



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 3:1–4, 9:1–5, 15:7–13

"The Jews and the Oracle of God"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading for this morning is in Romans chapter 3. We're reading verses 1 through 4. And then since that is a relatively brief section, we want to read two more brief sections from the epistle as well. So will you turn first to Romans chapter 3, verse 1 through verse 4? The apostle has just said that "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." And then speaking for an imaginary objector he says, "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Incidentally that word circumcision has an article in the original text at this point and we could render this, "What profit is there of the circumcision?" Or "What profit has the circumcision?" And the fact that this is a reference to that nation rather than the right itself is evidenced by verse 2 when he says, "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto *them* were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

And then in chapter 9, verse 1 through verse 5 the apostle gives us a passage that in some ways is parallel with the passage in chapter 3. While you're finding chapter 9, I'll begin in verse 1.

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

As we shall see in the message, I hope, this is an explanation of what the advantage of the Jew is. And then in chapter 15, verse 7 through verse 13. Again in a passage that is in many ways parallel to the two that we have previously read, the apostle, speaking about receiving certain brethren who have differing views on indifferent things says in the 7th verse,

"Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, (probably something like for the faithfulness of God) to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye nations; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the nations; in him shall the nations trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit."

Those verses beginning with verse 9 through verse 12 are a series of quotations from the Old Testament from which the apostle seeks to support the statement that he made in verse 8 and the first part of verse 9, which illustrates the fact that in the apostle's thinking there was a very close

connection between the promises of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must never make such a great disjunction between the Old Testament and the New that we fail to see that the New Testament contains the fulfillment of those Old Testament prophecies. It is true that in some ways this age is different, but it also true that it is a direct continuation of the Old Testament revelation in that in the coming of Christ we have the fulfillment of those Messianic promises. May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[prayer removed from audio]

[Message] We're turning to the Epistle to the Romans again, and our subject for this morning is "The Jews and the Oracles of God." The Nation Israel was established again in 1948, as we all know. Since the establishment of the nation, interest in the prophetic word has mounted. The sales of books that deal primarily with the Scripture in the future have skyrocketed. Not long ago, a few years back, in the '70s for that has been in the sense the age of this skyrocketing interest in the future, an old book was published and within six months over fifty thousand copies had been sold of this old book. As we all know, the *Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey has had a remarkable circulation. Over ten million copies of that particular volume have been published since it was published in the earlier part of the last decade. In a recent from Zondervan Publishing House, that was the figure that they put on that particular volume.

Not only that, but we have seen a great interest, generally, in our population in the future by the bumper stickers that you read on the back of automobiles, and even on the inside. Some automobile stickers we saw a few years back that said, "Guess who's coming again?" And on the inside on the dash board, I remember getting in a Christian's car a few years ago in San Diego, and I looked down there and it said, "If I'm raptured take the wheel." [Laughter] And I immediately began to think about how I was going to reach across there and get that wheel. [Laughter] It just

plunged into my mind. [Laughter] The secular periodicals have taken a great interest in this, too. One in the seventies, a *Time Religion* subtitle was "Is the End Near?"

And not only that, but there has been a great interest among the Jewish people as well; they have manifested interest in what the Scriptures have to say about the future. An Oxford Scholar, a very well known-man who used to teach in Canada, G. B. Caird, has written a respected commentary on the Book of Revelation. He referred to the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelation as "the paradise of cranks and fanatics." Well, if Revelation chapter 20 is the "paradise of cranks and fanatics," then there are certainly a lot of them around today, because many of them are peering into the future, as it is set forth in the apocalypse, with a great deal of pressure. I remember a few years back, however, that there were others who discounted all of this. One local pastor here in Dallas said about the Book of Revelation that "John wrote that book when he was senile." So not everybody has been favorably impressed with what the Bible has to say about the future.

Another feature of this interest in the prophetic word over the past decade has been the interest that has arisen in the relationship of Judaism to Christianity. In fact, there has been talk about a new theology of Judaism since there has been some sort of rapprochement between the Roman Catholic Church and Judaism since Vatican II, and other meetings of the World Council of Churches. There have been, of course, many rabbis who have made statements concerning the Christian faith that are of interest, because they have been disturbed because an organization such as Jews for Jesus has arisen and has had quite an impact among younger Jewish people in the United States. In a *Newsweek* article of a few years ago, one of the rabbis, Rabbi Norman Frimer, of New York is said to have complained, "They're saying we are rejected by God and need salvation. I'm insulted by that kind of presumption." I might just interject here that I was reading in the newspaper this past week, and there is a governor of a well-known state who is a Gentile who has said much the same thing. He said that he doesn't take a great deal of interest in this talk about being born-again. He was born one time, and he was very well-pleased with that first birth. And he did not need any further birth. It's the same governor who also said just a year or so ago when he assumed office, that

he hoped that we would pray to God for guidance, but if God was unable to carry out the guidance that we needed, then he perhaps would supply what God was unable to do. [Laughter]

But there is another rabbi, a reform rabbi, Balfour Brickner, who commented according to this *Newsweek* article, "Everybody has the right to proselytize, but people also have the right to exist. The coming together of religious and political conservatism, especially this looking to the sky for salvation, is exactly the kind of environment which led to the advent of Jesus two thousand years ago." Well it's plain that Rabbi Brickner thinks that the coming of Jesus Christ was not a good thing. At the heart of this interest in the future, and particularly as it pertains to the relationship between Judaism and Christianity is the question, are the promises to Israel still valid? What effect upon them has national rejection of Jesus had? In other words, we all know that Israel according to Scriptures, the generation that was alive when Jesus was here, rejected the claims of Jesus of Nazareth. Does that have an affect upon the promises that were given in the Old Testament to the Nation Israel?

Now the passage that we're looking at has a very important word on that point. But the apostle will give the full treatment of the answer to that question in chapters 9 through 11, but the anticipations are given here in verses 1 through 8. We'll deal this morning with verses 1 though 4. Now, Paul is answering in this third chapter Jewish counterclaims, and in the course of doing this he's drawing the net tighter about human nature. He's already shown us in chapter 1 that the Gentiles are sinners, and then in chapter 2 he has begun by thinking about those who stand by his side applauding what he says about the Gentiles but who themselves are doing the same things. And so, in order to handle them he has set forth the principles of divine judgment and then turned his attention specifically to the Jew. He said, "But if thou art called a Jew and retest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God." And then he deals with them, and he shows that according to their privileges and their practices and their position as the circumcision, they too are guilty. He points out that the fact that one is a Jew outwardly does not mean that he is a real Jew. And the fact that he has been circumcised in the flesh that does not mean that he really has been circumcised in the full sense of the Old Testament.

Now, you'll remember that when God gave his promises to Abraham, he gave them as unconditional promises. And he gave the right of circumcision as the sign and the seal of the righteousness of faith. All male Jewish individuals were required to be circumcised. This was the sign that they belong to the Lord God and they were the recipients of those promises. Now, it was never intended that that right should be that which determined their relationship to the Lord. It was a sign and a seal. In other words, they were not only to have the right of circumcision, but they were to have exercised faith in the God of Israel, so the apostle turns upon that particular point and those that held that and says in the last verses of chapter 2 that circumcision, if that the person who is circumcised, does not live like a circumcised individual, he's like an uncircumcised individual. And then to startle them even more he says that if the circumcision practice is the law, then their uncircumcision is recognized by the Lord God for uncircumcision.

Well that was a startling idea, and while the prophets had pointed out that one must be circumcised in heart they had not, so far as I can tell, gone so far as to say that even the uncircumcised if they kept the law, they were recognized as circumcised. So the apostle is, as I say, drawing the net tighter around them. Our Berne pastor Luthi has said, "Like a herdsman carefully and skillfully driving his unruly sheep, and cattle, and horses toward the narrow door of the stable, Paul has led us up to the narrow door of heaven." And then Luthi adds an interesting expression, I like him as a commentary for these expressions, he says, "Luckily for us, we have not succeeded in giving the shepherd the slip. Happy is the man who has had the divine light fall upon the darkness of his sin. He's as fortunate as a man ill unto death who has had a doctor finally diagnose his illness and give him the medicine that will deliver him from it. That's what Paul is doing; he's trying to show us how sick we are, how perilous is our condition, that we are truly a dying people; as he prepares to give us the remedy in chapter 3 of the Epistle to the Romans."

But now a Jewish man listening to the apostle at this point would have said, but Paul, the Old Testament is full of the promises of God that were given to the Jewish nation. What is the advantage of being a Jew? What's the profit in the circumcision then? Now, this question I say

arises out of the context. You can tell that by the way in which the apostle writes. He says, "What advantage *then?*" He's going to draw an inference from the preceding context. Now, as I say he's shown that the Jew is to be judged on the same principles as the Gentiles. So the problem for them, the Jewish people, would be this, does this completed Jew, Paul, using the expressions that Christian Jews often use today. They're still Jews when they are converted, but they are completed Jews. That is, they have come to a true faith in the Messiah the Lord Jesus. Does this completed Jew, they were asking Paul, think that God originated distinctions between Israel and the Gentiles have been obliterated? The Old Testament is full of magnificent promises. As someone has said, "It's almost as if the prophets dipped their pens in a rainbow in order to speak of those beautiful promises given to the Nation Israel." Is the Old Testament with these great prophecies and promises a gigantic collection of false hopes? Or is the Christian God unable to carry out this grand scheme, which the Scriptures of the Old Testament set forth?

Now if one answered to this negatively, that is there is no longer any hope for the Jewish nation, then that would be a very offensive thing to Jewish national sentiment, but it also would be very offensive to the theology of the Old Testament; because in the theology of the Old Testament promises were given to the Nation Israel unconditionally. When we were studying the Book of Genesis not too long ago, we came to Genesis chapter 15, verse 7 and following, the passage that was preached on this morning in the Believers Bible Hour over KRLD, in that particular section, you'll remember, Moses the Prophet there writes about the inauguration of the Abrahamic covenant, or its confirmation in the sacrifice that Abraham offered. And in that sacrifice, the animals were divided placed on one side over against the other, the birds were also placed, one on one side and one on the other probably. And in as was the custom for the confirmation of a covenant, individuals were to pass down between the pieces signifying that they would be faithful unto death to the conditions of the covenant.

Well, Abraham was given that vision of the stars at night, and then God told him to arrange the animals for a sacrifice, and he waited all day long, and then as the sun was going down, he had

waited obviously over twelve hours, as the sun was going down he fell into a light sleep and then had a nightmare, a kind of nightmare for a terror of great darkness came over him. And then in the midst of this he saw the animal sacrifice there and the pieces over against another, and he looked out and there was a burning fiery furnace, smoking furnace, coming forward. It was obviously designed to be representative of the presence of God. And that burning fiery furnace came down between the pieces, and Abraham was not invited to follow, and as the representation of the presence of God passed down through the pieces, the covenant was confirmed. And God gave his promise.

Now, that was a clear way of saying the promises that are given to Abraham are unconditional promises. They do not rest upon the obedience of Abraham, "FOR I am going to fulfill these promises." Now, one would say, "Now wait a minute, do you mean that they don't rest upon Abraham and his seed's ultimate faith?" Well, not in the sense that they are conditions that they are to be fulfilled by man., Of course, the enjoyment of these promises is contingent upon the faith of Abraham and his seed, but the ultimate fulfillment of them is dependent upon the Lord unconditionally, because he guarantees that in the future, that nation will come to faith. In other words, he not only gives the promises, he not only guarantees the promises, but he guarantees that ultimately there will be the proper faith attitude for the reception of those promises. They are truly unconditional promises. Now, that is the background of this section.

So the Jewish man answers, "What advantage then has the Jew? If the Jew is just like the Gentile, and the Gentile is just like the Jew, then what is the advantage of the Jew? Paul, your theology is faulty. Your theology is inconsistent with our admitted privileges. We were not as the Gentiles in the Old Testament; we were given certain advantages, certain promises. What then is the advantage of the Jews?" The apostle had had many people ask him that question as he preached the gospel out in the open. All of the Jewish people who heard him speak would have had this question. And anyone who reads the Bible would have this question. So reminiscent of the stoic diatribe style of writing, the apostle poses the question rhetorically. "What advantage then has the Jew?" In other

words, does the covenant relationship, which has been established by the Lord God for centuries, does that covenant relationship count?

Now, he says, "What profit is there of circumcision?" That's a reference, I say, to the nation. So is the covenant still enforced? Do the Jews really have something that one could call a plus? What answer is the apostle going to give to this nation of revilers who reviled the Lord Jesus Christ when he came, who ultimately participated in his crucifixion and are guilty of it, as also the Gentiles, and have now become persecutors of the faith. What answer will he give them? Well, now the answer that the apostle gives is not a very pleasing answer for Gentiles, many of them that I know. Because many would like to think that because Israel has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, their promises are cancelled. And some of this is traceable to an antipathy to the Jewish nation.

Now, I've tried to analyze anti-Semitism, and my answer is, of course, my own. And I know this a rather touchy subject, but in the final analysis, I think that most anti-Semitism is traceable to a rejection of the sovereign grace of God in election. Most of it is traceable to that, finally, in my opinion; I may be wrong. That, however, doesn't touch what Paul is saying too specifically. He says now without any vacillation whatsoever, with this nation of Jewish people in the spiritual shambles of rebellion, with Christian churches springing up everywhere all over that world, as the believers have been forced out to spread the word, that they still have an advantage. He says, "Much every way," in answer to that question.

"What advantage then has the Jew?" Why he has an advantage that is much in every way. C. H. Dodd of the University of Cambridge, who taught there until relatively recent times when he retired, was probably as respected a liberal professor of New Testament as any man in the western world. Professor Dodd said, "The logical answer on the basis of Paul's argument is none whatever." In other words, that's what the apostle should have logically answered, after saying that a Jew is one who is a Jew inwardly, and circumcision is true circumcision if it is not simply in the flesh, but in the inward man. He should have said the Jews don't have any advantage. "But," Professor Dodd says, "in this case what got the best of Paul was his deeply ingrained Pharisaic and patriotic prejudice." In

other words, his prejudice overmastered his logic at this point, and as a result of it he still said, contrary to the logic of the preceding section, they have an advantage that is much every way.

You know, nations love to have a most favored nation relationship with the United States. In the economies of the nations of the western world, it's a very favorable position, or was at least until relatively recent times, to have most favored nation status with the United States. The Russians loved to have that relationship, because it gave them certain advantages in trade. Now, in a sense what we are saying here is Israel has had a most favored nation relationship with the Lord God. We may not like it, but nevertheless that's what the Bible teaches, and this God of the Bible is a God of distinguishing grace.

Now, we also should say this lest we forget it, that because they had a most favored relationship with the Lord God it also meant that they were especially likely to be judged by the Lord God, too. For with this special relationship that they had with the Lord God went their exposure to divine judgment. For example, Amos the Prophet said, concerning Israel, speaking for the Lord God, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Well, now it is clear that the Lord knows about all the families of the earth, but he said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth."

What is meant by that? Well, he means that in a special sense he knows the Nation Israel, that is, he has chosen them among all the families of the earth. But then the next words are often forgotten. They are "Therefore I will punish for all your iniquities." So there is a peril in unconditional election. We preach unconditional election in Believers Chapel, that's the doctrine of the Bible; it's the doctrine of the Apostle Paul. Our election is not based upon the faith that God foresaw that we might have. It's based upon his sovereign good pleasure. It is based upon his sovereign will. He foreordained some. Now, the very fact that we have, however, received an unconditional election exposes us to the possibility of judgment, Paul says. "Therefore I will punish you for your iniquities." There is a peril in unconditional election, and the apostle speaks of it there. So in the midst of our discussion of things, we should not forget that this most favored nation

relationship is one that exposed the Nation Israel to judgment, and as a result of their disobedience, they've been scattered to the four corners of the earth.

So the apostle says, "Much every way." But then he says, "First of all, our text translates this chiefly. Evidently the apostle had some seconds and thirds that he could have spoken about, but he's not always as precise as we would like him to be. He's not as neat as we would like for him to be. So he said, "First of all, because unto them were committed the oracles of God." The expression, "the oracles of God," has been given several different interpretations. Many of the commentators, both modern and contemporary and both liberal and conservative, have said that the reference is the whole of the Old Testament. "Much every way, because unto them were given the Bible." But the next verse says, "But what if some did not believe?"

Well, there's no question about belief of the Bible by these people he's talking about. These people he's talking about believe the Bible. The issue was not whether they believed the Bible. The issue is, did they believe in those Messianic promises that are contained in the Bible. But other commentators, also ancient and modern, have said this more than simply the Bible. In fact, it's a more special kind of meaning. Shedd, one of the commentators on the Epistle to the Romans and a very good one, has said that the reference is to special disclosures of God. That is, not simply the Bible as a whole, but to certain special revelations contained within the Bible. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, maybe the greatest theologian of the 20th century, said that the reference here to is oracular utterances. And that's true to the meaning of the Greek word, *logion*, which is used here. That is, they are messages given by the Lord God, which are like revelation.

Now, when I became a Christian in Birmingham, Alabama a long time ago, I was told by the man who led me to the Lord, that I should read the Bible. But I should read it in a certain way. He said, "Now you shouldn't start in Genesis. You should start at John. The reason that you should start at John is because it's easier. And read John through Revelation. That's truth that pertains particularly to us in the present age," Dr. Barnhouse said. "Then, he said, "go back and read Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in which great stress is laid on the New Testament as the fulfillment of

the Old. The prophecies of the Old Testament being fulfilled in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, and when you finish Luke, then go back at Genesis. And begin at Genesis and read through Malachi." Well, I didn't know any better than to do exactly what he said. And so, someone gave me a Bible about this time, put in my hands a Scofield Reference Bible, bound in cloth. It used to sell for about \$3.25. [Laughter] And I took that Bible which was given to me, the Bible I had, if I had one, I'm sure if I had opened it would have fallen to pieces. It had not been used in years. It probably was covered in dust. I liked this one; it was new.

And someone, anxious that I should grow in grace, gave me the Bible. There are people who criticize the Scofield Bible, and there are many notes in the Scofield Bible, both the Old and the New that are suspect. There are some statements in the Scofield Bible, which I do not accept. But I did never, as long as I read the Scofield Bible, I did never believe that those notes were to be accorded the same authority that the text was. I didn't know of anyone like that. I know a lot of critics of that Bible have said that people read the notes as if they were the text. I've never run across a person like that, but there may have been one lurking somewhere in some church. [Laughter] I don't deny that that is possible. And I just want to say this, that that was of great help to me in my Christian faith, and I still feel that when a person picks the Scofield Reference Bible up and reads it, if he will do what I did, read all of those notes at the bottom of the page. When he gets through reading the whole of the Bible and all of those notes, he will have a pretty good introduction to the theology of the Scriptures.

Now, he'll have some Arminianism, but part of the doctrine of sanctification is to be brought progressively to perfection, as the Scriptures speak. And that, of course, is the process of being brought from Arminianism to the doctrines of the sovereignty of God. So, keep reading the Bible and you'll come to an understanding of the spiritual things. But still, I can remember when I read that old Scofield Bible, it said, "unto the oracles of God," there was a little note that said something like "this is a reference to the Bible." Well now, I remembered that there was some question about some of the authors of the Old Testament being Jewish people, such as Job for

example. But nevertheless I didn't accept the note as being inspired of God. I just kept it in my mind, and whenever I read this, "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." I puzzled over the precise meaning of that expression. I've come to believe that what is referred to here is what we would call the Messianic promises. They are the oracles of God. In pre-Christian usage, this term is usually used of short sayings traceable to a deity.

In the Old Testament Greek translation of the Hebrew, it is used of particular sayings of the deity, primarily. In the New Testament if you will look at all of the places in which this word occurs, you will come to the conclusion, I think, that what is referred to are certain specific statements of the deity. So what is referred to here, I think most likely and many contemporary as well as ancient commentators have agreed, is the Old Testament Messianic promises. And if we read Romans 9:4-5, as we did in our Scripture reading, at this point, it's almost as if Paul was reciting what is the advantage of the Jew in those verses.

Then in Romans 15:7-13, the other passage we read in our Scripture reading, the word promises is mentioned there. Jesus Christ came as the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. Those are the advantages of the Jew. So when he says, " Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God," he has reference to the Messianic promises. Those Messianic promises are unconditional promises. So with Christian churches everywhere and with the work of God flourishing outside of the Nation Israel, he says that still, today, the Jews have an advantage that may be called, "Much every way." And if I may say this, I agree with the apostle. And I agree with the apostle, in 1980 they still have an advantage and a profit that can be called "much every way." For those prophecies and promises are unconditional promises.

Now, he says that they were committed to them. That's an important word, for that means that they do not have them for the purpose that they shall rest upon them only. But Israel was given their promises in order that they might be the stewards for the grace of God for the Gentile world. Just as the church of God today has been given the kingdom of God as steward. So, we are stewards

of the grace of God. That's why we preach the word. That's why we have a radio program, or radio programs all over the United States now, fifteen to twenty broadcasts. It's because we are stewards of the grace of God. The electing purpose of the grace of God that has singled us out for this advantage, this distinguishing grace is designed that we might be the instrumentalities for the preaching of the word of God. That is what we are trying to do, make Christ known. That may be startling to some of you who think that Calvinists are not supposed to be evangelistic. Well, what you need to do is to find out something about Calvinism, it is evangelistic in its nature. And those who have truly held to it have been those who have proclaimed the word of God. We don't apologize for it, we preach it.

Now, what a man standing by would say, "Wait a minute Paul, those Jewish people didn't believe. They have an advantage much every way, but what about the unbelief of the Nation Israel?" So Paul had this question often, "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" Now, this unbelief is related to the prophecies, the promises. You'll notice, he doesn't say they all did. He says, "What if some did not believe?" Because all Jewish people did not disbelieve. The Christian church was Jewish in the beginning. God fulfilled his promises to the nation in the coming of Christ, in the fact that the Christian church was largely Jewish in its beginning. That was the fulfillment of the promise. Out of the Jewish church, I don't like to use that term because that's been misused by some ultra dispensationalists, but this church was largely Jewish in its ultimate makeup, has gone out the word of God, "for those were faithful to their stewardship."

But the nation did not believe as a whole, that race, when our Lord was here. Shall their unbelief cancel the promises made by God? Paul considers this an attack on the voracity and faithfulness of God. He says, "When a person suggests that his promises are not going to be fulfilled, that's to attack his faithfulness." So he answers it in his characteristic way, bluntly. He says, "God forbid," an expression that has been translated by some as "Good heavens no." It's literally,

"May it not come to be." God will keep his word. So he rejects the question as abhorrent, the idea that unbelief would cancel the promises of God.

Further he says that if all men are liars, God will be true. And then in order to clinch it he cites a passage from Holy Scripture in which David confesses his own guilt and acknowledges the voracity, and truthfulness, and faithfulness of the Lord God. "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." So, to answer the question, do the Jews have an advantage? Yes, much every way. They have the Messianic promises. "But Paul, what about their national unbelief, doesn't that cancel those promises?" "No," Paul says, "God forbid. Those promises still pertain to the Nation Israel."

Now, Charles Hodge was one of the great theologians of the 20th century. He was a post-millennialist. Mr. Hodge said, "God is faithful to his promises, but he never promises to pardon the impenitently guilty." That's right. "God is faithful to his promises, but he never promises to pardon the impenitently guilty." And there is no, so far as I can tell, no admission yet, no hint of national admission of guilt yet by the Jewish nation. They are impenitent as a nation, not individually, impenitent as a nation, and they are unpardoned to the present day. But the Scriptures also go on to say this, Hodge is right; God is faithful to his promises. He never promises to pardon the impenitently guilty, but the Bible also states that the impenitent are often brought to penitence, and when they are brought to penitence, they are pardoned.

In fact, that's what the Bible teaches, and this is what the Bible teaches concerning the Nation Israel. The Bible teaches that they shall look unto him who they have pierced and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son. In other words, there shall be a national day of penitence for the Nation Israel in the future, at the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this [is] traceable to the mercy and faithfulness of God, for that text said before, it says, "They shall look unto him who they pierced." It says, "He shall pour out upon them the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall then look unto him who they have pierced and mourn for him." In

other words, he will fulfill his promises, because he guarantees that the day is coming when he will change their hearts from impenitence to penitence, and then they shall be pardoned.

Now, if you object to that, you object to the method by which you, yourself, were saved. That's exactly how you were saved. You were impenitent, and God in his wonderful grace, his effectual grace, changed your heart, and in changing your heart, brought you to penitence, repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If he has been so gracious to you, and if it is such a miracle that you are saved, and in case you don't believe it let me assure you it is. As I look out at you, what a miracle that this crowd of people looking at me should be saved people. Well that same miracle God is going to perform in the future for the Nation Israel.

A generation ago Robert E. Spier said, "How little you hear about our Lord's return anywhere in our churches today." Times have changed, although we need more sanity in our prophets. We need a great deal more sanity in the preaching of the prophetic word. We have a tendency today, among many of those who preach the prophetic word, to set dates, not specific dates, they often set years. They will say, for example, "We do not believe that we will be here in 1980." One man, whose books have probably been read more than anyone else used to say that. He would say, "I don't think we're going to be here in 1980." Well, here we are in 1980. That just proves he was a false prophet. We knew that all along, of course. He was a false prophet; we don't have any prophets today. We need more sanity in our prophets today.

They need to study the Bible a little bit more, and be more careful about the things that they say. Because otherwise, they'll be looked with Joachim of Fiore, who said he Lord would come in 1260." Or William Miller and the Seventh Day Adventists with him then who said that he would come on March 21, 1843, and then when that passed, he said he had misfigured [Laughter] it was March 21, 1884. And then there was that family in Arkansas, a group of families in Arkansas just five years ago, who left their jobs, closed their businesses, took their children out of school, stopped paying their bill, that's one of the advantages of holding to views like this, [Laughter] and moved into a small one bath three bedroom house. They did so because one of the women said she had seen a

vision in which the Lord told her that he was coming soon, and that every person at that prayer meeting should remain in the house until he came. Those are ridiculous statements. There are Christians even in our evangelical company who love the sensational. Let me urge you to study the Bible, you'll be more careful in the things that you say. But you will not give up the unconditional promises of God and the hope of the future. He is coming, and he is coming again. And at that time, the Jews will be Jews for Jesus, rabbis and all to the glory and the grace of God.

If you're here this morning and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we remind you of his faithfulness and his voracity. The promises of the word of God may be relied upon, they may be counted upon. And when they teach that the Lord Jesus Christ has offered an all atoning sacrifice for sinner, you can count upon that. And the promise is that whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed, you may feel absolutely free and sure that when you flee to that cross, and lay hold of that and that alone for your salvation, stopping your trust in other things that characterize your first birth, then you will have a new birth, a new hope, the forgiveness of sins, justification of life. You shall have assurance for time and for eternity. Come to the Lord Jesus Christ; put your trust in him. By the grace of God receive, as a free gift, the salvation that he offers to penitent sinners. Shall we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] We are grateful to Thee, Lord, for this wonderful section from Thy word. And we thank Thee that the apostle has given us an indication of that which he shall expound in more detail later. It has whetted our appetite for the great promises as they concern the greatest of the purposes, the purposes for the Nation Israel. We thank Thee for all of the marvelous ways in which Thy purpose has been working. We thank Thee that some of the branches have been broken off, that unnatural braches may be grafted in in grace. We praise Thee that in Thy grace, we Gentiles, unnatural branches, have been grafted into the olive tree. We look forward to the day when the natural branches shall be regrafted into their own olive tree.

“The Jews and the Oracle of God” by S. Lewis Johnson
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

If there are some here, Lord, who do not have Christ, we pray O God, that Thou wilt work mightily in their hearts. Show them the futility and ...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]