

SAKLC CONVERSATIONS

Mid-week adult study at St Armands Key Lutheran Church, Sarasota, FL
 “ROMANS, a letter for today”
 Session Plan for Thursday, April 27, 2017

A TIME OF JOINT PRAYER

THE EXCHANGE OF GOD’S PEACE

OBJECTIVES IN THIS SESSION:

1. Understanding the importance of combining zeal with knowledge.
2. To understand that Israel had plenty of opportunity to heed the Gospel of Christ, but for the most part, rejected it.
3. To see that God has not totally rejected His people of Israel.
4. To consider the possibility of apostasy (*definition - an act of refusing to continue to follow, obey, or recognize a religious faith*) for us today.

A CONTEMPORARY READING OF TEXT: ROMANS 10 – THE MESSAGE

TRANSLATION [Copyright 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson]

Israel has been reduced to the Practice of Religion

1-3 Believe me, friends, all I want for Israel is what’s best for Israel: salvation, nothing less. I want it with all my heart and pray to God for it all the time. I readily admit that the Jews are impressively energetic regarding God—but they are doing everything exactly backward. They don’t seem to realize that this comprehensive setting-things-right that is salvation is God’s business, and a most flourishing business it is. Right across the street they set up their own salvation shops and noisily hawk their wares. After all these years of refusing to really deal with God on his terms, insisting instead on making their own deals, they have nothing to show for it.

4-10 The earlier revelation was intended simply to get us ready for the Messiah, who then puts everything right for those who trust him to do it. Moses wrote that anyone who insists on using the law code to live right before God soon discovers it’s not so easy—every detail of life regulated by fine print! But trusting God to shape the right living in us is a different story—no precarious

climb up to heaven to recruit the Messiah, no dangerous descent into hell to rescue the Messiah. So what exactly was Moses saying?

*The word that saves is right here,
as near as the tongue in your mouth,
as close as the heart in your chest.*

It's the word of faith that welcomes God to go to work and set things right for us. This is the core of our preaching. Say the welcoming word to God—"Jesus is my Master"—embracing, body and soul, God's work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That's it. You're not "doing" anything; you're simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That's salvation. With your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: "God has set everything right between him and me!"

¹¹⁻¹³ Scripture reassures us, "No one who trusts God like this—heart and soul—will ever regret it." It's exactly the same no matter what a person's religious background may be: the same God for all of us, acting the same incredibly generous way to everyone who calls out for help. "Everyone who calls, 'Help, God!' gets help."

¹⁴⁻¹⁷ But how can people call for help if they don't know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven't heard of the One who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them? And how is anyone going to tell them, unless someone is sent to do it? That's why Scripture exclaims,

*A sight to take your breath away!
Grand processions of people
telling all the good things of God!*

But not everybody is ready for this, ready to see and hear and act. Isaiah asked what we all ask at one time or another: "Does anyone care, God? Is anyone listening and believing a word of it?" The point is: Before you trust, you have to listen. But unless Christ's Word is preached, there's nothing to listen to.

¹⁸⁻²¹ But haven't there been plenty of opportunities for Israel to listen and understand what's going on? Plenty, I'd say.

*Preachers' voices have gone 'round the world,
Their message to earth's seven seas.*

*So the big question is, Why didn't Israel understand that she had no corner on
this message? Moses had it right when he predicted,*

*When you see God reach out to those
you consider your inferiors—outsiders!—
you'll become insanely jealous.
When you see God reach out to people
you think are religiously stupid,
you'll throw temper tantrums.*

Isaiah dared to speak out these words of God:

*People found and welcomed me
who never so much as looked for me.
And I found and welcomed people
who had never even asked about me.*

Then he capped it with a damning indictment:

*Day after day after day,
I beckoned Israel with open arms,
And got nothing for my trouble
but cold shoulders and icy stares.*

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Facilitator's INTRODUCTORY COMMENT:

In our prior session on Romans 9, Paul focused on the failure of Israel to embrace Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. He used frequent O.T. Scriptural quotations to make his point. When the Apostle spoke of Israel he was not speaking simply of the Roman province of Judea *{who were Paul's contemporaries living in the first century AD}* as the Covenant people, he was writing with the hope of a completely restored Israel – as that nation which once existed in the times of King David and King Solomon. Now, as we continue in our study of Romans 10, Paul continues to address Israel's failure.

Paul starts out by repeating his love towards them. Though, as a nation, they had plenty of zeal, that zeal was not according to knowledge. Thus they rejected the righteousness of God while trying to establish their own righteousness through the Law of Moses. But Paul explains that Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and has brought it to an end.

The righteousness God now offers is based solely upon faith in Christ, not keeping the Law. It does not involve the accomplishment of some great feat, but the confession that Jesus is Lord and believing that God raised Him from the dead. As foretold by Scripture, it is offered to all, both Jew and Gentile through the preaching of the Word.

The problem with Israel is that not all of them received the Gospel message, even when ample opportunity had been provided. Paul concludes that even as Moses had earlier predicted God would provoke jealousy within the Jews by choosing another people. Isaiah had also told the story of a people who did not seek God, yet found Him. Yet, all along, Israel was constantly rebelling against God. See how Paul's thoughts develop by following the accompanying outline and the text of Romans 10:

USING AMPLIFIED BIBLE FOR AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF THE ROMANS 10 TEXT:

(Facilitator's outline of Paul's thought patterns; hereinafter, printed in blue)

I. Israel's refusal of God's Righteousness (Romans 10:1-15)

A. Paul's expression of concern (vss. 1-4)

1. That Israel be saved, for they have zeal but not knowledge (1-2):

Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for Israel is for their salvation. ² For I testify about them that they have a certain enthusiasm for God, but not in accordance with [CORRECT AND VITAL] knowledge [ABOUT HIM AND HIS PURPOSES].

2. Through ignorance, Israel seeks to be saved by the Law, and does not submit to God's righteousness in Christ which brings an end to the Law (3-4):

For not knowing about God's righteousness [WHICH IS BASED ON FAITH], and seeking to establish their own [RIGHTEOUSNESS BASED ON WORKS], they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law [IT LEADS TO HIM AND ITS PURPOSE IS FULFILLED IN HIM], for

[GRANTING] **righteousness to everyone who believes**
[IN HIM AS SAVIOR].

B. Righteousness of the Law vs. Righteousness by Faith in Christ (vss. 5-15)

1. Righteousness of the Law as defined by Moses (5)

For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law [WITH ALL ITS INTRICATE DEMANDS] **shall live by it.**

2. Righteousness by faith as defined by Paul –

a. Involves the mouth and the heart (6-8)

But the righteousness based on faith [WHICH PRODUCES A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM] **says the following: “Do NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, ‘WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?’ that is, to bring Christ down; ⁷ or, ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ that is, to bring Christ up from the dead** [AS IF WE HAD TO BE SAVED BY OUR OWN EFFORTS, DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE].” ⁸ **But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART”— that is, the word** [THE MESSAGE, THE BASIS] **of faith which we preach—**

b. Involves confessing Jesus and believing in His resurrection (9-10)

because if you acknowledge *and* confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord [RECOGNIZING HIS POWER, AUTHORITY, AND MAJESTY AS GOD], **and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.** ¹⁰ **For with the heart a person believes** [IN CHRIST AS SAVIOR] **resulting in his justification** [THAT IS, BEING MADE RIGHTEOUS—BEING FREED OF THE GUILT OF SIN AND MADE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD]; **and with the mouth he acknowledges *and* confesses** [HIS FAITH OPENLY], **resulting in *and* confirming** [HIS] **salvation.**

c. Offered to all who believe and call on Him (11-13)

For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM [WHOEVER ADHERES TO, TRUSTS IN, AND RELIES ON HIM] WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED [IN HIS EXPECTATIONS]." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile; for the same Lord is Lord over all [OF US], and [HE IS] abounding in riches (BLESSINGS) for all who call on Him [IN FAITH AND PRAYER]. ¹³ For "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD [IN PRAYER] WILL BE SAVED."

d. Accomplished through the medium of preaching (14-15)

But how will people call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher (MESSENGER)? ¹⁵ And how will they preach unless they are commissioned *and* sent [FOR THAT PURPOSE]? Just as it is written *and* forever remains written, "How BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

II. Israel's Neglect of the Gospel (Romans 10:16-21)

A. Not All Obeyed The Gospel (16-18)

1. As Isaiah Predicted (16)

But they did not all pay attention to the good news [OF SALVATION]; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"

2. Even though they had ample opportunity (17-18)

So faith *comes* from hearing [WHAT IS TOLD], and what is heard *comes* by the [PREACHING OF THE] message concerning Christ. ¹⁸ But I say, did they not hear? Indeed they have "THEIR VOICE [THAT OF CREATION BEARING GOD'S MESSAGE] HAS GONE OUT TO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE [FARTHEST] ENDS OF THE WORLD."

B. Their Neglect, and the gentiles' reception, was foreseen by the Scriptures (19-21)

1. As spoken by Moses (19)

But I say, did Israel fail to understand [THAT THE GOSPEL WAS TO GO ALSO TO THE GENTILES]? First Moses says, I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT A NATION (GENTILES); WITH A NATION THAT LACKS UNDERSTANDING I WILL MAKE YOU ANGRY."

2. As spoken by Isaiah (20-21)

Then Isaiah is very bold and says, "I HAVE BEEN FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME; I HAVE SHOWN MYSELF TO THOSE WHO DID NOT [CONSCIOUSLY] ASK FOR ME."²¹ But of Israel he says, "ALL DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS [IN COMPASSION] TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE."

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER/DISCUSS:

1. Why was Israel not submitting to the righteousness of God?
2. What should one confess? What should one believe?
3. For whom is righteousness by faith intended?
4. What begins the process which finally enables one to call upon the Lord?
5. How does one come to faith?
6. What is the connection between hearing and believing?
7. What lessons can we learn from Paul regarding our attitude toward the lost? Did Paul pray for people to be saved, even if they would not repent?

FURTHER CONTEMPORARY READING OF TEXT: **ROMANS 11** –
THE MESSAGE TRANSLATION [Copyright 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson]

The Loyal Minority

1-2 Does this mean, then, that God is so fed up with Israel that he'll have nothing more to do with them? Hardly. Remember that I, the one writing these things, am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham out of the tribe of Benjamin. You can't get much more Semitic than that! So we're not talking about repudiation. God has been too long involved with Israel, has too much invested, to simply wash his hands of them.

2-6 Do you remember that time Elijah was agonizing over this same Israel and cried out in prayer?

***God, they murdered your prophets,
They trashed your altars;
I'm the only one left and now they're after me!***

And do you remember God's answer?

***I still have seven thousand who haven't quit,
Seven thousand who are loyal to the finish.***

It's the same today. There's a fiercely loyal minority still—not many, perhaps, but probably more than you think. They're holding on, not because of what they think they're going to get out of it, but because they're convinced of God's grace and purpose in choosing them. If they were only thinking of their own immediate self-interest, they would have left long ago.

7-10 And then what happened? Well, when Israel tried to be right with God on her own, pursuing her own self-interest, she didn't succeed. The chosen ones of God were those who let God pursue his interest in them, and as a result received his stamp of legitimacy. The "self-interest Israel" became thick-skinned toward God. Moses and Isaiah both commented on this:

***Fed up with their quarrelsome, self-centered ways,
God blurred their eyes and dulled their ears,***

***Shut them in on themselves in a hall of mirrors,
and they're there to this day.***

David was upset about the same thing:

***I hope they get sick eating self-serving meals,
break a leg walking their self-serving ways.
I hope they go blind staring in their mirrors,
get ulcers from playing at god.***

Pruning and Grafting Branches

¹¹⁻¹² The next question is, "Are they down for the count? Are they out of this for good?" And the answer is a clear-cut No. Ironically when they walked out, they left the door open and the outsiders walked in. But the next thing you know, the Jews were starting to wonder if perhaps they had walked out on a good thing. Now, if their leaving triggered this worldwide coming of non-Jewish outsiders to God's kingdom, just imagine the effect of their coming back! What a homecoming!

¹³⁻¹⁵ But I don't want to go on about them. It's you, the outsiders, that I'm concerned with now. Because my personal assignment is focused on the so-called outsiders, I make as much of this as I can when I'm among my Israelite kin, the so-called insiders, hoping they'll realize what they're missing and want to get in on what God is doing. If their falling out initiated this worldwide coming together, their recovery is going to set off something even better: mass homecoming! If the first thing the Jews did, even though it was wrong for them, turned out for your good, just think what's going to happen when they get it right!

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ Behind and underneath all this there is a holy, God-planted, God-tended root. If the primary root of the tree is holy, there's bound to be some holy fruit. Some of the tree's branches were pruned and you wild olive shoots were grafted in. Yet the fact that you are now fed by that rich and holy root gives you no cause to crow over the pruned branches. Remember, you aren't feeding the root; the root is feeding you.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ It's certainly possible to say, "Other branches were pruned so that I could be grafted in!" Well and good. But they were pruned because they were

deadwood, no longer connected by belief and commitment to the root. The only reason you're on the tree is because your graft "took" when you believed, and because you're connected to that belief-nurturing root. So don't get cocky and strut your branch. Be humbly mindful of the root that keeps you lithe and green.

²¹⁻²² If God didn't think twice about taking pruning shears to the natural branches, why would he hesitate over you? He wouldn't give it a second thought. Make sure you stay alert to these qualities of gentle kindness and ruthless severity that exist side by side in God—ruthless with the deadwood, gentle with the grafted shoot. But don't presume on this gentleness. The moment you become deadwood, you're out of there.

²³⁻²⁴ And don't get to feeling superior to those pruned branches down on the ground. If they don't persist in remaining deadwood, they could very well get grafted back in. God can do that. He can perform miracle grafts. Why, if he could graft you—branches cut from a tree out in the wild—into an orchard tree, he certainly isn't going to have any trouble grafting branches back into the tree they grew from in the first place. Just be glad you're in the tree, and hope for the best for the others.

A Complete Israel

²⁵⁻²⁹ I want to lay all this out on the table as clearly as I can, friends. This is complicated. It would be easy to misinterpret what's going on and arrogantly assume that you're royalty and they're just rabble, out on their ears for good. But that's not it at all. This hardness on the part of insider Israel toward God is temporary. Its effect is to open things up to all the outsiders so that we end up with a full house. Before it's all over, there will be a complete Israel. As it is written,

***A champion will stride down from the mountain of Zion;
he'll clean house in Jacob.***

***And this is my commitment to my people:
removal of their sins.***

From your point of view as you hear and embrace the good news of the Message, it looks like the Jews are God's enemies. But looked at from the long-range perspective of God's overall purpose, they remain God's oldest friends.

God's gifts and God's call are under full warranty—never canceled, never rescinded.

30-32 There was a time not so long ago when you were on the outs with God. But then the Jews slammed the door on him and things opened up for you. Now they are on the outs. But with the door held wide open for you, they have a way back in. In one way or another, God makes sure that we all experience what it means to be outside so that he can personally open the door and welcome us back in.

33-36 Have you ever come on anything quite like this extravagant generosity of God, this deep, deep wisdom? It's way over our heads. We'll never figure it out.

***Is there anyone around who can explain God?
Anyone smart enough to tell him what to do?
Anyone who has done him such a huge favor
that God has to ask his advice?
Everything comes from him;
Everything happens through him;
Everything ends up in him.
Always glory! Always praise!
Yes. Yes. Yes.***

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Facilitator's further COMMENTS:

Paul concluded the last chapter with a quote from Isaiah describing the nation of Israel as “*a disobedient and contrary people.*” He now begins chapter eleven by providing several examples to show that despite this rebellion God has not totally rejected His people.

What God has done, however, is to harden the hearts of the rebellious Israelites. But the outcome of this hardening led to salvation coming to the Gentiles, which in turn God was using to provoke Israel to jealousy in the hope of winning them back to Him. This is also why Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles, hoping to save some of them through jealousy.

Paul then directs his attention to the Gentile believers, explaining that their obedience allowed them to be “*grafted*” into Israel to replace those removed by their own disobedience. This “*grafting,*” however, is permanent only for as long as they remain faithful. In addition, if any Israelites repent of their unbelief, they, too, can be grafted back in.

As Paul concludes this chapter, he explains that this is how “*all Israel*” will be saved. Through a “*hardening in part*” mercy can now be shown to the Gentiles; and, by showing mercy to the Gentiles, mercy will be available to disobedient Israel. In this way Paul can declare that “*God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all*”, proving that God is no respecter of persons and makes His plan of salvation available to all. Finally, Paul ends the chapter with a doxology praising the wisdom and knowledge of God. See the continuing development of Paul’s thoughts by following the accompanying outline and the text of Romans 11:

USING AMPLIFIED BIBLE FOR AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF THE ROMANS 11 TEXT:

I. ISRAEL IS NOT CAST AWAY; GOD HAS NOT TOTALLY REJECTED

ISRAEL (Romans 11:1-10)

A. Evidence Supporting This (vss. 1-6)

1. Paul himself (vs. 1)

I say then, has God rejected *and* disowned His people? Certainly not! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2. There is a Remnant, just as in the days of Elijah (2-5a)

God has not rejected His [CHOSEN] people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³ “Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT [OF THE PROPHETS], AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE.” ⁴ But what is God’s response to him? “I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.” ⁵ So too then, at the present time there has come to be a remnant [A SMALL BELIEVING MINORITY]

3. A Remnant according to Grace, not works (5b-6)

according to God’s gracious choice. ⁶ But if it is by grace [GOD’S UNMERITED FAVOR], it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace [IT WOULD NOT BE A GIFT BUT A REWARD FOR WORKS].

B. But Many Have Been Hardened (7-10)

1. An “elect “have been saved, the rest were hardened (7)

What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking [THAT IS, GOD'S FAVOR BY OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW], but the elect [THOSE CHOSEN FEW] obtained it, while the rest of them became hardened *and* callously indifferent;

2. This "hardening" foretold by Scriptures (8-10)

Just as it is written [IN SCRIPTURE],

**"GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR,
EYES THAT DO NOT SEE AND EARS THAT DO NOT HEAR,
[A SPIRITUAL APATHY THAT HAS CONTINUED] TO THIS VERY DAY."**

⁹ And David says,

**"LET THEIR TABLE (ABUNDANCE) BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,
A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.**

**¹⁰ "LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED SO THAT THEY DO NOT SEE,
AND MAKE THEIR BACKS BEND [UNDER THEIR BURDEN] FOREVER."**

II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11-32)

A. The Jewish Stumbling and Gentile Connection (11-16)

1. Salvation to the Gentiles an incentive for the Jews to repent (11-12)

So I say, have they stumbled so as to fall [TO SPIRITUAL RUIN]? Certainly not! But by their transgression [THEIR REJECTION OF THE MESSIAH] salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, to make Israel jealous [WHEN THEY REALIZE WHAT THEY HAVE FORFEITED]. ¹² Now if Israel's transgression means riches for the world [AT LARGE] and their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment *and* reinstatement be!

2. This is one reason why Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles (13-16)

But *now* I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ in the hope of somehow making my fellow countrymen jealous [BY STIRRING THEM UP SO THAT THEY WILL SEEK THE TRUTH] and *perhaps* save

some of them. ¹⁵ For if their [PRESENT] rejection [OF SALVATION] is for the reconciliation of the world [TO GOD], what will their acceptance [OF SALVATION] be but [NOTHING LESS THAN] life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the first portion [OF DOUGH OFFERED AS THE FIRST FRUITS] is holy, so is the *whole* batch; and if the root (ABRAHAM, THE PATRIARCHS) is holy, so are the branches (THE ISRAELITES).

B. Words Of Warning Against Gentile Conceit (17-24)

1. Gentiles are but “wild branches” grafted in to the root (17-18)

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you [GENTILES], being like a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among them to share with them the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not boast over the [BROKEN] branches *and* exalt yourself at their expense. If you do boast *and* feel superior, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root that *supports* you.

2. To replace “broken branches”, true, but can just as easily be displaced and replaced (19-24)

You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand by your faith [AS BELIEVERS UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH OF CHRIST’S DEITY]. Do not be conceited, but [RATHER STAND IN GREAT AWE OF GOD AND] fear [HIM]; ²¹ for if God did not spare the natural branches [BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF], He will not spare you either. ²² Then appreciate the gracious kindness and the severity of God: to those who fell [INTO SPIRITUAL RUIN], severity, but to you, God’s *gracious* kindness—if you continue in His kindness [BY FAITH AND OBEDIENCE TO HIM]; otherwise you too will be cut off. ²³ And even they [THE UNBELIEVING JEWS], if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God has the power to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and against nature were grafted into a cultivated olive

tree, how much easier will it be to graft these who are the natural *branches* back into [THE ORIGINAL PARENT STOCK OF] their own olive tree?

C. The Hardening and Blessings of Israel (25-32)

1. Hardening is partial, until the fullness of the Gentiles come in (25)

I do not want you, believers, to be unaware of this mystery [GOD'S PREVIOUSLY HIDDEN PLAN]—so that you will not be wise in your own opinion—that a partial hardening has [TEMPORARILY] happened to Israel [TO LAST] until the full number of the Gentiles has come in;

2. In this way all Israel will be saved (26-27)

and so [AT THAT TIME] all Israel [THAT IS, ALL JEWS WHO HAVE A PERSONAL FAITH IN JESUS AS MESSIAH] will be saved; just as it is written [IN SCRIPTURE], "THE DELIVERER (MESSIAH) WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." ²⁷ "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

3. They may be enemies of the Gospel, but they are beloved by God (28)

From the standpoint of the gospel, the Jews [AT PRESENT] are enemies [OF GOD] for your sake [WHICH IS FOR YOUR BENEFIT], but from the standpoint of God's choice [OF THE JEWS AS HIS PEOPLE], they are still loved by Him for the sake of the fathers.

4. And they may obtain mercy just as the Gentiles did (29-32)

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable [FOR HE DOES NOT WITHDRAW WHAT HE HAS GIVEN, NOR DOES HE CHANGE HIS MIND ABOUT THOSE TO WHOM HE GIVES HIS GRACE OR TO WHOM HE SENDS HIS CALL]. ³⁰ Just as you once were disobedient *and* failed to listen to God, but have now obtained mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient so that they too may one day receive mercy because of the mercy shown to you. ³² For

God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all [JEW AND GENTILE ALIKE].

III. PAUL'S HYMN OF PRAISE TO GOD (33-36)

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments *and* decisions and how unfathomable *and* untraceable are His ways! ³⁴ **For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO HAS BEEN HIS COUNSELOR?** ³⁵ **Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT WOULD BE PAID BACK TO HIM?** ³⁶ **For from Him** [ALL THINGS ORIGINATE] **and through Him** [ALL THINGS LIVE AND EXIST] **and to Him are all things** [DIRECTED]. **To Him be glory *and* honor forever! Amen.**

FURTHER QUESTIONS TO PONDER/DISCUSS:

1. In your estimation, what are the main points of this chapter?
2. In the story of the wild olive tree what characteristics of God are illustrated?
3. On what condition are people grafted in or cut off?
4. Why was salvation allowed to come to the Gentiles?
5. What does vs. 33 prove regarding human inability to devise a plan for our own salvation? What should we learn about following human doctrines about salvation? Can you see how Martin Luther might have been influenced by this passage?