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Sermon Notes

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God Gave Israel Its Spiritual Blindness

Romans 11:7-10

Introduction

Exodus 3:5-6 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Take off your shoes, for this ground is holy!

This passage is a most solemn one, very difficult for the human mind to comprehend

Paul ascribes some things to God in this passage that the human mind cannot comprehend, would never have thought to ascribe to God

Here Paul claims that the shocking failure of the Jews to see Jesus Christ as their Messiah is due to the direct actions of God

Context:

Key Question of Romans 9-11: Why is Israel rejecting their own Messiah, despite all the obvious evidence that Jesus is the Christ?

First answer: Romans 9:6 Divine election

Second answer: Romans 9:30-33 Israel pursued righteousness unrighteously

Salvation is a simple gift of God through faith in Christ

It is available to anyone, Jew or Gentile who trusts in Christ, who calls on the name of the Lord

Romans 11: Paul's final answer to this immense problem

- 1) God Has Not Rejected ALL of Israel: Paul is a Jewish Believer
- 2) God Has Reserved a Remnant, as He Always Has
- 3) God Has Hardened the Rest of Israel, as He Said He Would

- 4) Israel's Hardening is part of God's Eternal Plan... for Two Purpose
- 5) First, that the Gentiles Might Be Saved
- 6) Second, that the Jews Might Be Humbled
- 7) Ultimately, "All Israel will be saved" = the nation of Israel and the Elect of Israel will be the same at the end

I. Israel's Stupor and Blindness

A. Paul's Call by God

Acts 9:15-16 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

B. Paul's Evangelistic History with Israel

- Damascus (Acts 9): Jews in Damascus conspired to kill him (Acts 9:20-25), so Paul had to escape the city by being lowered over the city wall in a basket
- Jerusalem: The Grecian Jews tried to kill him after he debated with them (Acts 9:28-30)
- Cyprus: Elymus the Jewish Sorcerer bitterly opposed him (Acts 13:6-11)
- Pisidian Antioch: Jews, filled with jealousy, talked abusively against the gospel and had Paul expelled from their city (Acts 13:45-51)
- Iconium: some Jews believed, but the rest stirred up the Gentiles and plotted to have Paul stoned (Acts 14:2-5)
- Lystra: some Jews came from Iconium and won the crowd over; they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, leaving him for dead (Acts 14:19)
- Thessalonica: Jews there formed a mob and stirred up a riot in the city, trying to kill Paul (Acts 17:5)
- Berea: a large number of Jews believed, because they were more noble-minded than the others, and searched the Scriptures to see if these things were true about Jesus; BUT Jews from Thessalonica came down to Berea and stirred up a riot against Paul, so he fled for his life (Acts 17:13)
- Corinth: Jews opposed Paul and became abusive; however, God thwarted their plan to attack Paul, and allowed Paul to work there for a year and a half (Acts 18:6)

- Ephesus: Paul tried to reason with them in the synagogue, but they became obstinate; so Paul left them and rented the lecture hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9)
- Greece: the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to set sail for Syria, so he had to travel overland (Acts 20:3)
- Jerusalem: Some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul in the temple and assumed that Paul had brought a Gentile in the Temple; they started a riot and tried to kill Paul (Acts 21:27-31)
- Jerusalem: Tried before the Sanhedrin, the Jews called for Paul's death, and some tried to tear Paul apart physically (Acts 23:10)
- Jerusalem: Some Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink anything until they had murdered Paul (Acts 23:12)
- Caesarea: The Jews presented their legal attack against Paul by a lawyer named Tertullus and sought the Roman governor's decision to put Paul to death (Acts 24:5-9)
- Rome: Paul ends up under house arrest in Rome and presents the Gospel to Jews living in Rome; some believe, others oppose (Acts 28:25)

Paul's summation of his ministry experience with the Jews:

Romans 11:7 What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened

C. So, Too, At the Present Time

Romans 11:5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.

1. Today the same phenomena is true
2. Some Jews hear the gospel of Christ and believe
 - a. Messianic Jews
 - b. "Jews for Jesus"
 - c. Estimates of Jewish Christians in the United States: over 100,000
3. BUT Most Jews reject the gospel
 - a. Bitter about the persecutions of false Christians
 - b. Seeing no difference between true Christians and the German people responsible for the holocaust in WWII

- c. Remembering the history of Anti-Semitism: the crusades, the Inquisition, the pogroms in Russia, Martin Luther's virulent statements against the Jews, Nazi Germany: they lump it all together and reject Christ
- d. Uproar around the time of Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*

Abraham Foxman, President of the Jewish Anti-Defamation League, was vocal about the possibility that Gibson's film would produce Anti-Semitic attacks and danger for Jews all over the world

He said, "For almost 2,000 years in Western civilization, four words legitimized, rationalized, and fueled anti-Semitism: 'The Jews killed Christ.' "

This history of Gentile Anti-semites connecting Jews with the death of Jesus, while forgetting that Gentile sin is equally responsible for the death of Christ, is an ugly one indeed... and it has left a bitter taste in the mouth of many modern Jews

4. Most Jews today are secular

Many Jews today (some say at least half of all living Jews) identify themselves as Jewish but prefer to remain "secular." They identify with no particular Jewish movement, and have no understanding or affiliation with any Jewish Biblical roots. The concept of Messiah as expressed in the Hebrew Scriptures or Judaism's "13 Principles of Faith" is foreign to most Jews today.

San Jose Mercury News March 22,1997 p. 1 The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada formally declared that the 80% of US Jews who are Reform or Conservative "are not Jewish".

Summary: "At the present time": the situation has not changed at all from Paul's day—some Jews have come to trust in Jesus of Nazareth as their Savior, their Messiah, their God; BUT the overwhelming majority of the Jews reject Christ, and many reject active participation in even Old Covenant lifestyle

D. Deepest Issue: The Old Testament Does Not Speak Christ to Them

1. They do not see Christ in Isaiah 53

Isaiah 53:4-6 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2. "Jews for Judiasm" web site said that the best interpretation of this passage is that it refers to the Jewish nation as a whole, in all their suffering and their dispersion!!!

3. Incredible! In this way they present themselves as the innocent, sinless sin-bearers for the whole world! The direct opposite of what God intends and is saying to them

Isaiah 53:8 for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

4. They do not see Christ in Daniel 7

This is the awesome “Son of Man” vision, and I believe this is the passage Jesus thought of when He chose the title “Son of Man” to refer to Himself 55 times in the gospels

This was the passage he cited about Himself when on trial before the High Priest

Daniel 7:13-14 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

I was witnessing to a Jewish woman as we flew back from China... she had no idea about Daniel 7, had never read it, had no idea who the “Son of Man” was. She talked at length about her Rabbi in Brooklyn, and I asked her to ask him who the Son of Man was in Daniel 7. She said she would!

5. Before Christ, the Jewish Rabbinic writings saw Messiah in these passages

See <http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ422.HTM>

Alfred Edersheim (1825-1889), a convert to Christianity from Judaism, in his *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (2 vols., 1883), cited 456 passages in the Old Testament which Jewish commentators had interpreted as messianic (vol. II, pp. 710-743).

The commentaries in the Talmud, written before the onset of Christianity, clearly discuss the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 and puzzle over how these would be fulfilled with the glorious setting up of the Kingdom of the Messiah.

The Jews were almost unanimous in agreeing that the “Son of Man” passage in Daniel 7 is messianic. The Messiah was called “man of the clouds,” a title which is espoused by the *Talmud*. Abravanel said: "The expositors explain these words, 'like a son of man,' as referring to the King Messiah."

The second century Jewish rabbi Aqiba, in the *Babylonian Talmud* (38b) said the thrones place in Daniel 7:9 were one for God and one for the Son of David, the Messiah. Another Jewish rabbi at the time said “How can you give a throne to the Messiah equal to that of God? That’s blasphemy!” But that is what Rabbi Aqiba taught about Daniel 7!

After the Church used these prophecies to prove the claims of Christ, the Jews took the position that the prophecies did not refer to the Messiah, but to Israel or some other person

Abraham ibn Ezra (Spain, 1092-1167) was one of the greatest Jewish scholars. He considered Gen 49:10 messianic, and also Zech 13, but he considered the "son of man" in Dan 7:13 to be Israel.

Isaac Abravanel (1437-1508; originally from Spain) wrote more about the Messiah than any other Jew before him. He followed the *Talmud* and the *Midrash* in his messianic interpretations. The following verses are messianic: Gen 49:10, Is 11:1-5, Is 61, Micah 5:2, Zech 9:9, chs. 12-13, Malachi 3:1. Is 9:6 applied to Hezekiah. Is 53 referred to the nation of Israel, as did the "son of man" of Daniel 7:13.

However, once Christians started using these passages, the hearts of the Jews were closed to their truth

6. Jesus saw this phenomena during His ministry

John 5:39-40 *You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*

7. Paul says a "veil" is over their hearts whenever Moses is read

2 Corinthians 3:14-16 *But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

8. The question is: WHY??? Paul's answer is DEEP and SHOCKING to many people

II. Israel's Stupor and Blindness Caused by God

Romans 11:7-8 *What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, ⁸ as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day."*

A. Hardening Mentioned in Romans 9

1. Paul is consistent

2. In Romans 9, every human being (including among Jews) gets one of two things from God: either they are elect by grace or they are hardened

Romans 9:18 *Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.*

3. SAME HERE in verse 7

Romans 11:7 What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened

4. Paul says it again in verse 25

Romans 11:25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

B. “God Gave Them”: The Key Concept

1. The difficult part to accept: This hardening comes ultimately from God Himself
2. Yes, Israel had hard hearts and blind eyes and deaf ears through their own unbelief and sin

Matthew 13:15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

3. Yes, Satan is the “god of this age” who blinds the eyes of unbelievers so they cannot see Christ

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

4. BUT Paul here ascribes it ultimately to God Himself:

a. Connection between verse 7 and 8

i) Verse 7 ends, “The rest were hardened”

ii) Verse 8 begins, “As it is written...”

iii) So verse 8’s quotation explains the statement “The rest were hardened”

iv) NOTE: verse 8’s “quotation” is not actually a direct quotation of Moses, but Paul interprets it properly and intensifies it to make the direct point that Israel’s hard hearts, blind eyes and deaf ears were ultimately given by God Himself

v) Paul mixes elements from Deuteronomy 29:3-4 and Isaiah 29:10

Deuteronomy 29:3-4 With your own eyes you saw those great trials, those miraculous signs and great wonders. ⁴ But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear.

Moses said the Jews had seen all those great signs and wonders in the Exodus, but still they did not understand God or believe in Him. That is directly relevant to the Jews' rejection of Christ who performed even greater miracles

Moses said it passively: God has NOT given you a mind to understand; He has NOT given you eyes that see; He has NOT given you ears that hear.

Paul turned it around and made it active: GOD gave them eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear... so Paul is stressing it, as we'll describe in a moment

The second quote has to do with a "spirit of stupor"

Isaiah 29:10 The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep

There the prophet Isaiah said Israel was as if they were in a drunken stupor, unable to hear the words of the prophets

The quotation of Deuteronomy and Isaiah are combined by Paul to explain the statement "The rest were hardened"

Paul's main point: IT IS GOD WHO DOES THIS... God is in control here, God is sovereign over Israel's state... both the elect remnant and the hardened people

b. Clear statement

vs. 8 "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day."

GOD GAVE THEM

- 1) a spirit of stupor: it's as though they were drunk, like in Isaiah's time... their minds unresponsive to the clear logic and proof of the gospel
- 2) eyes so they could not see: they looked right at the miracles of Christ and said "We want to see a miracle from you"
- 3) ears so that could not hear: they heard Him say plainly that He was the Messiah, and they asked Him "Tell us plainly if you are the Messiah"

Paul's point: GOD GAVE THEM THIS HARDNESS

Therefore, it is not that they were hardened because of unbelief, but that the hardening PRODUCED the unbelief

5. Similar statement in John 12

John 12:37-40 Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. ³⁸ This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the

Lord been revealed?" ³⁹ For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: ⁴⁰ "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn-- and I would heal them."

HE has blinded their eyes... **HE** has deadened their hearts... who can John mean but God Himself? Especially since Paul openly states that God does it here in Romans 11:8

C. Paul's Answer to the Grief of Jewish Rebellion: God's Mysterious Sovereign Purpose

1. The very fact that Paul is about to give a PURPOSE to all this hardness and blindness shows that it must be God who does it

^{ESV} Romans 11:11 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.

Paul gives THREE purpose statements in verse 11...

And there are many others in Romans 11:11-32

***Romans 11:19-20** Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true.*

***Romans 11:25** Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

***Romans 11:30-32** Just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. ³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.*

Purpose after purpose after purpose!!! God has planned all this out for His own glory and the eternal joy of a countless multitude from both Jew and Gentile peoples!

NOW: These purpose statements make it OBVIOUS that the hardening Paul is speaking about is from GOD... Satan has no good purpose in hardening hearts, in blinding eyes and deafening ears; the Jews themselves had no such good purposes in hardening hearts and blinding eyes and deafening ears

So, God has a high and lofty purpose in all of this

2. Therefore, God is in control, even when the vast majority of Israelites are rejecting Christ and being eternally condemned as a result

3. If it were opposite, then Paul's message would ultimately be hopeless... Israel is rejecting Christ and there is nothing God can or will do about it
4. Instead, Paul is saying, "Even in the agonizing midst of the national rebellion of Israel against the Gospel, God is still on His throne... in some mysterious way He is working out a glorious plan
5. It is this vast mystery that causes Paul to conclude Romans 9-11 the way he does

Romans 11:33-34 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

Paul's unfathomable doctrine of election and reprobation, of God's total sovereignty over both, leaves us with a soaring vision of an absolutely powerful God who rules on His throne and whose plans cannot be thwarted... it also leaves us with some mysteries we will NEVER be able to solve fully

III. Israel's Stupor and Blindness Caused by God's Blessings

A. God's Table of Blessings for Israel

1. Paul quotes one of David's many "curse" Psalms
 - a. "David and His Enemies" a major theme in the Psalms
 - b. "Curse" Psalms are generally not personal... David himself was very gracious to his enemies, again and again
 - c. These Psalms represent God's stance to those who will never receive His grace... it is a plea to God to act on the wicked who reject His grace
 - d. This Psalm is 69, which all the Jews recognized as containing Messianic prophecies: "Zeal for your house has consumed me" and

Psalm 69:21 They also gave me gall for my food And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

2. The "Table" here represents God's blessings to Israel
 - a. Physical blessings: a land flowing with milk and honey, served on a laden table of blessings for the Jews

Psalm 23:5 -6 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

- b. Even more... Spiritual blessings: the “table” represents Israel’s rich spiritual heritage—the sacrificial system, with all its symbolism

Numbers 4:7 And over the table of the bread of the Presence they shall spread a cloth of blue and put on it the plates, the dishes for incense, the bowls, and the flagons for the drink offering; the regular show bread also shall be on it.

Malachi 1:7, 12 [these passages call the animal sacrificial system of the temple “The Lord’s Table”]

The “Table of the Lord” in the Old Covenant was the sacrificial system, their temple worship that was meant to be a rich source of blessing to Israel

B. The Table Becomes a Snare and Trap

Romans 11:9 And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them.

1. The Israelites trusted in their blessings and grew fat and hardened against God
 - a. They trusted in the Table of the Lord and turned away from the Lord of the Table... they trusted in the Temple, and thought God would never abandon their place of holy worship

Jeremiah 7:4 Do not trust in deceptive words and say, "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!"

- i) When the Lord came and fulfilled the temple sacrificial system, they should have let it go
- ii) Instead they clung to the Old Covenant table of the Lord, and refused the Master of the Feast, Jesus Christ

Instead of embracing the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world, they clung to the Temple itself and to the sacrificial system, and angrily stoned Christ’s messenger Stephen, who predicted that the time would come when Israel would no longer need the animal sacrifices or the Temple itself... Christ’s atonement at the cross had made that table of the Lord obsolete

Acts 6:13-14 *hey produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. ¹⁴ For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."*

- b. They trusted also in their physical blessings and turned entirely to other gods

- i) When Israel was led by God out of Egypt and through the desert, they knew there was no other god but the true God
 - ii) But when they entered the Promised Land and conquered all their enemies, they settled into a life of comfort and ease
 - iii) Then, they quickly forgot God and in their ease and comfort and affluence they turned away from God and experimented with exotic gods the way food connoisseurs experiment with exotic dishes and wine tasters with exotic mixtures of wine: they tried new gods, and new religions... and they used the material blessings of god to worship those new gods
2. They were arrogant and forgot God who gave them their blessings
 3. God warned Israel twice about the dangers of comfort and ease in the promised land
 - a. First, Deuteronomy 8

Deuteronomy 8:7-19 the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land-- a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; ⁸ a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. ¹⁰ When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹ Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹² Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁵ He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. ¹⁶ He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. ¹⁷ You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." ¹⁸ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. ¹⁹ If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.

Israel's table became a snare to them when they stopped heeding God's warning about prosperity and ease... they forgot God when their table was laden with His rich blessings

- b. Second the Song of Moses

The “Song of Moses” predicted Israel’s rebellion:

Deuteronomy 32:12-15 LORD alone guided him, no foreign god was with him. ¹³ He made him ride on the high places of the land, and he ate the produce of the field, and he suckled him with honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. ¹⁴ Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats, with the very finest of the wheat- and you drank foaming wine made from the blood of the grape. ¹⁵ "But Jeshurun [Israel] grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek; then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.

c. The prophets warned them again and again of their ease and their idols

Amos 6:1-7 Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come! ... You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. ⁵ You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. ⁶ You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. ⁷ Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

4. Even worse, they did not realize the blessings of the Lord’s table were meant to bring them to Christ as the ultimate fulfillment...

Romans 2:4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

C. God Hardened Israel by the Blessings He Gave Them

1. The Jews were given overwhelming spiritual and material advantages
2. But by choosing not to transform their hearts, God hardened the Jews by means of the very blessings He had lavished on them
3. Their spiritual blessings made them nationalistic and prideful, and they refused to consider that Christ had come for their sins
4. Their material blessings made them fat and lazy and complacent and willing to experiment with false gods... and made them forget the true God

D. David’s Curse: Stumbling, Trapped, Blind, and Bent

Romans 11:9-10 "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. ¹⁰ May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."

1. The curse of Psalm 69 is dire and devastating

2. Israel is cursed with stumbling, with being trapped, with being blind, and with backs bent forever
3. Paul's point is that it comes from the unsearchable, mysterious plan of a sovereign God!
4. Next time, God willing, we will try to understand God's purpose in hardening the Jews against Christ

IV. Application

A. Accept the "Things Revealed": God's Sovereign Plan

1. John Piper on American pragmatism and arrogance
2. God has revealed His sovereignty over human salvation
3. We must embrace it and delight in it... even if we cannot fathom all the details

B. Be Humbled by God's Sovereign Plan

1. God's ultimate purpose is to save both Jews and Gentiles in such a way that they cannot possibly boast in anything of themselves
2. The better we understand God's sovereignty in salvation, the more humble we should be and will be
3. Know that, if you are a Christian, it is only by God's sovereign grace... give Him all the glory for it!!
4. Also, be humbled in that you cannot fathom what God is doing with the Jews... His plan is too deep!

C. Be Secure in God's Sovereign Plan

D. Be Warned: Do Not Let Your Table Become a Stumbling Block to You

1. America is in the very same position as Israel materially and spiritually
2. We need to heed the warning of Deuteronomy 8: Beware lest, when you are enriched by all the blessings of this good land, your heart will become dull and hard towards God... you will become arrogant and spiritually dull... full of food and entertainment and pleasure and comfort and ease, and making plans for more and more of the same... **BUT CHRIST YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN**
3. Romans 11:11-28 is a warning to Gentile believers: **DO NOT BECOME ARROGANT TOWARD GOD OR TOWARD THE JEWS...**

4. We American Christians need to be serious about repentance