

**Romans (67)**  
**The fall of “Israel”**

In Romans 9, 10, and 11 the apostle Paul was explaining why it was that the Jewish people had for the most part refused to believe on Jesus of Nazareth as their promised Messiah. But whereas the Jews had failed to believe on Jesus, the Gentile world had embraced Him as Lord. Paul explained that this was God’s plan in history. He repeatedly showed that the Old Testament prophets foretold exactly what has unfolded. God had purposed to save only a remnant of Jews and He had purposed to save a multitude of Gentiles from all nations. In the passage before us today, we read of further Old Testament prophecies that confirm Paul’s teaching. Let us read Romans 10:14-21.

<sup>14</sup>How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?  
<sup>15</sup>And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” <sup>16</sup>But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” <sup>17</sup>So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

<sup>18</sup>But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for

“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,  
and their words to the ends of the world.”

<sup>19</sup>But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says,

“I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation;  
with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”

<sup>20</sup>Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,

“I have been found by those who did not seek Me;  
I have shown myself to those who did not ask for Me.”

<sup>21</sup>But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

On the last two Sundays we examined the meaning and implications of Romans 10:16, “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’” Paul quoted Isaiah 53:1, which is from the Fourth Servant Song of Isaiah. God had foretold through Isaiah that the Jews would fail to believe the report about the Suffering Servant, whom God would send to save His people from their sins. Paul draws the conclusion in verse 17, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

Let us consider the precise meaning of this verse: “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” The first word, “So”, links the statement with what went before. Verse 17 draws an inferential conclusion from verse 16. There Paul stated, “But they (that is, the majority of Jews) have not all obeyed the gospel.” Paul draws the conclusion, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” What Paul is implying is that faith does not result from one’s ethnic identity, that is, being Jewish, but rather faith is produced from “hearing” the message regarding “the Word of Christ.” And so, Paul is further arguing that God has not been untrue to Israel or unable to accomplish

His purposes, but rather, God has determined that the faith that brings salvation is produced through hearing the Word of Christ, not due to one's ethnic identity.

Paul declares that faith comes from hearing. This is a reassertion of what we read in verse 14: "And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?" Hearing the Word of God is essential. Hearing the Word of God is the means that God uses in saving His people from their sins. God doesn't save people through a godly example or one's personal testimony. One's godly example or personal testimony may give weight to the message we proclaim, but understand this: it is the message of the Gospel that must be believed that results in salvation.

The one exception to this is what Peter set before Christian wives in 1 Peter 3. There we read that the Lord may work salvation in her husband apart from a word spoken directly by the wife.

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. (1 Pet. 3:1f)

Some Christian wives so berate their husbands through their many words that their influence upon their unsaved husbands is negative rather than positive. A man does not easily respond to his wife's verbal correction. He should and may respond to her, but when she confronts him directly and frequently, it grows old quickly for him and she loses her influence with him. It is one thing for a man to submit to the Lord; but it is quite another matter for a man to surrender his dignity as a man and submit to domineering wife. In such a case he does not respect himself and, if the truth were known, she does not respect him highly either. Of course balance is in order on these matters. A wife has the responsibility to express her concern and perhaps a word of exhortation to her husband when she sees him overtaken in a fault, but it must be done with wisdom and relative rarity, if she desires to have a continual and positive influence on her husband for his good. And so, when the husband sees the "respectful and pure conduct" of his wife, he will tend to be influenced more by her than by the wife who has many words for her husband.

But normally it is through the means of hearing the Word preached that results in faith. Now, when Paul wrote, "so faith comes through hearing", he was focusing on the content of the message being heard. This message is about Jesus Christ—"the word of Christ" (v. 17)<sup>1</sup>. Remember that verse 16 was a quotation from Isaiah 53 in which we have the prophecy of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The message that is to be proclaimed and believed is the message of Jesus Christ who was crucified to atone for sinners, who was raised from the dead and entered into His glorious reign.

The saving message cannot be confined to a general statement about the goodness of God and his salvific purposes. It centers on Jesus the Messiah and his saving work on the cross. The reference to the "word about Christ" provides a hint as to why verse 17 succeeds verse 16 rather than following verse 15 immediately, for verse 16 appeals to Isaiah 53:1. The message about Christ centers on his death and resurrection, which are communicated in Isaiah 53. The in-breaking eschatological salvation that is proclaimed by God's messengers (Rom. 10:15; Isa. 52:7) focuses on God's Son, who has inaugurated the age to come by virtue of his death and resurrection. Thus the saving proclamation of Jesus as Lord, who died for our sins and was raised from the dead (cf. Rom. 4:25; 10:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).<sup>2</sup>

Paul wrote in another place of the centrality of his preaching the cross of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> The expression, "the word of Christ" should be understood as an objective genitive--it is a word about Christ, rather than a subjective genitive--a word from Christ or by Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker Academic, 1998), p. 567.

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For ***I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*** <sup>3</sup>And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup>and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup>that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:1-5)

Of course God is sovereign in the dispensing of His salvation. He does so by the Holy Spirit who illuminates the mind of the sinner to understand the message, to see its relevance, to understand it as the only remedy for his sin, which the Holy Spirit has convinced him will damn his soul in hell if he does not obtain God's pardon. And so God has purposed that He will work His salvation through hearing and believing the message about Jesus Christ being proclaimed to sinners. He causes His elect to "attend to the things spoken." Of Lydia it was said, "The Lord opened her heart ***to pay attention to what was said by Paul***" (Acts 16:14). After Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch after their first successful missionary journey, they reported to the church. Acts 14:27 reads, "And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and ***how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.***"

That salvation results due to God's grace through the Word heard rather than the act of hearing itself, Paul states Romans 10:18ff

<sup>18</sup>But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for

"Their voice has gone out to all the earth,  
and their words to the ends of the world."

People can hear the message proclaimed but not benefit from it. Israel had "heard" the message but had not been saved. Hearing must be joined to faith in order for it to bring benefit to the sinner. We read of the failure of Israel in the wilderness even though they had "heard" the Word of God. "For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it" (Heb. 4:2).

Now in verse 18 Paul declared that the messengers of the gospel of Jesus Christ have "gone out to all the earth" even to "the ends of the earth." What Paul meant by this is that by the time he had penned this epistle to the church at Rome, the gospel of Jesus Christ had been proclaimed throughout the Roman world so that Gentiles were coming to faith in Jesus Christ. As far as Paul was concerned, the gospel had been preached to all the world by time he had penned this epistle.

Now I think that we should understand the importance of this verse in the light of a passage that is commonly but wrongly understood to be a prophecy of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 24:6 we read of our Lord's teaching in the Olivet Discourse, in which our Lord taught His disciples what lie before them. Jesus said:

<sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup>For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup>"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup>All these are the beginning of sorrows.

<sup>9</sup>Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. <sup>10</sup>And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup>Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup>And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup>But he who endures to the end shall be saved. <sup>14</sup>***And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.***

<sup>15</sup>Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup>then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup>Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup>And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup>But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup>And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup>For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt. 24:6-21)

It is the commonly accepted opinion that this is the Lord Jesus prophesying of His Second Coming at the end of the age. He declared that the gospel (i.e. the gospel of the kingdom) will be preached in all the world before the end of the age will take place when He returns in His glory. Some go so far as promote world-wide missions, even proclaiming the gospel to unreached people groups, those who have never heard the gospel, and that this is necessary for the church to accomplish before Jesus will return. There are two major problems with this teaching. First, it can be shown that Jesus was speaking not of His Second Coming in this context, but rather He was foretelling the fall of Jerusalem that occurred through the Roman armies in AD 70. The second problem with this position is that our Lord was not speaking of taking the gospel to every people group throughout the whole world, but rather He was speaking of the fact that the Gospel would be proclaimed to all the Gentile world before the fall of Jerusalem would occur. The apostle Paul declared here in Romans 10:18 that God had fulfilled the Old testament prophecy of the gospel being proclaimed in all the earth. When Paul wrote this epistle (early 60’s AD), Jerusalem was still standing. But the gospel had gone into the world, and so the fall of Jerusalem could then be expected to occur soon.

Paul stated in another place that the gospel had been taken to the whole world, in other words, the Gentile world. Colossians 1:6 reads,

<sup>3</sup>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup>since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup>because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. ***Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup>which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing--as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth...***” (Col. 1:3-6)

Paul declared that the gospel had been taken to the whole Gentile world.

There is a “problem”, however, with Paul’s quotation in Romans 10:18. Again it reads, “But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for ‘Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.’” The problem is that this is a quotation of Psalm 19: 4, which in its context is a word about God’s general revelation in the creation, not the special revelation of God’s written Word. But Paul applies it to the gospel. Here is how Psalm 19:1-11 read:

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
And the firmament shows His handiwork.  
<sup>2</sup>Day unto day utters speech,  
And night unto night reveals knowledge.  
<sup>3</sup>There is no speech nor language  
Where their voice is not heard.  
***<sup>4</sup>Their line has gone out through all the earth,  
And their words to the end of the world.***  
In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,  
<sup>5</sup>Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.  
<sup>6</sup>Its rising is from one end of heaven,  
And its circuit to the other end;

And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

- <sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
<sup>8</sup>The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
<sup>9</sup>The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.  
<sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold,  
Yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
<sup>11</sup>Moreover by them Your servant is warned,  
And in keeping them there is great reward.

Verses 1-6 of this psalm describe God's *general revelation* through His creation. As the world is observed, certain characteristics about the nature of God can be clearly seen. There is not enough information in general revelation to bring a sinner to salvation, but there is enough information about God to render people everywhere without excuse (cf. Romans 1:20). Beginning with verse 7, however, God's *special revelation* of His written Word is described. Salvation can only come through God's special revelation, and that revelation is of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Now the "problem" arises in Paul's quotation in Romans 10:18, which reads, "But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for 'Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.'" He applies Psalm 19:4, which in context speaks of God's general revelation, and uses it to declare the world-wide proclamation of the gospel, God's special revelation.

How is this to be explained? After setting forth several possible explanations I believe that **Thomas Schreiner** addressed the matter rightly:

A better solution is to say that Paul uses Psalm 19:4, which in its original context refers to natural revelation, to portray the dissemination of the gospel message to the end of the earth. He does not restrict himself to the historical meaning of the text. One should observe, however, that Psalm 19 refers both to general revelation (vv. 1-6) and special revelation (vv. 7-14). Paul perceives that the progress and course of the gospel is such that it now extends over the whole earth, so that the proclamation of the gospel is now comparable to the all-encompassing reach of general revelation. One of the remarkable features of the new age inaugurated by Christ is that the saving message is no longer restricted to Israel but encompasses the whole world.

One should not press Paul's words inordinately here. The purpose is not to say that all missionary work has been accomplished, for as Romans 15:24 demonstrates Paul had plans to evangelize Spain. What these words indicate is that the mission was now extended to include Gentiles (cf. Col. 1:23). God's general revelation thus functions as a type and anticipation of the gospel message that extends to all peoples.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, what Paul was arguing in Romans 10:18 was that the Jews had indeed heard, for the gospel had been proclaimed in all the world.

But then in **Romans 10:19** Paul takes the matter further. Not only had the Jews heard the gospel, but they had "understood", or had known the essential matters also. It reads, "***But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, 'I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.'***" This is a quotation from Deuteronomy 32:21 (from the LXX version). This is taken from the Song of Moses. This verse is a declaration that God planned to convey to another "nation" that which Israel though it was due to inherit. The fact that Israel would be angered over this

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pp. 570f.

would reveal they knew what was transpiring. Rather than leading them to be broken and to repent of their sins, it resulted in their anger toward the “nation” that God would bless in the place of Israel. Who or what is this “nation” that would render Israel on the outside excluded from the promises of God while it enjoyed God’s promises? It was the “nation” of believers in Jesus Christ, who were largely Gentile Christians, but also includes Jewish Christians. The Lord Jesus spoke of this in the face of His rejection by the Jewish leadership. We read in **Matthew 21:33-46**.

<sup>33</sup>“Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. <sup>34</sup>Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. <sup>35</sup>And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup>Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. <sup>37</sup>Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ <sup>38</sup>But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ <sup>39</sup>So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

<sup>40</sup>“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”

<sup>41</sup>They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”

<sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

‘The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief cornerstone.  
This was the LORD’s doing,  
And it is marvelous in our eyes’?

<sup>43</sup>“Therefore I say to you, *the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.* <sup>44</sup>And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”

<sup>45</sup>*Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.* <sup>46</sup>*But when they sought to lay hands on Him,* they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

Here we read of the Lord Jesus declaring to the Jewish leaders that they were being removed from leadership over the people of God within the kingdom of God, and the blessing of the kingdom will be given to another “nation.” This, of course, is a reference to the church comprised of believers in Jesus Christ, both Gentiles and Jews.

And then we read of the description that Peter gave of the people of God in **1 Peter 2:4-10**.

<sup>4</sup>Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, <sup>5</sup>you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

“Behold, I lay in Zion  
A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,  
And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

<sup>7</sup>Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient,

“The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief cornerstone,”

<sup>8</sup>and

“A stone of stumbling  
And a rock of offense.”

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

<sup>9</sup>*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*  
<sup>10</sup>*who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

By Paul declaring in Romans 10:20 that not only had Israel heard, but that they had understood, they had known what was proclaimed to them, he was showing their culpability. What Paul is showing is that the problem of the Jews failing to believe the gospel was not because they had not heard, nor was it because they did not know, or understand; it was because of their sinful unbelief and disobedience to God.

Paul then quotes another Old Testament verse. **Romans 10:20** reads:

<sup>20</sup>Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,

“I have been found by those who did not seek Me;  
I have shown myself to those who did not ask for Me.”

This is from **Isaiah 65:1**. It speaks of God’s sovereign will in choosing to reveal Himself and His salvation to the Gentiles. God revealed Himself to the Gentiles who had no desire for Him nor put forth any effort to know Him.

But then Romans 10:21 concludes with one more verse from Isaiah 65, which addresses the sinful rebellion and unbelief of Israel. This is from **Isaiah 65:2**, “*But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”* Paul shows that the Jews were fully responsible and accountable for their actions. They warranted God’s judgment of excluding them from being recipients of His promises. They were rebellious.

The passage indicates that Israel was fully responsible for the divine judgment that was pronounced upon it. The fact that the nation day after day, week after week, year upon year, continued to be disobedient and to contradict God, even in spite of God’s outstretched hands of patience and invitation, made matters worse for Israel.<sup>4</sup>

**John Murray** also described what Paul had concluded, but also sets the stage for Romans 11.

In this chapter the apostle is dealing with the failure of Israel. His analysis begins with the indictment that their zeal was not according to knowledge, that they were ignorant of God’s righteousness and did not subject themselves to it. He continues this accusation by noting that they did not give obedience to the gospel. But the climax is reached in verse 21 when Israel is characterized as a disobedient and gainsaying people. The apostle demonstrates the inexcusableness of Israel and does so by appeal to their Scriptures. They had heard the gospel. They knew beforehand the design of God respecting the call of the Gentiles. They had been forewarned of the very situation that existed in Paul’s day and with which he is concerned in this part of the epistle. Verse 21 brings us to the terminus of the condemnation. We may well ask, what then? Is this the

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<sup>4</sup> William Hendriksen, *Romans*, New Testament Commentary (Baker Academic, 1980, 1981), p. 353.

terminus of God's loving-kindness to Israel? Is verse 21 the last word? The answer to these questions chapter 11 provides.<sup>5</sup>

We now arrive to Romans 11. Paul opens by declaring that God had not totally rejected the Jewish people.

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? <sup>3</sup>“Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” <sup>4</sup>But what is God's reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” <sup>5</sup>So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. <sup>6</sup>But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. (Rom. 11:1-6)

Paul saw God as having been faithful and still gracious to Israel in that He was saving a remnant of Jews through faith in Jesus Christ. God was still dealing mercifully and graciously with “Israel” in this gospel age.

Paul saw himself as one of the remnant of Jews that God had chosen and purposed to save through Jesus Christ. What is a remnant and what is God's purpose in preserving Himself a **remnant**? *A remnant is a small portion of what had existed formerly, preserved by God in order for a new beginning to occur.* Like a sprout is taken from a vine to be grafted to another, the original vine is afterwards destroyed. But in a sense the former vine lives on in the sprout. The preservation of a remnant provides for the promises of God that He made to be fulfilled. He is able through the remnant to be true to His promises regarding Israel (Jews) to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Paul had referenced this remnant idea back in Romans 9:27, in which he quoted Isaiah 1:9 which spoke of a remnant of Jews being saved. The remnant consisted of those relatively few number of Jews who came to Jesus Christ of which Paul was one.

Now before we close, let us stand back and see the doctrines of our faith set forth in Romans 10:20 and 21. Again it reads:

<sup>20</sup>Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,

“I have been found by those who did not seek Me;  
I have shown myself to those who did not ask for Me.”

<sup>21</sup>But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

Here we see two major doctrines of God's Word side by side. In verse 20 we read of *divine sovereignty* in bring salvation to sinners by His free and sovereign will. “I have been found by those who did not seek Me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for Me.” There we see divine sovereignty. But then we read in verse 21 we read of *man's responsibility*: “But of Israel he says, ‘All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.’” If you are saved from Your sin, it is due to God's free and sovereign grace. He chose You to be saved. And when the time came to save You He set forth His power and in grace He drew You unto Himself. You are a great debtor to God's grace. But if you are an unbeliever and you die in your sins, it is your fault, your responsibility. You are guilty and you will be accountable for your sin and unbelief. For all your life God has been patient with you. He has all day long held out His hands to you, a disobedient and contrary rebel. And so here we have God's sovereignty

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<sup>5</sup> John Murray, *Romans* (Eerdmans, 1965), vol. 2, pp. 64f.

and man's responsibility set forth together in our text. They are not contradictory nor are they incompatible. Those who believe in human responsibility but deny divine sovereign grace, will trouble themselves and others with their errant doctrine. On the other hand, those who only emphasize divine sovereignty but they do not confront sinners with their responsibility to repent of their sins and believe the gospel, will see little fruit from their efforts. If you are saved it is due to God's grace; if you are unsaved it is your fault, your unbelief, your rebellion that will damn your soul for eternity.

And so, let us close with these words. If you truly know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then give glory to God for His grace that He freely chose to give you. But if you are still outside of Jesus Christ, please recognize that you are in great need of God's grace. Would you do this, therefore? Will You ask God to transform you by His grace so that You become one of His people? Will You begin to call out to the Lord Jesus to save you from your sin? Ask Him to show mercy on you and ask Him to give you a new heart, one that will desire Him, seek Him, so that you may be found of Him.

Sinner, at the Great Day of God you must give an account for every warning you have ever had, for every time you have read your Bible, yes, and for every time you have neglected to read it. For every Sunday when the House of God was open and you did neglect to avail yourself of the opportunity of hearing the Word and for every time you did hear it and did not listen.

You who are careless hearers, are tying fire wood for your own burning forever. You that hear and straightaway forget, or hear with levity, are digging for yourselves a pit into which you must be cast. Remember, no one will be responsible for your damnation but yourself at the last Great Day. God will not be responsible for it. "As I live says the Lord"—and that is a great oath—"I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies. But had rather that he should turn unto Me and live." God has done much for you. He sent you His Gospel. You are not born in a heathen land. He has given you the Book of Books. He has given you an enlightened conscience. And if you perish under the sound of the ministry, you perish more fearfully and terribly than if you had perished anywhere else.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vo. 4, #207.