

97-02-16b

Okay, we're back now from our break. And wrapping up this section in Romans, where Paul discusses Israel. And it's a puzzle when we first see this verse 26 of chapter 11.

All Israel will be delivered. Everyone who is an Israelite will be saved. Is it Old Testament? Is it New Testament? Is it both? Is it neither? The purpose here is if we pause for a moment and take a look at this.

The Bible means when it talks about being saved, our salvation from the lake of fire and Christ's work of redemption and so forth. But it is by no means limited to that. It's an important store of knowledge.

Well, the gospel is for unbelievers. You give the gospel to an unbeliever. Believers need the gospel and we need to heed the gospel.

Our rescue from eternal destruction, but also present evil age. Our rescue from the power of sin. Our day-to-day life deliverance.

Enhancement and a manifestation of our eternal salvation. Of the word saved and the word delivered. Soterios and all of the various derivatives from that stem in the New Testament is the theological name for the category of cross.

And it's kind of a shame because again, we limit it to the truth about regeneration. Here's the truth about how you go from being lost to being saved. There's a big part of quote-unquote soteriology that deals with how do we implement the power of God in our daily life.

How are we delivered from the things that tend to ensnare us and cause us to stumble? For example, take a look at Matthew chapter 10. And this is under the category of what does the Bible mean? What do we mean when we're talking about being saved? Here Jesus is talking about the gospel of the kingdom. And we're in Matthew chapter 10.

And starting in verse 16, Jesus is talking to the twelve. He's talking to those who have the specific mission of communicating to the nation of Israel. Now, you've got to keep this in context.

Remember again, this is Old Testament. This is the age of Israel. And this is the gospel of the kingdom.

We saw looking at Matthew 4.23, 9.35, I think it was, those two identical verses talk about Jesus proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. And in between those two, you have the gospel of the kingdom. It is a call to believers to live in the light of their calling, to live as the people of God, to be sons of their Father in heaven.

It is not an evangelism call in the traditional sense. He doesn't say, believe in me and be

redeemed and avoid the lake of fire. He says, love one another.

Do good to those who hate you. This is the way you should pray. This is the way you should treat one another.

This is how you should live. Now, either salvation is by works. And when you respond to that gospel, you're going to do good things to be saved.

Or the gospel of the kingdom is not gospel that pertains to how to avoid the lake of fire. And so that word gospel has a broader thing. Well, he's talking here, a broader thing.

It has a broader meaning. Here in Matthew 10, verse 5, Jesus is sending out the 12 to proclaim the gospel. What does he say? He commanded them saying, do not go to the way of the Gentiles and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

Now, if this was the gospel of salvation, this seems like a pretty mean thing to do. Well, if you're a Samaritan, you can't be saved. If you're a Gentile, you can't be saved.

Well, I'm only going to preach the gospel to Jews. This is very politically incorrect and very narrow-minded and bigoted even. Well, we're not going to let the disciples talk to any Samaritans.

What about Jesus? Jesus talked to the woman at the well. What's going on here? What's the point? This gospel of the kingdom is being proclaimed to the people of God. It's being proclaimed to the people who are believers and the kingdom is their inheritance.

Go back and look at Deuteronomy, which we will do here in a minute. Do not go into the way of the Gentiles. Do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. These sheep are lost. Now, he doesn't say, let's go get some new sheep.

God's fold is empty. Let's go and bring in some sheep and get some sheep for the fold. These sheep were in the fold and they have strayed.

They have escaped. They've gotten out and gone their own way. And he says, we've got to go bring them back.

The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. You had it and then you lost it. They are believers and they're outside God's purpose.

They're outside God's plan. And Jesus has come to bring them back. Here's the kingdom.

I'm here to present to you the inheritance that was promised to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, that was promised through Moses and through David. These covenanted promises of God for the people of God are imminent. They can be fulfilled.

Change your mind. And if you qualify for this inheritance, and it's not a matter of qualifying through salvation in the traditional sense, it's a matter of qualifying through faith, qualifying through obedience, qualifying not only by being a believer, but by being a fruitful believer. That's what's on the line here.

That's the gospel of the kingdom. So he tells them, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. And he gives instructions.

He says in verse 16, I'm sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves. Be wise as serpents, harmless as doves. Beware of men, they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in the synagogues and so forth.

Verse 21 of Matthew 10, brother will deliver up brother to death and a father, his child, children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved. Now, you're a disciple.

You're going out and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. You're getting despised for it. You're being rejected for it.

You're betrayed by your own family over it. But if you endure to the end, you will be saved. Now, does this mean if you don't endure to the end, you've lost your salvation, you're going to the lake of fire? I think not.

I think it would be very difficult to sustain that because now we've got a whole new view here where we can lose our salvation through disobedience. If you don't endure to the end, you're not going to be saved. What does it mean? The word soteria and its locus of meaning, all of the words that derive from it had the idea of being delivered.

It was used in regular Greek. If you rescued somebody that was sinking, you deliver them. You get them out of a jam.

You rescue them from danger. You rescue them from potential death or dismemberment or whatever. So he says, if you endure to the end, you will be delivered.

So right away, one of the first instances in the New Testament, we have this word being used not to talk about rescue from the lake of fire. As a matter of fact, Jesus has not even mentioned the lake of fire to this point. The closest you can come is to wonder what John meant when he said, the he who comes after me will baptize you with fire, which isn't the lake of fire either.

So if you endure under persecution, you will be delivered. Interesting use here. Turn over to chapter 19, verse 25 of Matthew.

Matthew chapter 19, verse 25. This is our famous passage about the rich. So hard for them to enter the kingdom.

Easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom. Jesus says in verse 23 of Matthew 19, assuredly, I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again, I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

Now, if we're talking about the kingdom of God as a synonym for salvation from the lake of fire, this can cause us some great philosophical difficulties, can't it? Why would it be harder for someone who is rich? Couldn't God have arranged this for him? So they would lose their wealth and then it would be easier for them to get saved, quote unquote. If God wants the rich to get saved, why can't He arrange for a disaster so that they lose everything and then it'll humble them down and they can be saved. It's not what it's talking about.

The kingdom of heaven is not a synonym for salvation from the lake of fire. The kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God is a reward for the faithful. It's a reward for the obedient.

It is the heritage of those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose. Specifically at this point in the Old Testament economy. Look at Hebrews chapter 11.

All these died in faith, not having received the promise. Abraham looked for a city whose founder and builder was God. They were looking for the fulfillment of God's covenant promises and that's the kingdom.

It does not mean that if you do not enter the kingdom, you are not saved. It means you lose out on the reward. You lose out on the blessing.

You lose out on the fulfillment of the covenant promises because you by disobedience, by having an uncircumcised heart have cut yourself off from your people. Remember back in Genesis 17, God says, if you're not circumcised, as you don't fulfill the sign of the covenant, that man will be cut off from his people. What does it mean? It doesn't mean he has no salvation.

It means he has no heritage. He has no inheritance. He has no possession in the kingdom.

So that's what we're talking about here. His disciples heard this and they said, who then can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, with men, this is impossible. With God, all things are possible.

Peter answered and said, we have left all and followed you. Therefore, what shall we have? Jesus said, assuredly, I say to you that in the regeneration, when the son of man sits on the throne of his glory, when the kingdom is fulfilled, when the kingdom is here, you who have followed me will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left

houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit eternal life.

Reward for following. You don't have to follow Christ to be delivered from the lake of fire, but you do have to follow Christ. You do have to be a disciple.

How are you a disciple of Christ? Love one another, love God. It's obedience. It's faith in time, faith in the daily circumstances of life that qualifies one for these things.

Look at verse 30. But many who are first will be last, and the last... Now, one of the things, if you've ever done anything in mathematics, if you've done anything, period, actually, in life, if you just think about logically, if you've got something that's first and something that's last, I was sitting there last night having a great time listing out all of my Statesman Quartet albums, and I put them in a spreadsheet, and I listed them from first to last. I have a list, and there's one that's first and there's one that's last.

The earliest album, the first one ever made, and here's my latest one. Well, I've got a first and I've got a last, but they're all part of one group, aren't they? It's the same thing. I didn't include Tijuana Brass in there.

I didn't include The Vocal Majority. I didn't include any of the other several hundreds of albums that I might have. This is a list that has something in common, and in that list that has something in common, there's something that's first and there's something that's last.

What Jesus is talking about here is you've got the saved. You've got those who are going to be resurrected and are going to go into the eternal future. Some of them are going to be first and some of them are going to be last.

Your position in the list, your status in the kingdom, your status in the eternal future, especially in the millennial kingdom portion of the eternal future, depends on what we do in this life. Not just the fact of our salvation, but what we do. Do we follow? Are we willing to set aside father and mother and sister and brother and wife and children and houses and lands and all the other things that he mentions here? Now, this seems like kind of a harsh thing.

Well, do I have to go and say anathema my family and give away all of my possessions and go sit on the curb and wait for the kingdom? Not at all. What's he trying to say? What is the priority in your heart? Are you the rich young ruler or are you willing to risk all, willing to set aside all if it's necessary to pursue the things of God? Do you love God that much or not? And this has nothing to do with going to the lake of fire. It has everything to do with are you going to be near the top or are you going to be near the bottom in the kingdom? Are you even going to enter the kingdom? Why is it hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom? There are going to be many who come to Christ in that day and say, Lord, Lord, look at all the things I did.

He's going to say, I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers. That, by the way, is a very interesting passage.

And I probably have it written down here somewhere. Look at Matthew. Let's just turn over a page or two here.

You can see in Matthew 22, for example, the parable of the wedding banquet. Where the people are invited and they don't want to go. You can see in 22 specifically, the guest comes into the banquet and he doesn't have the garment.

He doesn't have the linen wedding garment. And that white garment is universally representative of the deeds of the saints. It's explicitly stated that this white robe are the righteous deeds of the saints over in Revelation.

Well, this guy comes in, he doesn't have the righteous deed. He doesn't have the outflow of love and faith in his life. He's tried to come into the wedding banquet.

And the King says in verse 13 of Matthew 22, bind him hand and foot, take him away and cast him into the darkness which is outside. The banquet hall is well lighted. You have the joy and the festivity.

This person is bound hand and foot and cast out. He's not destroyed. He's not burned with fire.

He's cast out. There's weeping and gnashing of teeth. Great disappointment.

He wanted to be in the banquet hall and he's not allowed to stay. He's got no garment. Many are called but few are chosen.

And there's a distinction in this story if you go back and look. The people who were invited and absolutely refused to even come, they are destroyed and their cities are burned with fire. That's a different fate than this individual suffers.

This individual responded to the invitation and came but wasn't qualified to stay. And that's the fate of these Old Testament saints who are believers and who don't respond to the call, who don't recognize their responsibility. And you will recall that you can look, I believe it's also in the previous chapter, Matthew 21 and verse 43.

Jesus says, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. The kingdom of God will be taken from you. You have it, it's going to be taken from you.

Now you can't take away the kingdom from an unbeliever, can you? Who can you take away a rightful inheritance? It's somebody who's qualified for it because they're a son. But they disqualify themselves for the inheritance. They disqualify themselves for the kingdom and it's taken away

and given to another.

And when Jesus tells the Pharisees, you will see many in that day coming from the East, West, North and South, sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom, but you yourselves will be cast out. They see the kingdom of God. They're there, they're resurrected, but they're not in it.

They're not living in the historical boundaries of the nation of Israel. There's going to be a lot of Jewish believers from the Old Testament age who are going to be resurrected on day one of the millennium, but they're going to be living in Africa and they're going to be living in the steppes of Russia and they're going to be living off in India and down in Zaire and Columbia and China and Vietnam and lots of far off places. They're going to be every place except in the historical bounds because they're not allowed to enter the kingdom.

So what are we talking about with this rich man? It's hard for him to enter the kingdom. It's hard for him to make the choice between his riches and his eternal inheritance. One in the hand is worth two in the bush.

I've got riches now. I'm going to hang onto these. I don't want to possibly lose this for the sake of pie in the sky.

That was the problem with the rich young ruler, wasn't it? So this entering the kingdom is not a synonym for salvation. If you remember anything out of all of this, remember that. Entering the kingdom.

Think about Jesus talking to Nicodemus. Except a man be born again, he shall not what? Enter the kingdom? Shall not see the kingdom of God. You can see it without entering it.

If you're not born again, you're not even going to see the kingdom. Because if you're not born again, you're not going to be resurrected. In the church age, we get resurrected at the rapture and we'll see the kingdom.

If you're an Old Testament saint, you're going to get resurrected on day one of the millennial kingdom and you're going to see the kingdom. You may not be in it, but you'll see it. But if you're not born again, when is it that the rest of the dead live again? Revelation says the rest of the dead live not.

Remember in Revelation chapter 20 and 21 along in there? Live not until the thousand years were completed. They're not going to see the kingdom because they're unbelievers. They're not born again.

And the Bible is very explicit and we need to watch closely. There's a difference between seeing the kingdom and entering the kingdom. Entering the kingdom is a reward for faithfulness.

Seeing the kingdom is the heritage of anybody that's a believer. All believers will be resurrected at the inception or before the inception of the kingdom. So when Jesus is speaking in Matthew 19, 25 and he says it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom.

He's saying you've got a big problem when you start accumulating material things and you start setting store by them. How hard is it going to be for you to be willing to set that aside? To set aside not only material things, but possibly also the good opinion of your family. Jesus says if you're willing to do that, you're going to have a hundredfold in the kingdom.

You'll enter and you'll have possession and inheritance there. Now what does that mean to us? We face the same decision today. We face the same option and we should learn from the example of Israel who had a similar calling and a similar opportunity and as a nation fell apart and fell down and stumbled and largely missed the boat.

Many of them are going to be last in the resurrection. Some of those who even qualify to enter the kingdom are going to be last in the kingdom. And Jesus makes an issue of that.

We say, oh, well, you know, I'm not motivated by rewards. I don't, I don't, you know, I'm going to cast all my crowns before him. I'll just be glad to be there and so forth.

That's fine, but that's not God's calling. God says, I want you to be fruitful. I want you to inherit.

I want you to receive reward because it reflects his glory. And that's our calling. We're not just called to get saved.

We're called to excel. We're called to be mature. We're called to bear fruit.

We are called to receive the inheritance. And it's not a matter of being humble and saying, oh, well, I don't care about rewards. If you say you don't care about rewards, you're saying you don't care about the calling of God because God says, I don't just want to recruit you and get you into uniform.

I want you to be a great soldier. I want you to be a great Marine or a great sailor. I don't just want to get your recruiting papers and get you signed in to the organization.

I want you to excel. I want you to be getting meritorious service medals and silver stars and bronze stars. I want you to be the ultimate, take advantage of everything I have for you in this calling.

And we can't sort of kick our toe in the dirt and say, well, I'll just be glad to be there. There's a song that they sing, I'll just be glad to get inside those beautiful heavenly gates. If I can just squeak in, that's my goal.

I just, you know, just get me across that minimum bar there. And if the minimum wasn't good enough, it wouldn't be the minimum. That's not our calling.

That's not our responsibility before the Lord. And he says, strive to enter in by the narrow gate. Strive to be in that minority that understands the plan and gets with it.

But this all comes from understanding what it means to be saved. If you're going to be saved indeed, it's not just clearing the bar and getting into the eternal future without going to the lake of fire. It is excelling and reflecting the glory of God.

Look at Luke chapter one, verse 71. You know what's going on in Luke one. It hasn't been that long ago since Christmas.

One of the longer chapters in the New Testament, Luke chapter one. You don't often get a verse 71 in any chapter except maybe some of the major prophets. But in Luke chapter one, verse 71, you have Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist.

Once he gets his tongue unloosed, he prophesies under the ministry of the Spirit. Blessed is the Lord God of Israel. He has visited and redeemed his people.

He has raised up a horn of deliverance for us. He has spoken to us in the house of his servant David as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets who have been since the world began that we should be delivered from what? From our enemies and from the hand of all those who hate us. This is the very same word that's translated saved elsewhere in the New Testament.

So it's not talking about we're getting delivered from the lake of fire, is it? We're being delivered from our enemies. We're being delivered from the hands of those who hate us. He's going to perform to us the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

He's going to fulfill the promises to the seed, the promises to the children of promise, the promise to those who have been watching and waiting for his deliverance. You can turn a few pages over in Luke to Luke chapter seven and verse 50, another rather long chapter. Interesting passage here where Jesus has been asked to the house of a Pharisee.

He went there and sat down to eat. Verse 37 of Luke seven, there's a woman in the city who was a sinner. When she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, stood his feet behind him weeping and she began to wash his feet with her tears and wipe them with the hair of her head.

She kissed his feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. And of course the Pharisees are saying, he knew that there's this defiled woman making over him here. He wouldn't allow it and so on.

But when you get down to verse 44, Jesus turns to the woman and says to Simon, do you see

this woman? I entered your house and you gave me no water for my feet. She has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss my feet since the time I came in.

You did not anoint my head with oil, but this woman has anointed my feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much. Now does this mean she got saved because of this act? Not at all.

Her sins are forgiven. This is experiential forgiveness. This is the forgiveness that we seek when we claim the promise in 1 John 1.9. When we follow the example of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, we forgive one another and we ourselves are forgiven.

This is the ongoing need for restoration, for reconciliation, for forgiveness in the ongoing day to day. Otherwise you have to say that we're forgiven by works because He says, look, this woman has done these things for me, therefore I'm going to forgive her. But what are these things? These things are a manifestation of deep love.

She takes this costly ointment. If you look it up, you'll find that the cost of this was about a year's wages for a laborer in Israel at this time. What does the average person make in America? I think the average wage, I saw it somewhere between 26,000 a year.

Can you imagine somebody taking a \$25,000 bottle of ointment, cracking it open and pouring it on your feet? This was an act of selflessness, an act of appreciation and an act of love that Jesus is commenting on. And He says, her sins are forgiven because she approaches. She knows who she is.

She knows what she's done, but she has come and she is expressing her love. She's expressing this desire for intimacy, desire for relationship. She's putting Jesus ahead of everything.

Putting Jesus ahead of a year's wages. Putting Him ahead of whatever bad opinion the Pharisees are saying, look at this defiled woman. How did she even get in here? She risks all of that for the sake of Jesus Christ.

And He says, her sins are forgiven. This is not salvation from the lake of fire forgiveness. This is intimacy with God.

This is fellowship with God and reciprocal love between a believer and God. Her sins are forgiven because she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.

And those of us who assume that we're righteous, assume that we're okay, we don't worry about where we stand before the Lord. We love little. We're forgiven little, which means that there's a stack of stuff that's accumulating in our account.

Remember Romans chapter two? We're storing up wrath for ourselves on the day of judgment.

That's for a believer. You can't store up wrath rejecting Jesus Christ.

That's a one issue deal. But on a day-to-day basis, if we're apathetic, we can store up wrath just the way Israel did as believers. Those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, who is this who even forgives sins? But He said to the woman, your faith has saved you.

Your faith has delivered you. He just got through saying, her sins are forgiven because she loved much. And now He says, you are saved.

You are delivered. Unless you believe in salvation by works, you have to come to the realization that this is talking about deliverance through fellowship with God, deliverance through obedience, deliverance through faith. In time, she is going to have an inheritance in the kingdom.

She is a fruit bearing branch. And that is characterized by Jesus as deliverance. Look at chapter 8, verse 12.

We've studied in detail when we went through Mark, the parable of the soils. And we've seen that once again, like the tree and the branches that bear fruit, this is the seed of the Word of God. And does it come up and bear fruit or does it wither and go away? And the plant withering and dying under the sun doesn't mean, well, they were saved.

They had the plant, but then the plant withered and died. So now they're not saved anymore. You just can't make salvation work in the parable of the soils.

The parable of the soils is being taught to believers. And it's a picture of what are you going to do with the Word? What are you going to do with the call? What are you going to do with the resources that God has put before you as a believer? And when the seed is taken away, Satan snatches it away. He says here in verse 11, the parable is this.

The seed is the Word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear. Then the devil comes and takes away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be delivered.

Lest they should believe and be saved. And one of the reasons we've misinterpreted this parable for so many years is that we just knee jerk when we see the word save and we think, well, that was the gospel. And Satan snatched away the gospel and they couldn't be saved.

Well, what are we saying here? If that someone's going to preach the gospel to an unbeliever, Satan's going to come and yank the gospel out of the soil. Otherwise they would have been saved. They would have gone to heaven, but now they're going to hell because Satan snatched away the gospel.

So Satan is figuring out who's going to be saved and who isn't because he's going to snatch away the gospel. Not at all. As you know from our detailed study of this parable, this field belongs to God.

This field represents the people of God. What are we going to do with the truth when we hear it? If we let it sit on the surface, we don't meditate on it. We don't let it soak in.

We don't let it germinate in our soul. We just leave it up there on the surface. The first thing that comes along is going to blow it away.

The wind can come. The birds can come. Satan will find some way to get that and not even make it an issue to us anymore.

Otherwise, we would trust it. We would have faith in it and be delivered. It's deliverance in time through faith that he's talking about here.

Look at verse 13, the ones on the rock are those who when they hear, they receive the word with joy, but these have no root. They trust for a while, but in time of testing, they fall away. And remember the picture there? The seed sprouts up, but the sun comes and beats on it and it withers and dies.

And after that seed dies, after that plant dies, the field is just like it was before the seed ever came, right? If this is salvation, well, what about those days when the plant was growing before the sun hit it? Were they saved? And then the sun came and the plant died. Well, now they're not saved anymore. You can't make that work.

But what you can see is that some of us can start down the road for growth and start down the road for production and bearing fruit. And then circumstances choke the Word and it's unfruitful and it dies. And even what we had is taken away.

That's what He's talking about here. So we see once again, the word saved, we need to understand that it covers a lot of ground. Look at chapter 13 of Luke, verse 23.

Jesus is teaching to believers here. And in verse 22 of Luke 13, He went through the cities and villages teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. Reminds us of what it says back in Matthew chapter 4 and in Matthew chapter 9, teaching, preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Then one said to Him, Lord, are there few who are saved? Are there few who will be saved? Who will be delivered? What does Jesus say? Strive to enter through the narrow gate. Now right away, if we're gonna take this as salvation, then you've got to strive. Striving must be a part of getting through the gate because He says strive.

Now how much striving is there in receiving eternal salvation? What do we contribute to our eternal salvation from the lake of fire? By grace you have been saved through faith, gift of God, not of works. Nobody can boast. So why would Jesus say strive? Work at it.

Persevere to get through that narrow gate. Many I say to you will seek to enter, will not be able. This is the narrow gate into the kingdom.

This is the narrow gate into the inheritance. This is the narrow gate to reward and blessing in the eternal future. Many will seek to enter and will not be able.

Reminds us of those Pharisees. Lord, Lord, in your name, we did all these wonderful things. I never knew you.

You'll see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and many from the east, west, north, and south sitting down in the kingdom, you yourselves thrust out. They'll want to enter. They're gonna weep and wail and gnash their teeth.

They're gonna be in the darkness which is outside that kingdom because they were faithless. They were apathetic. They missed their calling.

And that's what he's talking about here. When once the master of the house in verse 25 has risen up and shut the door and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open for us. He will answer and say to you, I do not know you, where you are from.

You will begin to say, but look, we ate and drank in your presence and you taught in our streets. He will say, I tell you, I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from me all you workers of iniquity.

This condemnation is based on their work. It's based on their deeds. They worked iniquity.

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Now, if you're an unbeliever, you're not gonna see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob sitting down in the kingdom. Why? You haven't been resurrected.

The rest of the dead live not until the thousand years are finished. But if you're a faithless believer, you'll see it. You'll see it from the outside.

You will see the kingdom because you've been born again, but you're not going to enter. And notice, you yourselves thrust out. You had the potential to be there, but you're thrust out.

You're like the guest at the wedding banquet. And sorry, you all can't stay. They will come from the east and west, from the north and south and sit down in the kingdom of God.

And the east, west, north and south is a little nudge. It's a reminder that here's people from outside the boundaries of Israel that are gonna be coming in and sitting down. East, west, north and south is outside the land.

Gentiles are gonna be coming in. Indeed, there are last who will be first and there are first who will be last. You're all part of the same group.

You're all in the same list, but there's only a few of you at the top of the list that are gonna enter

and the rest of you are gonna be last. Don't be on the broad way that leads to ruin. Be on the narrow way that leads to life.

Participation in the fullness of that life. Now we could go on. There are passages where being saved is a direct reference to salvation in the traditional sense.

You can think of Ephesians 2, 8 and 9. You can think of John 3, 17, that the world is saved through Christ. You can think of many passages where that's true. But look at Romans chapter 5, verse 9 just by way of review.

Verse 8, God demonstrates his love toward us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us much more than having now been justified by his blood. Now that we are believers, we shall be delivered from wrath through him. This is the wrath at the judgment seat.

This is the wrath that Israel has experienced because of their apathy and faithlessness and rebellion, because of their pursuit of their own righteousness by their own works instead of the righteousness that comes through faith. Having been justified, we have confidence that we will now be delivered from wrath through him. We got our salvation through him.

We can also get our reward through him and our deliverance from God's wrath, God's discipline. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son, much more having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. This is something that happens after salvation.

You can get saved after you're saved. We could go on and on. I've got tons of references here, but I'll leave it to you to look at some of these other passages that talk about, say, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Remember that one? What do you mean work out your salvation? This is deliverance from judgment, deliverance from God's displeasure at the judgment. You've got to work at that. You've got to strive like the Old Testament saints to enter in at the narrow gate.

Broad is the way, wide is the gate that leads to ruin, and that's where most of us as believers are headed. Well, we don't want to be at the bottom of the list. We don't want to lose the opportunity to reflect God's glory and fulfill his purpose for us.

He has loved us with an infinite love and has asked us to emulate that love by loving him in return and loving one another. That's what fulfills the law in the Old Testament. That's what fulfills our calling in the New Testament.

And so as we continue our study here in Romans and see Paul's call to righteousness by faith, to not get entangled in looking for justification in the eyes of people, not get entangled in the idea that you can do a few things and be righteous, not get the idea that because we have prospered, we're in God's good books, and that's all we have to do. These are all mistakes that Israel made.

And so Paul stops right in the middle of his letter in chapter 9, 10, and 11, and he says, if you want to talk about Israel, look at Israel and learn from their example.

They have had to be set aside, and even their rebellion and their rejection is working in the God's plan because it's through that snapping off of those dead branches that the opportunity has been opened up to us as Gentiles. But he says, if you make the same mistake they made, if you're a fruitless branch, God will snap you off just the way he snapped them off. If they will respond, because now we're in the church age and everything depends on faith, and whatever our background, whatever our failures may have been, we may have been snapped off out of the tree, but if we get with the program and respond to this call, God can graft us in again, just like he says he can graft Israel in again.

Now, Paul is going to use this example of Israel that he has spent three chapters on here. When we start chapter 12 next week, he's going to use this as a launching place for exhortation. He's given the examples, he's given the teaching portion of the book, now he's going to say, based on what we've talked about here, here's what you need to do.

And that's where you get Romans 12.1 and Romans 12.2. Don't be conformed to the world, be transformed by the renewing of your minds. What does he say in chapter 12, verse 1, just as something to think about for next week. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, believers, by the mercies of God.

He's just been talking about the mercies of God, that God puts up with Israel, and that God's going to redeem Israel, even in spite of all of their transgressions. He says, God has endured with great patience the vessels of wrath destined for ruin, so that he might have mercy on the vessels of mercy. So he says, I beseech you by the mercy of God.

Think about God's mercy. Think about these great things that he has just listed at the end of Romans chapter 11. Of him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be glory forever. Now, I beseech you by his mercy, present your bodies a living sacrifice. Be willing to forego whatever it is you think is more important, whatever it is you hold dear, and seek those things which are above.

That's the transition point. And this is a big transition because he has demolished the argument of the Judaizers. He's demolished the arguments of these people to say, well, you've got to be obedient and click off these check marks over here in the law to please God.

And Paul has demolished that. And he said, people that thought that way have been set aside and snapped off because they missed the boat. I beseech you by the mercy of God that's there waiting to be poured out.

Get that picture and live by it. Don't consider these other things to be more important than

receiving the mercy of God. We'll close on that note and pick up there in Romans 12, 1 next week.

Father, we thank you for the wonderful truth of your word. We thank you for the tremendous grace that you have expressed toward us and the expressions of your mercy and your compassion in including us in your plan and giving us this wonderful resource of your word and of your spirit. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will take these things and will create a fortress in our soul that can withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, that we will not be led away by our own desires, but that we will see clearly the narrow road and that straight gate that you have set before us.

We pray that as we respond to these things and as you do your work in us and as we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, that in every way and in every part of our life, Jesus Christ will be glorified. We ask it in His name, amen.