

[Romans 11:26 – 12:1]

~ These United States have widely varying and majestic landscapes; dizzying mountain ranges contrasted with unfathomable depths of the Grand Canyon. The heartland of America has Great Plains that are vastly breathtaking. And all of these things reveal the mighty work and beauty of God; just as the Word of God reveals the mighty work and beauty of our Holy High Priest in Heaven, God's Son, the Blessed Hope of the world, Christ Jesus. Our Spiritual Safari has reached several new plateaus on the peaks of God's government but, in this report, we're going even higher.

We're continuing in a section of Romans where Paul deals with God's future purpose for Israel. For two thousand plus years now, God has been saving those who accept Christ; both within and outside of the nation Israel. All men are placed on the same basis before God today. That in no way discounts the Old Testament, though; Gentiles were invited to come to Jerusalem and worship in the temple. And God still has a future plan and purpose for Israel. So, as we pick up in this report we're talking about the future restoration of Israel as a nation....

XI

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

~ Paul has previously made clear that "*all Israel is not Israel;*" so, he is not saying every individual Israelite is saved. This speaks of the national and corporate entity of a nation; and always a remnant. It was a remnant in Elijah's day, and in David's day; and was as true in Paul's day as it is today. God's people will always be a remnant in this age; and will remain a remnant after the church is removed from the earth and the Great Tribulation period begins. We're told twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes, equaling one hundred forty-four thousand, will be sealed. |

do not know if that is the total of the remnant during the Great Tribulation; but it seems likely there could be others.

Either way, the reference is to the nation as a whole; not individuals within the nation. The message to the individual is they must turn from transgression; and a remnant will then return at that time. All in the remnant will be saved in that day is what Paul means. We could reference myriad Scripture concerning this, but the important thing to understand is Paul is speaking of Israel as a nation and *NOT* of individuals....

28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

~ This is a summation of Paul's preceding argument. There are two lines of thought that are in a seeming contradiction; both are true, however. Israel is regarded as an enemy for the sake of the Gentiles – that is, so the Gospel can go to the Gentiles. On the other hand, they're beloved for the sake of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So, it would be impossible to claim to be a Christian and indulge in *ANY* form of anti-Semitism.

The failure of the nation Israel – and our failure today as the church body – doesn't alter the plan and purpose of God. The gifts spoken of are *NOT* natural gifts. The word used is closely related to grace; and the calling is not an invitation, either – but is the effectual calling of God; and it has nothing to do with repentance. Crying a river means nothing – only your faith in Christ matters. Even the faith is not meritorious – it's Christ Who saves. Our faith only enables us to lay hold of Him in a manner we can grasp mentally....

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

~ Paul is speaking to Gentiles as the early church in Rome was largely Gentile. By this time in history, many Gentiles were being saved. Paul is making a contrast between the nation Israel and the Gentiles in this passage. In times past, Gentiles did not believe; but now a remnant of the Gentiles had obtained mercy! Israel, who once did believe – no longer believes! So, God makes provisions to save both Jew and Gentile on the same basis; and that way is through His grace and mercy! God shows the same mercy to both because both are in the same state of rebellion and aggravated unbelief. Well, grace and mercy are both gifts of God, friends....

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

~ The reason for restoring the nation Israel is locked in the depths of riches found only in the wisdom of God. Anyone who tells you otherwise is unworthy of thoughtful consideration. So, from here forward, we need to bear in mind an axiom of truth we picked up way back in Abraham's account: whatever God has done / is doing / will do in the earth is wise, right and is the best that can be done. You and I have an old nature, and our natural man always questions God in every decision and problem. God has every right to do whatever it is He does or allows. Why? – Because He is God. If you don't believe God is doing that which is in yours and His best interest, then *YOUR* thinking is wrong. And, friends, we cannot think wrong and act right! See, you and I are *always* wrong because we're stupid – God is always right because all knowledge is His, His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways!

These two verses are a glorious place to arrive at in agreement with Paul the apostle! The totality of our understanding is now placed within the confines of wisdom and glory of God! This is where we *briefly* contemplate the heights we have reached, friends. We have climbed this treacherously high mountain in this safari and – here we are at the top of comprehension. This is where Satan made his decision. Our feet are going down a treacherous path that is easily abused; but waves of light illuminate us. The

horizon reveals the expanse of our insignificant existence. We can only dream of unsearchable judgment! Let us pray here for wisdom, discernment; and growth in the grace and knowledge of our Savior and Lord. Selah ~

This passage is pure praise to the Lord Jesus. This is non-argumentative; yet presents the greatest argument imaginable. It covers pole to pole and all three hundred sixty-plus-five degrees. It goes out in all directions at every angle and all points of light in the universe originate with this truth. If you do not understand the *why* of God's dealings between Israel, the Gentiles and ourselves as the church body of Christ, it's not because there isn't good evidence and sufficient teaching – the difficulty is with *YOU* and *YOUR* understanding – because we have just been told in this passage. We must remember God said His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways....

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

~ The questions we have in the Authorized Version are simple enough; but the answers aren't as easy and, therefore, not forthcoming! No one knows the mind of the Lord. It was Paul's ambition to know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death! But Paul still didn't know the mind of the Lord. Only the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul could ever have written this epistle. Only the Spirit of God living through us will ever produce anything meaningful in glorifying Himself. You can't do it. I can't do it. I would also caution you to be careful not to cast your pearls before swine when teaching this section of Scripture.

No one advises God how to proceed; but a lot of people seem to want to give Him said advice. When we see those who make a proclamation of healing, for example, they don't realize they are telling God what to do. God doesn't need their advice – and He doesn't take it – and I doubt He

wants to even hear it; but they keep it coming. The Lord Jesus never asked the disciples for advice when He was here on earth – not *one* time. In fact, Jesus ignored their unsolicited advice when the disciples told Jesus to send the crowd away. Jesus fed the crowd. Every time Jesus asked them a question, He already knew what He was going to do. God doesn't need our advice, friends – and He doesn't take it. Make a note.

Paul asks who had first given to God. Well, how about you? Have you ever really given anything to God? See, You and I *can't* give God anything. It's already His to begin with. If we could give something to God, that would place Him in the awkward position of owing us something. That's never going to happen. I will say this, though: one of the main reasons most of us are so poor today is because we don't even *want* to give Him anything. Whatever your purpose in your heart to give to God, He is going to turn right around and give much more back to you....

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

XII

1 I beg of you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

~ Verse thirty-six of chapter eleven has been described as the most sublime apostrophe in existence; even on the pages of Scripture itself. God is our all-sufficient cause, source and resource of everything. He is our provider and mighty sustainer in His universe. God is going to call every creature to account to Him; because all things flow towards God. All glory, praise and honor belongs to Him. Those who don't give God His rightful place are robbing Him of the glory that belongs only to Him. That must and will be judged.

Chapter twelve brings us another new division in Romans; and it is the practical application of all of Paul's previous theological arguments as outlined in Romans - beginning in chapter twelve and continuing through

the end. Verse one opens with “*therefore*,” which ties it in with everything preceding. One word gathers the entire epistle thus far. There is no law here; no thunder and lightning from Mount Sinai. Paul begins with, “... *I beg of you*...” Moses commanded; but the apostle exhorts. This approaches the suggestion that no commandment follows the fire from Mount Sinai because we have the ‘mercies’ – *plural* – of God. The plural is a Hebraism that simply denotes abundance of mercy. God is so rich in mercy, friends! I know that because He has to use a lot of it on me. I suspect He uses quite a bit on you, too? We’re talking about the compassion, tenderness and pity of God Almighty. His compassions never fail.

Then, we are called upon to yield and to ‘*present*.’ This is the same word we had in chapter six where some say the application was to the mind; and, here, the application is to the will. Well, that’s a false distinction – the appeal in *BOTH* is to the *WILL*! Chapter six brought us the way to Christian character as we yielded to Him. Here, we have the way to Christian consecration and *conduct* as we continue to yield to Him. Our bodies contain our total personality; the body is the only physical means by which we can express ourselves. When the mind, the affections, and the will are yielded to Him, then the Holy Spirit of God can use the body.

Vincent assembled these Scriptures to reveal a wide latitude of glorifying God in our bodies; because we were bought with a price. We need to really get hold of the fact that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Our words and deeds are our reasonable, rational and realistic service to God. Let’s make sure they are well-pleasing to Him. This is where the Gospel walks in shoe leather, by the way. It has to be real. In the first part of Romans, the reader saw the helmet of salvation and the shield of faith. In this last section, our feet become protected with a preparation of the Gospel. When we conclude Romans, we should be able to stand, walk, and prevail in any spiritual battle — although we are *never* called to fight. We’re commanded to stand. This is where our careful Christian walk and marathon run in the race intersect.

We considered a practical application in our reports on sanctification. This is a very practical section, too. But, there is a sharp distinction in the two sections. Under sanctification, we were dealing with Christian *character*. In

this section, we are dealing with Christian *conduct*. When we examined sanctification, we examined the inner man. Here we consider the outward manner. There, it was the condition of the Christian; but here, we have the consecration of the believer. There, we saw who the Christian is; but here, we see what a genuine Christian does.

We also learned about the privileges of grace. This section contains additional precepts of grace. The annunciation of our way of life must be followed by evidence of that profession, friends. Otherwise, it's just lip service. Announcing justification of faith must be augmented by activities of life. Further, the conduct of Christians must be expressed in this world by their relationship to those with whom they come into contact. Naturally, these relationships must be regulated in some way. This is the way.

It's very easy to write a long list of rules of conduct. Paul is *NOT* doing that, though; he has already delivered us from the Mosaic System of Levitical Law. That was not done to put us under some other law, either. There are a lot of Christians who don't do this and don't do that; the problem is: they don't do anything unless they're doing everything. Personally, I wish they didn't gossip so much. Those who think they are separated from and have no sin – watch them *very* carefully! They are *ALWAYS* carnal Christians.

These are not rules and regulations coming up; they are tremendous spiritual principles that will correctly guide the believer. The Holy Spirit has given us a road map of life. It shows the topography, the curves, orientation; but it doesn't give any speed limit. Detours are clearly marked. The city of Vanity is surveyed, and the exits are clearly marked. The believer is told about lodging and restaurants; but is never told to patronize any certain place. The believer is told to lead; but many different choices are given as to which route to follow.

Our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God by descending from dizzying pinnacles on the mountaintops of God's government back to the wide-open Great Plains where the Word of God is worked out in our hearts and lives today. This is also the realm of existence we move on and have our being in here on earth. The child of God has a relationship to Him. We also have a relationship to the gifts of

the Spirit of God. We have a relationship to other believers; and to unbelievers; to government; to our neighbors, and to those we deal with in our day-to-day existence. We're in the world, but not of the world. Either way, there is a very real *duty* a genuine child of God has in this world. We will examine that responsibility as we continue through Romans ~