're lost. They're lost. And you know, this probably describes some 75% of church members in our nation.

They're very religious. Maybe not in a legalistic way as the Jews were and many of them still are. But very religious nonetheless.

And yet lost. Church members. Yeah, church members. Who are lost. And, you know, they are members of a religious club, I guess.

I don't know what they think of it. But they're very religious. But they're lost. All right. But notice something else here very quickly. Israel was lost. Yes. But the implication here is, not only in verse 1, but as we continue from there, that Israel was savable.

They're lost, but savable. See, Paul would not have prayed if their spiritual condition was hopeless. This was a prayer that Paul believed was answerable.

[15 : 24] Or he would not have prayed it. Now, don't get confused and go back to chapter 9. And it sounds like Paul is praying there.

But he's speaking of Israel in the past tense there. And all of the benefits and the inheritance of Israel as a people. And yet, Israel in the past is anathema.

There's no hope with anathema. But now Paul's not focusing on the sovereignty of God and his sovereign plan. Paul's focus now is on the responsibility of man.

And his focus is on Israel in his day. And he is saying, I am constantly praying, pleading, pleading to God for Israel that they would be saved.

That there would be a great revival. A great harvest of souls. Like we talked about this morning in Nenna. And this is what Paul's praying for. So, if this is Paul, then don't you ever stop praying for the lost.

[16 : 33] You can't ever write them off and say, well, they'll never be saved. You don't know that. They're savable. And so God wants us to continue to pray for them. They are savable. And by the way, Israel is on, in that respect, on the same level before God today as our Gentiles.

And so then the Jews should be evangelized as any other people without Christ. Romans 3.23, For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

All right, so first of all then, Paul declares that the Jews are not saved, but they are savable. That's number one. And then second, Paul describes why the Jews are not saved.

Why they are not saved. Why they are lost. And in his description of why the Jews are lost, we can make connections cross over into why many Gentiles are lost as well.

Same thing applies there with Gentiles as it does with Jews. But the focus is, here is the Jew. And Paul gives us two reasons why the Jew is lost.

[17:46] And these two, again, apply to many Gentiles as well. The Jew is lost, number one, because of their misguided religious practices. Their religious practices.

The whole system of religion is misguided. Faulty. Wrong. Going in the wrong direction. Look at verse 2, back here in Romans.

For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They have a zeal. That is a fervor in the spirit for God.

God's righteousness. For God. But not, this zeal is not according to knowledge. That is, it's an incorrect understanding of what the right, who God is and what God expects.

And righteousness. It's all misguided. Folks, listen. A lot of people in this world have a zeal for God, don't they? I mean, a lot of people do.

[19:02] The Muslims have a zeal for God. It's Allah. Personally, I do not believe that it's the same God. Even though Allah is just simply the Arabic for God.

They have a zeal for the God they worship and serve. Jehovah's Witnesses have a zeal for God. Mormons have a zeal for God. Jews have a zeal for God.

This is what Paul said. Even Christians, some who call themselves Christians, have a zeal for God. I'm not saying true believers. Those who would number themselves among Christians and call themselves Christians have a zeal for God.

But a zeal for God is a great thing to have so long as it is directed in the right way. That is, toward the right God and in the right way as prescribed by Scripture.

But a zeal for God is a tragic and dangerous and damning thing if it leads a person down the wrong religious road.

[20:07] And that's what was the case with the Jew. Now, more than most people, Paul knew what he was talking about here. For example, in Acts chapter 26.

Let me just read that to you. Acts 26 and verse 9. Paul says, Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

This I also did in Jerusalem. And many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests. And when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme.

And being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities. While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission.

And it was at midday. See, Paul was zealous. Very zealous. In his religion. In his zeal for God.

[21:16] But it was misguided. And he's admitting that in his personal testimony. And we can look at Philippians chapter 3 and verse 4. Listen to it.

Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh. I more so. Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin.

A Hebrew of Hebrews. Concerning the law. A Pharisee. Concerning zeal. What did he say about his zeal? Persecuting the church.

Persecuting the righteousness which is in the law. Blameless. That is as far as he was concerned. As a Jew. And this is what the Jews believed.

They had a zeal for God. See, prior to his conversion, Paul had a zeal for God. But not according to knowledge. And I'm afraid that that describes a lot of people today.

[22:16] Who have a misguided religious practice. Proverbs 14.12 says, There is a way that seems right to a man.

But the end thereof is the way of death. Alright, now the Jews were and are lost. Not only because of their misguided religious practices.

But also because of their misapplied religious pride. See, there is a proper pride.

Pride in the Lord. And a pride in His Word. But their pride was misapplied. And that pride was basically to establish their own righteousness. Before God. That's what he says in verse 3. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness. Kind of interesting. That right side by side.

[23:16] He says they had a zeal for God. But not according to knowledge. And then he says they're ignorant. They're ignorant of God's righteousness. And seeking to establish their own righteousness.

See, this was their religious pride. Seek their own righteousness. Have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law.

For righteousness to everyone who believes. A misapplied religious pride. You see, the Jews by and large. In Paul's day.

And to some extent still today. Have been involved in a great religious effort. A prideful endeavor. And that has been to build for themselves.

An edifice of righteousness. That they're constructing themselves. And they are doing it in their own strength. But it is something that is built upon.

[24:16] The demands of the law. Their ability to keep the law. This was supreme. And still to the Jews today. And in Paul's day. He was a Pharisee. And the Pharisees had developed.

All of these many myriads of laws. Extra to the Bible. So that they could be keepers of the law. Because they were building for themselves.

An edifice of righteousness. Based upon. Founded upon. Their keeping the law. Which is utterly impossible.

You see. The Jews. The problem is this. They have come. To the wrong mountain. The law was given at Mount Sinai.

Grace. Was given in a sense. At Mount Calvary. And the Jews. Continue to run to Mount Sinai. Where the law was given.

[25:14] Thinking that salvation. Is in the keeping of the law. The law. But righteousness. Is nowhere to be found. At Sinai. At Mount Sinai. Except.

One that is absolutely unattainable to us. Righteousness. Is only available. At Mount Calvary. And it's the righteousness of Christ. And so there is no righteousness.

In the law. And righteousness. Is in the cross of Christ. And so if you're righteous. Your religious pride. Is in building up.

Your own righteousness. By keeping the law. Then you're misguided. You are fooled. The law was given.

To lead us to Christ. And not to save us. Paul said to the Galatians. In Galatians 3.24. The law was our schoolmaster. To bring us unto Christ.

[26:11] That we might be justified. By faith. So. Law was given to show us. That we need to be saved. And it takes us. Literally. Or figuratively.

By the hand. And brings us. To the cross of Christ. And says. Your only hope. Is there. Your only hope. Is a savior. A sinless savior.

The Lord Jesus Christ. You see. What the Jew must learn. Is what Paul is saying. What the unbelieving Gentile. Also must learn. Is this.

And that is. To lay aside. One's own righteousness. And. Admit. Complete. And total. Failure.

Before God. And Jews. So Jews. And all. Religious people. Refuse to do that. But. Listen. Without. Without. That kind.

[27:07] Of submission. To Jesus. You're not only lost. But. Inexcusably. Lost. Thank you.