

**“What it Means to be Reformed”; Session #85, Soli Deo Gloria – To God Alone
Belongs Glory - “The Glory of God Among the Nations”, prepared by Pastor
Paul Rendall for the Adult Sunday School Class on July 31st, 2016.**

1. The Glory of God is seen in the greatness of His purposes in saving the elect Gentiles and the elect Jews in His time and in His way; making them both part of Christ’s Church.

Romans Chapter 11: 29-36 – “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” “For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.” “For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.” “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” “How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” “For who has known the mind of the Lord?” “Or who has become His counselor?” “Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?” “For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever.” “Amen.”

The purposes of God, to show grace to a person, or to a group of people, or even to a nation of people, are not always seen clearly by God’s own people. This is the truth which is being conveyed to us here in Romans chapter 11. But we need to see that God so orders all things after the counsel of His own will that He will show everyone who is willing to be taught, that to Him belongs all the glory for the Great Commission’s fulfillment among the nations.

John Gill says on verse 33 –

“How unsearchable are his judgments!” – Which are not to be understood of his awful judgments on wicked men in particular, nor of the administrations of his providence in general; though these are a great deep, and in many instances are unsearchable, and cannot be counted for in the present state, but will hereafter be made manifest; nor of the commands of God, sometimes called his judgments, which are all plain, and may be easily searched out in his word; but rather of the counsels and purposes of God, and the doctrines of grace relating thereunto; which are the deep things of God, and are only searched out by the Spirit of God, who reveals them to us:

“and his ways past finding out!” – “Not the methods and course of his providence, though his way in this respect is often in the deep, his footsteps are not to be known, discerned, and traced, by finite creatures; but rather the goings forth and steps of his wisdom from everlasting, in his purposes and decrees, council and covenant, which are higher than the ways of men, even as the heavens are higher than the earth; and which are all mercy and truth to his chosen people, and strict justice to others, and not to be found out by any; particularly his ways and methods, and dealings, with both Jews and Gentiles; that he should for so many hundred years leave the Gentiles in blindness and unbelief; and now for as many years his favourite people the Jews in the same, and yet gather in his elect out of them both; these are things out of our reach and comprehension.”

Gill on Romans 11: 36 – “For of him, and through him, and to him are all things”,.... “Not only all things in nature and providence, he being the Maker and efficient cause of things, and the preserver and supporter of them their beings, and to whose glory they are all designed and directed; but all things in grace owe their original to him, as their first cause; they are produced by him, and make for his glory; they all spring from his sovereign will, are brought about by his almighty power, and tend to the glory of his grace; as does everything in election, redemption, and regeneration: particularly the counsels and purposes of God respecting men may be here meant; which all rise out of his own heart, without any motive or inducement to them in the creature; are accomplished by his divine power, notwithstanding all the opposition of men and devils; and all issue in his glory, even such of them as may seem to carry in them severity to some of his creatures: and since this is the case, the following doxology, or ascription of

glory to God, is justly and pertinently made, to whom be glory forever; and which will be given to him by angels and men to all eternity, for the perfection of his being, the counsels of his will, and the works of his hands, both of nature and grace; to which the, apostle annexes his amen, so be it, assenting to it, wishing for it, and believing of it.”

II. Let’s look at how God will promote His own glory and the glory of His dear Son by the fulfillment of His promises and purposes to both Jew and Gentile.

Romans 11: 11-28 – “I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?” “Certainly not!” “But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.” “Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!” “For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.” “For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” “For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.” “And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches.” “But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.” “You will say then, ‘Branches were broke off that I might be grafted in.’” “Well said.” “Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith.” “Do not be haughty, but fear.” “For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.” “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God; on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness.” “Otherwise you also will be cut off.” “And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.” “For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?” “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’” “Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.”

We should most certainly expect, at some point in the future, the conversion of the Jews as an ethnic nation and people. The Old Testament Scriptures mention it in a number of places. What is being spoken of in verses 11-28 is the glory of God’s unsearchable ways in relation to their having been cast off for a time, and their being “grafted back in” to the New Testament Church sometime in the future. The gifts and calling of them are irrevocable. There will be a fulfillment of all the promises of mercy to them according to God’s sovereign timing and purposes of mercy to them as a nation. Let us not be haughty but fear lest we should be wise in our own opinion and not believe that their blindness is temporary, even though it has been long. (Since 70 A.D.) Their blindness is only in part and will remain only until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. The reason for their conversion will be to show the glory of God’s mercy and How unsearchable are His judgments and how unfathomable His ways. And should we not look for this great event, and pray for the conversion of the Jews? I think that we should.

Zechariah 8: 20-23 – “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us continue to go and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of hosts.’” “I myself will go also.” “Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.”

Jonathan Edwards says – “Another thing which makes it exceedingly manifest, that the day of the church’s greatest advancement on earth, which is foretold in Scripture, has never yet come, is, that it is so plainly and expressly revealed, this day shall succeed the last of the four monarchies, even the Roman, in its last state, wherein it is divided into ten kingdoms, and after the destruction of antichrist, signified by the little horn, whose reign is contemporary with the reign of the ten kings. These things are very plain in

the 2d and 7th chapters of Daniel, and also in the Revelation of St. John. And it is also plain by the 11th chapter of Romans. that it shall be after the national conversion of the Jews, which shall be as life from the dead to the Gentiles, and the fullness of both Jews and Gentiles shall be come in, all the nation of the Jews, and all other nations, shall obtain mercy, and there shall be that general ingathering of the harvest of the whole earth, of which all that had been converted before, either of Jews or Gentiles, were but the first fruits. Thus it is meet, that the last kingdom which shall take place on earth, should be the kingdom of God's own Son and heir, whose right it is to rule and reign; and that whatever revolutions and confusions there may be in the world, for a long time, the cause of truth, the righteous cause, shall finally prevail, and God's holy people should at last inherit the earth, and reign on earth; and that the world should continue in tumults and great revolutions, following one another, from age to age, the world being as it were in travail, till truth and holiness are brought forth. It is meet, that all things should be shaken, till that comes which is true and right, and agreeable to the mind of God, which cannot be shaken; and that the wisdom of the Ruler of the world should be manifested in bringing all things ultimately to so good an issue. The world is made for the Son of God; his kingdom is the end of all changes, that come to pass in the state of the world. All are only to prepare the way for this; it is fit, therefore, that the last kingdom on earth should be his. It is wisely and mercifully ordered of God, that it should be so, on this account, as well as many others, viz. That the church of God, under all preceding changes, should have this consideration to encourage her, and maintain her hope, and animate her faith and prayers, from generation to generation, that God has promised, her cause should finally be maintained and prevail in the world."

– Taken from his treatise – *A Humble Attempt to "An Humble Attempt to promote an explicit agreement and visible union of God's people through the world, in extraordinary prayer, for the revival, of religion, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, pursuant to scripture promises and prophecies concerning the last time. Pages 336 and 337*

Charles Simeon says: "The whole Scriptures declare, with one voice, that the Jews shall be converted first, and be God's honoured instruments for the converting of the whole Gentile world. The Prophet Micah says, "The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men [Note: Mic_5:7.]" The dew and the clouds come not at man's call; but go when and where the Lord is pleased to send them: and, unconscious of the ends for which they are sent, they fertilize the ground in God's appointed time, and diffuse life wherever they descend. So are the Jews scattered unwittingly, and unconscious of the ends for which they are sent, over the face of the whole earth, to impart, in due season, all the blessings of life and salvation to a perishing world. And to this effect does the Prophet Isaiah also speak, when of them, in their present scattered state, he says, "They shall declare my glory among the Gentiles; and shall bring all their Brethren, as the Children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the House of the Lord [Note: Isa_66:19-20. with Rom_15:16.]" Whether the persons, here called their brethren, be their brethren of the ten tribes, whose place of residence is not known; or of the Gentiles, who may be called brethren by anticipation; I cannot exactly say: but this is plain; "They shall declare God's glory among the Gentiles." And speaks not the Apostle Paul also to the same purpose? He says, "If the fall of them (the Jews) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead [Note: Rom_11:12; Rom_11:15.]" Yes, it is the admission of the Jews into the Christian Church that will be the means of awakening the attention of the whole Gentile world; who, beholding and admiring the grace of God in them, will, with holy zeal, embrace the Gospel of Christ, and fly to him with unanimity, "as a cloud," and with speed, "as doves to their windows [Note: Isa_60:8. with Zep_3:20 and Jer_33:9.]"

Thus I think it appears, both from the Scriptures in general, and from my text in particular, that the Jews must be converted first, before the great body of the Gentiles be gathered in; and that they are ordained of God to be his honoured instruments for the conversion of the whole world.

As for the notion of some Commentators, that Christ is the Jew, on whose skirt the Gentiles shall lay hold, it really is so foreign to the whole context, that it does not deserve a moment's consideration. The Jews themselves are far nearer to the true interpretation than such expositors as these. The Jews adduce this passage, to prove, that, instead of their ever embracing Christianity, the Christian world are to become Jews; since it is said, that the whole world shall "take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." The Jews, I say, are so far right in this interpretation, that they are the persons designated in the text: only the passage must be understood of Jews who have embraced their Messiah, and not of Jews who continue to reject him.

With this only proviso, the Jews are right: and we Christians should exert ourselves to the utmost, to prepare them for the work they are destined to perform.]

Learn, then, from hence,

1. The great importance of the Jewish cause—

[By the Jewish cause, I mean the endeavours which are now making for the conversion of the Jews. It is a lamentable fact, that the Christian world has never yet, since the time of the Apostles, paid to it the attention it deserves. The situation of the Gentile world has not been overlooked; but that of the Jews has been altogether forgotten, except in one or two instances, where partial exertions have been made for their welfare. But why should they be thus excepted, and be the only people upon earth that are to be cut off from the flow of Christian benevolence? Are not their souls of as much value as the souls of others? Is it a small matter that six or eight millions of souls should be daily and hourly going down into perdition; and be left, in all their successive generations, to “perish for lack of knowledge?” But consider them as “beloved of God;” as no doubt they still are, notwithstanding all that they are suffering at his hands; consider them, I say, as “beloved of God;” and will you think it right that they should be despised by us?

But come more closely to the point: view them as God’s instruments for the conversion of the world; and then say, whether we should not seek to bring them to the knowledge of the truth? Verily, if we have no regard but for the Gentiles, we ought, even for their sakes, to express love to the Jews, and to labour, to the utmost of our power, to fit them for their destined work: yea, the greater our concern for the Gentiles, the more earnest should be our efforts for the Jews. Permit me then, if it be only for the Gentiles’ sake, to urge upon you an attention to the Jews; and henceforth to labour for them, as their ancestors in the apostolic age laboured and endured for you — — — The husbandman, when his corn is ripe, looks out for reapers. Do ye the same now. The Gentile field is ripening apace: the Jews are God’s appointed reapers. Engage them, then, without delay, that the harvest may be gathered throughout all the earth.]

2. The duty of Christians in all ages—

[You have seen the religion which will characterize that blessed period to which we are looking forward. There will be a delight in worshipping and serving God: there will be zealous exertions, too, in all, to stir up one another to a holy emulation in this good work. None will be satisfied with going to heaven alone, or serving God alone. All will be anxious for the good of all: all will be active, too, in honouring their God, and in promoting the interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom. The people of one city will go to another city, to exhort and urge them to an active concurrence in every good work. Methinks the means, which are now used on so contracted a scale that a few only embark in this service of love, will then be adopted on the largest scale; and whole societies, or rather whole cities, shall unite to provoke one another unto love and to good works.

Yet, let me say, I would not have any to imagine that a zeal either for Jews or Gentiles will stand in the place of personal religion. If we commend to any the blessed word of God, or the embracing of our holy religion, let us take care to lead the way, in the study of the one, and in the practice of the other. Let us never say to any, “Come,” without adding at the same time, “I will go also.” Yea, and let us so lead the way, as the Jew will do at the period before referred to: let us so walk before others, that they may see, and be constrained to acknowledge, “that God is with us of a truth.” Let us be living “epistles of Christ, known and read of all men;” so that others may “lay hold of our skirt,” and wish to “go with us,” and have “their portion with us,” in the realms of bliss. Let us “be as lights shining in a dark world;” and “so make our light to shine before men, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.” This is our duty, no less than it will be of those who shall live in the latter day. Our religion must be neither wholly personal, nor wholly official; but a just combination of both: and, whilst we are labouring to the uttermost to “save ourselves,” we must use all diligence to save every other person who can by any means be brought within the sphere of our influence.”]