

## **Romans (68)** **The Future Hope of “Israel” (1)**

Our Lord has given us much instruction regarding His purpose in grace through history. In the three chapters that we have been addressing, of which the third, Romans 11, we are beginning to consider today, God has shown us His intention to bestow salvation through Jesus Christ to His people, who are comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. The question inevitably arises, however, why did not the Jews embrace Jesus as their Messiah? And what of God’s promises to Israel, will they not be realized? Paul has shown that it was never God’s intention to save all Jews, but rather, in this gospel age He purposed only to save a remnant of Jewish people through Jesus Christ. God had declared long before through His prophets that He had never intended to save all Jewish people. He would save a remnant of Israel (i.e. Jewish people, while making His gospel known throughout the world in order to bring into His church a great number of Gentile believers. These Jewish and Gentile believers from all over the world would join themselves into the one great nation, even the Kingdom of God, over which Jesus Christ rules as King.

But now we arrive to Romans 11 in which we are informed of God’s future purpose for “Israel.” God will bring to pass in history His great grace in salvation so that in the end “all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26). But there is great confusion and error regarding evangelicals’ understanding of what this salvation for Israel will look like. It is here where one of the major tenants of the common system of belief of evangelicals, commonly known as dispensationalism, differs strongly with the understanding of most of Reformed Christians, who are in the great minority compared with the dispensationalists. Dispensationalists argue that it is God’s intention to bring about a future hope for Israel as a political nation comprised of both Jewish believers and Jewish non-believers. God will establish a Jewish millennium of 1,000 years on earth, which they say that this will be the fulfillment and realization of God’s promise to King David, that a political nation ruled by David’s (and God’s) Son in this future 1,000 year “Jewish” millennium. The church of Jesus Christ will also exist, but as a separate entity from the nation of Israel, the two “kingdoms” existing side by side, but with separate and different features from one another. But it is the historic Reformed understanding that the Old Testament promises to David and others regarding a future for Israel as a kingdom is fulfilled and is being realized in the spiritual Kingdom of God over which King Jesus is currently ruling from David’s throne, which is the very throne of God in heaven. There is one Kingdom of Jesus Christ, which was inaugurated when Jesus Christ rose from the dead and was enthroned in heaven. The kingdom of God has continued to expand throughout this church age and it will be fully manifest for all to see at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We would argue that the teaching of the Apostle Paul here in Romans 11 allows for no such understanding of Israel as a separate nation-state in the plan of God. Rather, what is presented is that Jewish people come to experience salvation with all of its blessings in the manner that Gentile believers also believe and are subsequently blessed of God. It is our desire to work through these issues, considering the teachings and implications of Romans 11. In order to help us understand the larger picture, let us read all of Romans 11.

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.

<sup>7</sup>What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, <sup>8</sup>as it is written,

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,  
eyes that would not see  
and ears that would not hear,  
down to this very day.”

<sup>9</sup>And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,  
a stumbling block and a retribution for them;  
<sup>10</sup>let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,  
and bend their backs forever.”

<sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

<sup>13</sup>Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry <sup>14</sup>in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. <sup>15</sup>For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? <sup>16</sup>If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

<sup>17</sup>But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup>do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. <sup>19</sup>Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” <sup>20</sup>That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. <sup>21</sup>For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. <sup>22</sup>Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in His kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. <sup>23</sup>And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup>For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

<sup>25</sup>Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup>And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion,  
He will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;  
<sup>27</sup>“and this will be My covenant with them  
when I take away their sins.”

<sup>28</sup>As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. <sup>29</sup>For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup>For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, <sup>31</sup>so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. <sup>32</sup>For God has consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all.

<sup>33</sup>Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!

<sup>34</sup>“For who has known the mind of the Lord,  
or who has been His counselor?”

<sup>35</sup>“Or who has given a gift to Him  
that he might be repaid?”

<sup>36</sup>For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

Paul had been showing that the Jewish rejection of Jesus as their promised Messiah had been foretold long ago by the prophets. They had also prophesied of the inclusion of a great number of Gentiles to the faith of Jesus Christ. The conclusion of Paul’s readers might be that God had cast off Israel once and forever. But in chapter 11 Paul declares that this is not the case. God has a great plan involving the rejection and inclusion of the Jewish people into His church and how it affects the inclusion of Gentiles into His church.

In verses 1 through 6 the apostle declared that God was still saving His people and bringing them into His church, even if it is but a remnant of their former numbers. **Verse 1** reads, **“I ask, then, has God rejected His people? By no means!”** This negation of the question was the most emphatic negation possible in the Greek language of Paul.<sup>1</sup> The failure of Israel to believe in Jesus Christ is in no way due to God’s rejection of Israel.

Paul used himself as an example to show that God had not rejected the Jewish people from His plan of salvation. Paul himself was Jewish, and yet God had saved him. Therefore, God could not have cast off Israel otherwise he would not have been saved.

Paul declared that “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.” This speaks of God’s covenant love for His people. Paul is not referring here to all people of Israel without distinction. He is only speaking of the ones within “Israel” that He had foreknown; Paul was referring here only to the ones from all of Israel that God had elected to be saved.

The idea conveyed by the word “foreknew” is that God knew His chosen people relationally, by way of covenant relationship with them. God foreknew them and therefore He moved to save them. To be foreknown covenantally is to be “fore loved” by God. Paul had expressed this same idea back in Romans 8:28ff

<sup>28</sup>And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>**For those whom he foreknew** he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. <sup>31</sup>What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?... <sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from **the love of Christ**? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” <sup>37</sup>Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors **through Him who loved us**. <sup>38</sup>For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from **the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**. (Rom. 8:28-31, 35-39)

Everyone whom God foreknew, that is, fore loved, God having known him from eternity, believes on Jesus Christ for salvation. Paul knew that he was foreknown of God, for God had saved Him by His grace.

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<sup>1</sup> John Murray, *Romans* (Eerdmans, 1965), vol. 2, p. 66.

Paul then cited the Old Testament personage of Elijah who had wrongly thought that God had forsaken His people in his day. The account is in 1 Kings 19. We will read the larger passage for context.

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup>Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” <sup>3</sup>And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

<sup>4</sup>But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!”

<sup>5</sup>Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, “Arise and eat.” <sup>6</sup>Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. <sup>7</sup>And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, “Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.” <sup>8</sup>So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

<sup>9</sup>And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

<sup>10</sup>So he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

<sup>11</sup>Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; <sup>12</sup>and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

<sup>13</sup>So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

<sup>14</sup>And he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD said to him: “Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. <sup>16</sup>Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. <sup>17</sup>It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. <sup>18</sup>***Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.***”

Elijah had recently defeated and then executed the 450 false prophets of Baal. But when he heard that Queen Jezebel was seeking him, he turned and fled in fear. After a long flight from which he was weary and well discouraged, he voiced his opinion to God that he alone had remained faithful to God. But God corrected him, telling him that He had reserved 7,000 other Jewish persons who remained loyal to Him. In other words, God had elected 7,000 Jewish persons other than Elijah whom God enabled to remain true to Him in that during that difficult period of Israel’s history.

Paul was answering his own rhetorical question that he had posed in his epistle: “I ask, then, has God rejected His people?” Paul in effect said, “No. God has elected some Jewish people to be saved even in this church age.” Just as in Elijah’s day God had purposed to have some elect Jews remain in faith and loyalty to Him, so in this church age God has determined that a remnant of Jews would be

saved. Paul's citing of God's rebuke of Elijah served to dismiss those who thought God had abandoned Israel. This proved that God had not cast away the Jewish people. Paul drew the conclusion in **verse 5**: *"So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace."* In other words, God of His own will had chosen some Jews to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ in this church age.

Paul then made a statement about the nature of God's grace in the next verse. **Verse 6** reads, *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace."* God elects His people onto salvation wholly due to His grace, in other words, according to His free, unsolicited, unmerited, sovereign purpose and choice. His choice of who will be saved from damnation unto eternal life is of His grace alone, grace that is unconditioned on anything done by man or by anything in man that was foreseen by God. Here Paul is declaring quite clearly the doctrine of grace known as *unconditional election*. Here is a definition of God's unconditional election:

*God has chosen certain persons from fallen humanity to be recipients of His salvation, having chosen them before creation in Christ, not based on any foreseen condition or response of them, but solely due to His own good pleasure according to the purpose of His will.*

Election follows the understanding of man's total depravity, or total inability to come to God. Left on his own, even after having been instructed, admonished, persuaded, and pleaded with, man would still choose to reject God's rule over him, for he is spiritually dead, both incapable and unwilling to do the things God has commanded him. Man's salvation must originate from outside of him. It originates in God's election.

There is no indication in the Scriptures of a reason that God chose the ones He chose, passing over the others, other than it was good in His sight, that He had set His love upon them in eternity, and it was in accord with His purpose to glorify Himself in His grace. That is what Paul declared in Romans 11:6; salvation is due to God's grace alone, and that unconditional on man's works.

That Paul was speaking only of elect Jews of Israel is also clear from the two passages of Scripture that the Apostle Paul quotes in verses 7 through 10. The first is from **Deuteronomy 29:4**. We read in **verses 7 and 8**:

<sup>7</sup>What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, <sup>8</sup>as it is written,

"God gave them a spirit of stupor,  
eyes that would not see  
and ears that would not hear,  
down to this very day."

God may in His justice prevent sinners from seeing the way of salvation. Just as Pharaoh of Egypt hardened his own heart as well as God hardened his heart, so God does the same with those who refuse to repent of their sins and believe on Jesus Christ. He must purpose to save us or it will not happen. If we are to know and experience God's salvation, then He must illuminate our minds to understand the message of salvation and He needs to incline our hearts to desire to believe it once we have come to understand it. Therefore, if He has not chosen one to receive salvation, God not having elected that one unto salvation by God, then God can judge him in his sin by blinding him and keeping him ignorant of the only remedy for sin, which is faith in Jesus Christ.

The second Old Testament passage that Paul quotes is in verses 9 and 10, which is **Psalms 69:22 and 23**.

<sup>9</sup>And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,  
a stumbling block and a retribution for them;  
<sup>10</sup>let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,  
and bend their backs forever.”

Psalm 69 is a Messianic Psalm in which the rejection and sufferings of Jesus Christ were predicted 1,000 years before Jesus Christ walked upon the earth and was crucified in Jerusalem. Let us read it to understand better the context and the spirit of the psalm.

Save me, O God!  
For the waters have come up to my neck.  
<sup>2</sup>I sink in deep mire,  
Where there is no standing;  
I have come into deep waters,  
Where the floods overflow me.  
<sup>3</sup>I am weary with my crying;  
My throat is dry;  
My eyes fail while I wait for my God.

<sup>4</sup>Those who hate me without a cause  
Are more than the hairs of my head;  
They are mighty who would destroy me,  
Being my enemies wrongfully;  
Though I have stolen nothing,  
I still must restore it.

<sup>5</sup>O God, You know my foolishness;  
And my sins are not hidden from You.

<sup>6</sup>Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me;  
Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.

<sup>7</sup>Because for Your sake I have borne reproach;  
Shame has covered my face.

<sup>8</sup>I have become a stranger to my brothers,  
And an alien to my mother's children;

<sup>9</sup>Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up,  
And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.

<sup>10</sup>When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting,  
That became my reproach.

<sup>11</sup>I also made sackcloth my garment;  
I became a byword to them.

<sup>12</sup>Those who sit in the gate speak against me,  
And I am the song of the drunkards.

<sup>13</sup>But as for me, my prayer is to You,  
O LORD, in the acceptable time;  
O God, in the multitude of Your mercy,  
Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.

<sup>14</sup>Deliver me out of the mire,  
And let me not sink;

Let me be delivered from those who hate me,  
 And out of the deep waters.  
<sup>15</sup>Let not the floodwater overflow me,  
 Nor let the deep swallow me up;  
 And let not the pit shut its mouth on me.

<sup>16</sup>Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good;  
 Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.  
<sup>17</sup>And do not hide Your face from Your servant,  
 For I am in trouble;  
 Hear me speedily.

<sup>18</sup>Draw near to my soul, and redeem it;  
 Deliver me because of my enemies.

<sup>19</sup>You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor;  
 My adversaries are all before You.

<sup>20</sup>Reproach has broken my heart,  
 And I am full of heaviness;  
 I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none;  
 And for comforters, but I found none.

<sup>21</sup>They also gave me gall for my food,  
 And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

<sup>22</sup>***Let their table become a snare before them,  
 And their well-being a trap.***

<sup>23</sup>***Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see;  
 And make their loins shake continually.***

<sup>24</sup>Pour out Your indignation upon them,  
 And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them.

<sup>25</sup>***Let their dwelling place be desolate;***<sup>2</sup>  
 Let no one live in their tents.

<sup>26</sup>For they persecute the ones You have struck,  
 And talk of the grief of those You have wounded.

<sup>27</sup>Add iniquity to their iniquity,  
 And let them not come into Your righteousness.

<sup>28</sup>Let them be blotted out of the book of the living,  
 And not be written with the righteous.

<sup>29</sup>But I am poor and sorrowful;  
 Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high.

<sup>30</sup>I will praise the name of God with a song,  
 And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.

<sup>31</sup>This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bull,  
 Which has horns and hooves.

<sup>32</sup>The humble shall see this and be glad;  
 And you who seek God, your hearts shall live.

<sup>33</sup>For the LORD hears the poor,  
 And does not despise His prisoners.

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<sup>2</sup> This verse lends credibility of the view that the destruction of Jerusalem in Ad 70 occurred because the Jews had committed “the abomination” of crucifying their Messiah, an abomination that resulted in their “desolation.”

<sup>34</sup>Let heaven and earth praise Him,  
 The seas and everything that moves in them.  
<sup>35</sup>For God will save Zion  
 And build the cities of Judah,  
 That they may dwell there and possess it.  
<sup>36</sup>Also, the descendants of His servants shall inherit it,  
 And those who love His name shall dwell in it.

Verses 22 and following reveal that this psalm may be classified as an *imprecatory psalm*. In this kind of psalm the psalmist calls down curses upon his enemies, asking God to bring His judgment upon them.

Now the question may be asked, “How does one use the imprecatory psalms as a Christian?” This is David voicing his desire that his enemies would be overthrown and utterly destroyed. But did not Jesus pray from the cross, “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do”? How then do we deal with this kind of example found in Psalm 69? Paul applies Psalm 69:22 to Israel in that it was a prophecy of God bringing His just judgment upon Israel for their sins, their chief sin being their rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah.

**John Murray** quotes a source which addresses this matter:

“In this, as in Psalm 109 and 139:2, ‘Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee?’ the Psalmist regards the enemies of the Theocracy as his own, and his own enemies as enemies so far as they fought against the Divine order of the world. The imprecations, therefore, are only the form which ‘Thy Will be done’ necessarily assumes in the presence of aggressive evil. They are a prayer that the Divine Justice might be revealed in action for the protection of the cause of Truth and Righteousness against its enemies. So far are they from being peculiar to the moral standard of Judaism,’ that they are, as here, deliberately adopted by the inspired teachers of Christianity” (Liddon: *op. cit.*, p. 202.)

Let us look more closely at the statement Paul quotes from Psalm 69:22, which reads:

<sup>9</sup>And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,  
 a stumbling block and a retribution for them;  
<sup>10</sup>let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,  
 and bend their backs forever.”

Here “their table” is an allusion to the great privilege and blessing that God had given to Israel. The “table” here is that of a huge feast with every kind of desirable food in abundance. It speaks of all of the blessing that God had bestowed freely to them. It points chiefly, therefore, to have sent to them the Savior who would secure for them every blessing of God. But their “table” became a “snare” to them. A snare is a simple little trap set that will catch the leg or wing of an unsuspecting prey. God had designed and determined that Israel’s “table”, the privilege to have the Savior come among them, would be the cause of their defeat and destruction due to their rejection of Him.

Paul wrote elsewhere of God’s judgment upon Israel. He was writing to the church at Thessalonica referring to their suffering at the hands of Gentile unbelievers. Paul said that this was like the Jewish Christians who were persecuted by Jewish unbelievers.

<sup>14</sup>For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans,  
<sup>15</sup>*who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men,* <sup>16</sup>*forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be*

*saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.* (1 Thess. 2:14-16)

And yet in spite of the great wrath of God that was upon this people, God purposed to save some of them from their sins. The Apostle Paul was one of them.

We must close at this point and resume our study next week. But let us first draw some important lessons for us:

1. Let us affirm that if we are Christians, it is wholly and solely due to the free and sovereign grace of God that He chose to bestow upon us, in spite of our great guilt due to sin.

2. With great privilege comes great responsibility. Israel had a great table spread before it filled with everything good and desirable. But their privilege brought great accountability to them. Consider our great accountability before God due to all of His acts of kindness toward us. Our Lord pressed upon His hearers of their great privilege and therefore their great responsibility.

And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? <sup>43</sup>Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>44</sup>Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. <sup>45</sup>But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, <sup>46</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. <sup>47</sup>And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. <sup>48</sup>But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. ***For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required;*** and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. (Luke 12:42-48)

3. Temporal “blessing” is no guarantee of God’s favor; it may be a snare that God has placed in front of those who have refused Him in order that He may overthrow them in His judgment. God may be using the heretical “health and wealth prosperity preachers” to confuse and confound them He has purposed to damn.