

God's Gracious Covenant With Israel: The Foundation For Worldwide National Covenanting #5

Romans 11:27-29

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As we have worked our way through Romans 11, we have observed that God (as to His redemptive plan) is not finished with Israel as a Nation. Although Israel as a Nation has been cast off by God out of His Church for her rebellion and spiritual adultery against her Covenant Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord will yet graciously in the future pour forth His Spirit upon her so that she repents of her rejection of Christ and the Gospel, and as a Nation comes to Christ and mourns over Him as an only begotten son (Zechariah 12:10-14). But upon what ground or basis will the infinitely holy God condescend in love and not forget this covenanted Nation of old, but rather yet show her unfathomable mercy and blessing? Will God richly and abundantly save the Nation of Israel because of her own righteousness or goodness, because she is deserving of such blessing, because of her mere race or nationality, because of her being a Nation of antiquity, or because she has fought hard to maintain her own survival? No, no, a thousand times no. The answer to this question will lead us into an examination of our text this Lord's Day. Let us then consider and answer from the inspired Word of God the following question.

I. What is the stated ground and reason given by the Apostle Paul for the future national salvation that shall come to Israel?

A. Very simply, the stated ground and reason why God's salvation shall be bestowed upon an undeserving, rebellious, covenant-breaking Nation (like Israel) is because of God's Covenant with Israel (as we read in Romans 11:27, "For this is **MY COVENANT** unto them, when I shall take

away their sins”). Dear ones, God does not forget His Covenant with the Nation of Israel through the passing of time (even thousands of years). Israel may forget or despise that Covenant with God. Israel may reject the God of that Covenant, and the mercy and love found in that Covenant. Israel may suffer the severe judgment of her Covenant God for her rebellion and covenant-breaking in her being cut off from her covenant blessings and being scattered to the four corners of the earth, but the Lord God, with whom it is impossible to lie (Titus 1:2), will yet in the future graciously save that covenanted Nation through the mercies of the Lord Jesus Christ. The very Christ, concerning whom the Nation of Israel at one time shouted, “Crucify him, crucify him” (Luke 23:21), and likewise cried out with the greatest hatred for the sinless Son of God, “His blood be on us, and on our children” (Matthew 27:25), shall yet pardon Israel for her many sins. This is a love story that makes all human love stories seem like mere childish play. For this is not a love story about Israel’s love for Christ, but Christ’s perfect, redemptive, and enduring love for a covenant-breaking and unworthy Nation. Dear ones, this is the Gospel (i.e. Good News) of Jesus Christ, namely, that Christ came to save sinners, even the chief of sinners. Dear ones, in the salvation of Israel, we see the same grace of Christ that reached down to rescue guilty, undeserving sinners like you and me.

B. Let us briefly consider God’s Covenant with Israel from our text at this time.

1. You may recall that the Apostle Paul had just stated in the previous verse (Romans 11:26) that God would save “ALL Israel”, which is to say that God will save Israel as a Nation and so will bring her back as a Nation into the Church of Christ (which is symbolized by Paul in Romans 11:16-25 as being grafted back into her own olive tree from which she was cast off as broken branches due to her sin and rebellion against her covenant-keeping God). Likewise, we noted in Romans 11:26 that Paul

begins to give confirmation of that truth (that ALL ISRAEL shall be saved) from the Old Testament Scriptures when he writes, “as it is written” (in other words, as it is recorded in the Scripture). The first confirmation is found in Romans 11:26: “And so all Israel shall be saved: **as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.**” As we discovered in the previous sermon, this is actually a combination of two Old Testament texts taken from Isaiah 59:20 and Psalm 14:7.

2. Now Paul continues (in Romans 11:27) with the second confirmation from the Old Testament to prove his point that ALL ISRAEL (or Israel as a Nation) will be saved, which reads, “For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” The first word in the English text is “for”, but the most common translation of that Greek word (καὶ) is “and”. Thus, it is better translated, “**AND** this is my covenant unto them.” Paul has added the “**AND**” here in verse 27 because he now moves on to his second proof from the Old Testament to confirm that ALL ISRAEL shall be saved. He has stated the first proof in verse 26 **AND** now he proceeds to the second proof in verse 27.

3. Again in this second Old Testament proof (like in the first proof in verse 26), Paul combines two Old Testament passages into one proof. The first part of Romans 11:27 (“This is my covenant unto them”) is taken from Isaiah 59:21. Whereas the second part of Romans 11:27 (“when I shall take away their sins”) is taken from Isaiah 27:9. Here in this second Old Testament confirmation, Paul not only gives a second proof that ALL ISRAEL shall be saved, but also gives the basis upon which or the reason why ALL ISRAEL shall be saved: And “this is **MY COVENANT** unto them.” Dear ones, when God shall save the Nation of Israel in the future (and the near future we pray), He shall do so on the basis of the Covenant between God and Abraham and between God and the Nation of Israel (at Mt. Sinai). You see, Paul says in effect by quoting Isaiah 59:21 that God is simply remembering and fulfilling His Covenant that was made with the

Nation of Israel thousands of years ago. The “THEM” unto whom the Covenant is made is referred to throughout Romans 11 in various ways: As GOD’S PEOPLE in verses 1 and 2; As ISRAEL in verses 7 and 25; As BRANCHES in the olive tree that were broken off, but shall be grafted back in to the olive tree of the Church in verses 16-24; As ALL ISRAEL in verse 26; and as JACOB in verse 26. The very Nation of Israel that God blinded and hardened in verses 8-10 for their rebellion and covenant-breaking is the same Nation that God will remember His Covenant unto and the same Nation whose sins He will yet forgive. Dear ones, God will not be setting out upon a new work when He shall take away the sins of Israel as a Nation in the future, but will rather be setting out to complete and fulfill a work already begun thousands of years ago when God called Israel as a Nation to be His covenanted people. Man may forget, but God does not forget. That is the truth I pray the Lord will burn into your conscience today. Man may forget, but God does not forget.

4. Now Paul moves to answer a possible objection in Romans 11:28 that might arise among the Gentiles believers in Rome to whom this inspired letter was sent. Here is the likely objection: But how can God yet show mercy to the Nation of Israel when Israel has rejected and conspired to have Christ crucified, turned their backs upon the Gospel offered to them and persecuted the Apostles and Ministers of Christ who preached the Gospel to them? Is not the fact that Israel as a Nation is the enemy of Christ sufficient proof to demonstrate that Israel will not be saved in the future and that God’s redemptive plan for Israel as a Nation is already finished? To which Paul answers in Romans 11:28: “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” Paul in effect answers the objection by stating that there is a sense in which Israel as a Nation is the enemy of God (at the present time), but there is also a sense in which Israel as a Nation is beloved of God (at the present time).

a. First, how is Israel as a Nation the ENEMY of God (at the present time)? Paul says, “AS CONCERNING THE GOSPEL, they are the enemies of God.” In other words, as concerning their present rejection of the Gospel of Christ that is preached unto them and which they hate, they actually make themselves (collectively) the enemies of God. They oppose God (though unwittingly), and therefore God opposes them in their opposition and hatred of the Gospel of Christ (which is why God has judged and hardened Israel as a Nation and people in Romans 11:7-10 and has cast them off in Romans 11:15). But in God’s most holy and wise plan, this present Divine judgment of Israel as God’s enemy is for “your sakes” Paul states in Romans 11:28, i.e. for the sake of the Gentiles who are being addressed by Paul. In other words, Israel’s opposition to the Gospel of Christ and God’s opposition to Israel for their rejection of the Gospel of Christ has (in God’s redemptive plan) opened the door of salvation to you Gentiles who by God’s grace now receive the Gospel of Christ and are brought into the Church of Jesus Christ (as is stated by Paul earlier in Romans 11:11-12). Thus, according to Paul (even if this is not presently politically correct), Israel as a Nation and as a People in their present unbelief of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (through whom alone there is salvation according to Acts 4:12) are God’s enemy. Israel is **de facto** the enemy of God due to their disbelief in the Gospel of Christ.

b. Now to the second part of Paul’s response to the implied objection which is contrasted with the first part. How is Israel as a Nation BELOVED of God (at the present time)? “BUT AS TOUCHING THE ELECTION, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes” (Romans 11:28). In other words, despite the fact (**de facto**) that Israel as a Nation and People are God’s enemy presently due to their rejection of the Gospel of Christ, nevertheless at the same time, they are loved of God due to God having chosen them (**de jure**) to be His covenant Nation and People (consider Deuteronomy 7:7-10). And in God’s most holy and wise redemptive plan this love for Israel is for the sake of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob and to Moses and the Nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai) and the Covenant God made with them to be His People and Nation. God loves Israel because they are His covenanted People in spite of their being presently His enemies. Just as Israel is in fact (*de facto*) God's enemy due to their rejection of the Gospel of Christ, they are nevertheless by covenant (*de jure*) God's beloved Nation and People whom He will not and cannot forget because by covenant He has established His promise to be Israel's God even when they do not act like God's people due to their covenant-breaking and hatred of the Gospel of Christ.

c. For those who would interpret the ALL ISRAEL that shall be saved (in Romans 11:26) to be an elect remnant of individual Jews who were then and now being brought to Christ through the Gospel, I would submit that we have through the words of Paul the metaphorical "nail in the coffin" as to why that cannot possibly be the case. For Paul here in Romans 11:28 states that the same Israel that is presently God's enemy (*de facto*) is the very same Israel that is presently God's beloved (*de jure*). Now the elect remnant of individual Jews that were coming to Christ in Paul's time (according to Romans 11:5) and are likewise coming to Christ presently cannot be considered God's enemy any longer, for if they have come to Christ they are reconciled to God. Thus, Paul must have in mind in the salvation of ALL ISRAEL those who were in Paul's time and are presently in our time God's enemy because they reject the Gospel of Jesus Christ i.e. the Nation and People of Israel as a whole.

5. Finally in our text as found in Romans 11:29, we come to Paul's conclusive summary to the objection from the Gentiles as to why Israel's rejection of the Gospel of Christ and her presently being God's enemy should mean there is no future redemptive plan for Israel as a Nation. The Apostle Paul states: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

a. Let's start with the word "calling". This refers to their "election" as a Nation to be God's people (as we saw in the previous verse, Romans 11:28). Once God calls into a covenant relationship a Nation to be His People, that covenant will not be terminated by God. Despite the sin, the hatred, the covenant-breaking and rebellion (even to the point of partaking in the sin of Christ's crucifixion) on the part of Israel as a Nation, God will not forget His Covenant with Israel. Remember, man may forget, but God will not forget.

b. What does Paul mean by "the gifts" in Romans 11:29? These are all the blessings associated with the calling of God to be His covenant Nation and People (which are summarized in part by Paul in Romans 9:4). Both the blessings of the Covenant to Israel as a Nation and the calling to be in Covenant with God as a Nation, Paul states in the most clear way are "without repentance" (i.e. cannot be repented of, altered, or changed). In other words, the blessings and calling of Israel as a Nation are irrevocable. And so it is inevitable and absolutely certain according to Paul that ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED. Why? Because God cannot lie and because God always keeps His Word and will always be faithful to His Covenants.

C. Dear ones, the Lord did not go to the palaces of the mightiest Nation of the earth to find for Himself **a royal bride**. Nor did He go to the academies of the greatest Nation of the earth to find for Himself **a wise bride**. Nor did He go to the lenders of the richest Nation of the earth to find for Himself **a wealthy bride**. Nor did He go to the godliest Nation of the earth to find **a holy bride**. No, the Lord stooped ever so low and set out as a suitor to court and to woo to Himself an impoverished, idolatrous, obstinate, and enslaved nation.

1. The time in which the Lord courted Israel was when He came to her as an enslaved people in Egyptian bondage. Having no way (as to human resources) to set herself free from Pharaoh, the Lord

stepped forward as Israel's knight in shining armor in order to deliver her by His mighty hand. In all of the plagues poured out upon Egypt and in the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, and in taking Israel by the hand in order to lead her out of the perils of Egypt and through the Red Sea to safety on the other side, the Son of God humbled Himself to love and to woo to Himself an undeserving Nation that could not save herself.

2. The Lord then brought Israel to Mt. Sinai where He covenanted with her to be His **royal bride**. And Israel entered into Covenant with the Lord. With what Nation had the Son of God ever entered into such a covenant to be her God and Husband and for that Nation to be His bride?

3. However, Israel forgot and disregarded all the love demonstrated toward her in setting her free from her destitution, idolatry, and bondage and in entering into a Covenant of Grace with her. For within 40 days (not 40 years) after her covenant to be the Lord's bride, she was worshipping her God by means of a detestable image of a golden calf.

4. Was the marriage covenant between God and Israel loved and honored by Israel collectively as a Nation and as a moral person? No, Israel went after other lovers, other gods, and followed the religions and corrupt practices of the Nations around her. The Lord, however, continued to call her back to Himself out of her spiritual harlotries by His Prophets and Apostles even after conspiring and consenting together to the murder of her heavenly Husband, Jesus Christ.

5. When we consider the history of Israel as a Nation, we are reminded time and again that God did not choose this people because they were lovable or righteous (i.e. because of some merit in them). He chose them to magnify His undeserved love and mercy (Deuteronomy 9:5-6; 7:7-8).

6. Here is a love story in which the Lord takes a Nation to be His bride who from the very beginning are infatuated with other lovers. But out of His own covenant love for His bride, He will not utterly forsake her. The Lord showers Israel with His salvation, He bestows upon her a land, and gives her good laws to direct her, He appoints her kings (like David) after His own heart to lead her, He mercifully warns her by His prophets that if she continues in her backsliding ways that He will send His judgment upon her. What more could the Lord do to manifest His love for His bride? I'll tell you what more He did to demonstrate His love for His ancient People. He Himself became flesh and dwelt among her— He came unto His own (His own covenanted wife) in the person of the Son of God, but she received Him not (John 1:11). He not only sent His Ministers to convey His love to His unfaithful bride, but he came to her in person. He healed her sick, raised her dead, and offered eternal life to her. But what did she do? She had Him beat, spat upon, mocked and ridiculed, and crucified. In return for His love, He received her hatred and scorn.

7. And still the Lord will manifest His everlasting love for His ancient people by renewing His Covenant with her in the very near future and granting to her a genuine spirit of brokenness and contriteness. Oh, the deep, deep sorrow and grief that will be heard throughout Israel in that glorious day, but oh, the deep, deep love that will well up within her for Christ in that glorious day as she embraces Christ and the Gospel of salvation. Why? Because God does not forget His Covenant. Man may forget, but God does not forget.

D. I will build upon this covenant love and faithfulness to Israel as a Nation in a future sermon in applying that covenant love and faithfulness of Christ to the many Gentiles Nations that will yet covenant as national entities in the future to be God's people (according to passages like Isaiah 19:20-25 and Zechariah 2:11). The covenant love and

faithfulness of God to Israel as a Nation is the picture of God's gracious covenant love and faithfulness to all undeserving sinners as individuals and as Nations. For, dear ones, the love of Christ can never be earned or deserved by us. All we can do is respond in love to Him by our thankful love and our loving obedience to His holy commandments. And even that response of faith, love, and obedience is because God graciously works within us both to will and to do His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). To God be all of the glory! Amen.

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