

Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 11, Romans 9:17-11:32

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session 11 on Romans 9:17-11:32.

Paul has been talking about predestination, and as I've said before, I don't want to get into all the logistics of how that works.

There are some things that are probably beyond my intellect in figuring out God's mind, even though he's given us some insight into his divine mind, both by what he's taught us in scripture and by how he works with us by his spirit in our lives. And of course, what's canonical is what's in scripture. But what we do see here that I think we can all agree on in Romans 9, God is sovereign and God predestines.

And the point of this predestination is that it's by grace. It's nothing we did to merit God's love in our lives. It's nothing we did to merit God turning us to himself.

It's just God reaching out to us. And that's certainly true in my life. We see here also that God in verse 17, God raised up Pharaoh as what he's going to call a few verses later, a vessel of wrath.

God says I raised you up for this purpose. Well, why did God raise up this particular Pharaoh? He wanted a Pharaoh who would resist his will so that he could show his signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. And there's actually some mercy in this too, in the context in Exodus 9:15, which is quoted here in Romans 9:17. There's some mercy in the context because God says, I could have obliterated you.

I could have destroyed you and your people with you, but I raised you up for this purpose and I established you for this purpose so that I could show my glory in you. So, in Exodus 9:16, instead God established Pharaoh to reveal God's power. And as Paul puts it in 9:17 so that God's name would be proclaimed in all the earth.

You have this over and over again in Exodus, Exodus 7:5, Exodus 7:17, and so forth. God is doing this so that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. Later on, he does things, well, and actually he's already done some things, but in terms of judgments even, God does things so that the Israelites may know that I am the Lord.

God wants his name to be proclaimed through all the earth. Paul says that. Exodus talking about revealing God's power implies that as well.

And this is something that's not just for here. It's something Paul cares about elsewhere in Romans. Remember Romans 1:5, Paul's mission was to bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles for God's namesake, for the honor of God's name.

Well, here too, God has acted for the honor of his name. What's the point of the honor of his name? So that he'll be proclaimed among the nations, so that people will know who he is. He goes on in the context of 9:24 so that he can bring for himself a people not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles.

Whether it's Egyptians or in 1 Samuel, he acted in a way so that the Philistines, who already knew about what he'd done among the Egyptians, could know that he was God. The Israelites treat the ark in 1 Samuel 4 and 5, the Israelites treat the ark as almost a magical thing that's going to protect them. The ark, bring it here, it will save us.

And it doesn't save them. Hophni and Phinehas are living in sin or have been living in sin and judgment comes on Israel. And then in chapter 5, the Philistines, take aside the ark that they've captured.

They're all excited about it. And they find their God fallen in his face. They've fallen in his face before the ark.

Well, they don't know what's wrong with that. So, they just set the God back up. The next day he's fallen in his face, his head and his hands have been cut off the same way as you find your captured enemies.

You could cut off the hands to count how many you've killed or David does it with another body part. So, here's Dagon fallen in his face before God, and actually like a defeated enemy, fallen in his face before God. And they say, okay, well, and meanwhile, God is smiting the people with tumors.

And they finally decide to send the ark back. God was working in that case, not just to get the ark back to Israel, which he was, but also so that the Philistines might know that he was the Lord. God already cared about the Gentiles.

In Abram's seed, all the nations of the earth and all the families of the earth were to be blessed because God wanted to show his purposes to all peoples and wanted them to glorify him because it's in him that we have life. In the words of Jeremiah, you hew out for yourselves cisterns, water tanks, broken water tanks that can hold no water. You've rejected me, the fountain of living water.

Or in Hosea, you're against me, against your help. God is the best thing for us. God has our best interests at heart and God's glory and our best interests normally coincide.

But in any case, we should have zeal for God's glory also. God shows mercy and hardens whom he wills, 9:18. Well, this is using the language of Exodus 33:19. In verse 15, God spoke to Moses and was saying, I'll have compassion on him.

I have compassion. Well, that was in the context of telling Moses that he was going to, certainly Moses was somebody he would have compassion on. He would show him his glory, but he was going to punish those who disobeyed him.

And here we also read how God hardens Pharaoh. Exodus 9:12, Exodus 10:27, Exodus 11:10, God hardened Pharaoh. Now we also know from Exodus 8:15 and 32, Pharaoh hardened his own heart, but that's not Paul's point here.

Paul is pointing to God's sovereignty and how that exactly works out with human free will or human choices. You know how he can say to Samuel, I'm sending you somebody tomorrow and you're to anoint him as king over Israel. And as far as Saul knows, he's not being sent anywhere.

He's out looking for his lost donkeys. And his young man is with him and says, you're looking for these lost donkeys. Well, actually there's a prophet who can probably tell us about that.

A seer, a man of God in this town, and he can tell us where to find those lost donkeys. He doesn't realize he's being sent, but God is sovereign working through the events of human choices and so on. We don't have to harmonize it.

We can just recognize that as Israel recognized from the start, God is sovereign and that people are responsible for their choices. God raised up the Assyrians in Isaiah chapter 10. He says I raised up Assyria as the rod of my anger to punish my people.

But when they're done, I'm going to punish them for their arrogance. They didn't see themselves as God's rod. Well, God is at work in all this.

God shows mercy. God hardens as he wills. Who can resist God's purpose? Verse 19.

Well, this language of like who can stand against the Lord was often used in the Old Testament as praise for God, like in 2 Chronicles 20 verse 6, Daniel 4:35. But here it's the imaginary interlocutor speaking again. Who can resist God's purpose? In other words, hey, I can't help it. If I act against God, why blame me for my sin? God is sovereign.

God made me do it. Well, that's not what the text is saying. But this person, who can resist God's purpose? It's not my fault.

And so, Paul's response is, hey, rather if God is sovereign, who are you to question him? And he evokes texts about God's justice and sovereignty throughout the Old Testament. In verses 20 and 21, he uses this language from, and there are some other texts similar to this, Jeremiah 18 and so on. But especially these two texts, the Greek translation of these two texts, Isaiah 29.16, will the potter be accounted like the clay? Will what's made say to its maker, oh, you didn't make me right? Or Isaiah 45.9, won't you contend with the one who fashions you? Does the clay say to the one who fashions it, hey, what are you making? Actually, probably not put that way.

What are you making? What do you think you're doing? You should have made handles for this jar. The clay can't do that and we shouldn't do that either. If we're acknowledging that God is sovereign, if you don't want to acknowledge God is sovereign, well, you're responsible for your sin.

Either way, you shouldn't be complaining, right? So, Romans 9:22, God puts up with these vessels of wrath, these vessels on whom he's going to execute his judgment for the sake of the vessels of mercy. Why does human history play out? Why does God let suffering go on? Well, when he's done letting suffering go on, when he brings about perfect justice in the world, to do that, he's going to have to judge the world. And some of the people now who complain most loudly, about where is God's justice, are among those who will be judged by that justice.

But also, once God brings an end to it, it brings an end to the opportunity also for people to become vessels of mercy. So, God lets history play out for the sake of those who will be his people forever, for our sake, just as God endured Pharaoh to make himself known. Chapter 9, verses 25 and 26.

Here Paul quotes Hosea 2.23 and then Hosea 1:10. Those who are not his people will become his people. It's like Hosea, I think it would be really rough to have to name your kids like this, but in this generation, Isaiah was doing it also, giving his kids special names as a sign to Israel. Well, Hosea's children by Gomer, who had been a prostitute, it's not actually clear that all of them were his, but in any case, he names the children lo ami, not my people, and lo ruhama, not loved, not having compassion on.

I mean, how could you stand to have to name your daughter not loved? But then later on, those who were called Lo ami, not my people, will be Ami, my people, and Lo ruhama will be Rahama, loved. God will have compassion. And so, Paul quotes texts from Hosea.

In context, the point is that God will restore his people. After he rejects them for their sin, they'll come back to him. He will restore them.

That's like Hosea 1:9. Well, if God could make Israel his people after them being rejected as his people, then certainly God could also make Gentiles his people, who had not been his people. And so, Paul applies that language very relevantly here in Romans 9. And, you know, Paul could have used other texts as well. This is not Paul's invention.

Look at Isaiah 2, 2, and 3, where many peoples will come to Zion as the law is going forth from Zion. Or Isaiah chapter 19 and verse 21, the Egyptians will know the Lord. And in verse 25, blessed be Egypt to my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance, so that God makes peoples for himself among many peoples of the earth.

56:6 through 8 in Isaiah, where foreigners will join themselves to the Lord, and I will bring them to my holy mountain, and it will be a house of prayer for all peoples. Jesus quotes that in Mark chapter 11, verse 17. Zechariah chapter 2 and verse 11, many nations will join themselves to the Lord and will be my people.

So, you know, it also speaks of judgment on the nations. Not everybody from among the nations will serve the Lord, but God's word will spread among the nations. And that was also in some passages in the Old Testament.

Romans chapter 9, verses 27 and 28. And here I'm quoting from the cultural background study Bible due out in 2016. I wrote most of the New Testament notes.

Jewish teachers often linked texts by a common phrase. We've already talked about that Gezer Shabbat. Paul undoubtedly knows that Israel in Hosea 1.10, the text he just cited back in 9:26, is like the sand on the seashore, Hosea 1.10, which facilitates his link here with Isaiah 10:22 to 23, where he's also going to talk about the sand on the seashore, cited here in Romans 9:27 and 28.

Paul blends some wording of the two texts that was a common practice in his day. In Isaiah 10:22 and 23, God punishes his own people, sparing only a remnant. Then we come to verse 29 of Romans 9, which is another Isaiah remnant text.

He's going to quote from Isaiah 1:9, where only some of Israel survives the judgment. And verse 10 calls Israel Sodom and Gomorrah. That's actually fairly common in the writings of the prophets in the Old Testament.

It's not surprising that Jesus says, Woe to you, Capernaum. Woe to you, Chorazin. Sodom and Gomorrah would be better off in the day of judgment than you.

Matthew 11 and Luke 10, but I was also thinking in Matthew 10, he makes a comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah also in other places. But it's already there in the Old Testament prophets as well. So, the point is, God judges all people alike without ethnic favoritism.

God wants everybody to hear the good news. And because Paul keeps stressing this in Romans 11, he's going to have to come back and make sure you don't miss the point that God does have a special love for Israel. He keeps coming back to, just like we have to keep qualifying the point because people can hear us in a wrong way.

Paul, kept coming back and qualifying certain points to make sure you don't take it the wrong way, which people often through history did anyway. Romans chapter 9, verses 30 to 32, Gentiles didn't pursue righteousness, but then they grasped it by faith. Verse 30, Israel pursued the law of righteousness but didn't reach it.

Verse 31, because Israel pursued it from works rather than faith. Verse 32, and we'll talk more about that in chapter 10, verses one to three. If you pursue the law as a way of accruing right standing for yourself before God, making yourself better, better than somebody else, or just as a means of self-improvement, if that's all that it is, you're pursuing the law from the standpoint of works.

Paul wants us to pursue the law of the scriptures from the standpoint of faith. Now, Jewish people, again, normally believed that they had been chosen in Abraham. They were people chosen for salvation.

But Paul is saying, you're not chosen on the basis of your ethnicity, you're chosen on the basis of Christ. And so, they also believed they were saved by grace. They are part of the covenant by grace.

But once you're in the covenant, it doesn't mean that some people can't be better than others. Some people can't look down on others. And people did look down on others.

You might not think so by certain passages you read. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, certainly, the people who wrote some of these hymns were humbling themselves before God. But then you read what they said about outsiders who weren't part of their community.

They were all damned. In one of the Qumran hymns, it speaks of the rest of Israel as the community of Belial, the community of Satan. So, I mean, that's pretty strong language.

You can't say it's anti-Semitic. It's a Jewish document. But certainly, some Jewish groups didn't like some other Jewish groups.

And the Pharisees, believed in piety, seriously. But when you look at how they, in later sources, how the rabbis descended, especially from Pharisaic teachers, how they viewed the Am haretz, the common people who didn't know the law and understand the law as well as they should. You have Christians like that, too, who act just like the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son, missing the point.

We can't look down on anybody because all of us are saved by grace. We can't look down on people who aren't converted as if we're better. We aren't better because we are more worthy than they are.

We are saved by God's grace and they, too, can be saved by God's grace. And God saved some of us from, you know, if you were converted young, praise God for that, all the better. But some of us, well, some of us were converted younger than we could have been.

We praise God for that, too. But all of us are dependent on God's grace whenever we are saved and whatever we were saved from. Israel pursued it from works rather than from faith.

And so, again, we hear contrasting approaches to the law, just as in chapter 3, verse 27, by what law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. And this is developed further in chapter 10, verses 5 through 10, which I'm going to spend more time on than the first part of chapter 10. Well, since I'm going to do that, let me just mention before I finish chapter 9 that scholars have debated about chapter 10, verse 4, telos, whether the end of the law means the law is done away with, or it just means that it's the goal of the law.

And I used to always say it was the goal of the law. And then in context, it occurred to me, maybe it's actually saying the end of the law, but the end of the law for this purpose, for self-justification, which was never the purpose of the law to begin with, but just in terms of how people would use it. But the term can mean the goal of the law.

So, in any case, ultimately what the law points towards is Jesus Christ. And that's clearly true back in 3:31. So that could be what it means in 10:4. But if it does mean end, it means the end of the law, trying to use it in a certain way.

You can't get away with that, although it was never intended for that to begin with. Chapter 9, verse 33, he blends texts again. That was a common way to do things.

The common key term through which he blends these two texts in Isaiah is the term stone. Isaiah 8.14, Israel stumbles over God as a stone. Isaiah 28.16, whoever trusts, and yes, in the Greek translation of Isaiah, it is pisteuon, whoever trusts, whoever

believes in the foundation stone, the cornerstone that God lays will not be in haste or panicked or in the Septuagint, the Greek translation, will not be ashamed.

And that's going to be a very important text because Paul is going to pick up on that later on in chapter 10 and verse 11, whoever calls in the name of the, yeah, that's verse 13, whoever calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. In verse 11, whoever believes in him will not be ashamed. Whoever believes in what he's already quoted as the stone.

Well, the stone is the cornerstone. And so, somebody who's linking texts might think of Psalm 118, verse 22, that Jesus cited in Mark chapter 12 and verse 10. Jesus cited that at the Passover season in Jerusalem when Passover pilgrims were coming and Psalms 113 through 118, the Hallel, were fresh in their minds.

And Jesus speaks of the stone that the builders rejected. In Matthew chapter 21, actually, with regard to the stone, he links together some other texts where you can fall on the stone and be broken, or the stone can come on you and crush you. A crushing stone, a judgment stone for those who don't believe and don't respond in the right way.

And that's an allusion back to Daniel chapter 2, somewhere in verse 44, something he speaks of the different kingdoms in the statue. And then finally, it's the kingdom of God, which comes like a big stone and crushes the other kingdoms. And first Peter also links these texts together.

Why do we have these texts linked together in different passages in these particular texts? My thinking is because people knew that that's how Jesus taught it. And therefore, they were ready to use these stone texts. Paul also speaks elsewhere of Christ as his divine stone himself.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 4, where Christ is the rock in the wilderness, the source of water. In Deuteronomy chapter 32, God is the rock of Israel. So, a lot of these connections could have been made.

Paul mentions two of them explicitly here, but the fact that one of his texts is a cornerstone text probably evokes what Jesus had taught about the cornerstone also. Going on to Romans chapter 10, verses 5 through 10. You know, we should approach the law as a message of grace, if we understand it the right way.

In the same way when God gave the 10 Commandments, he prefaced the 10 Commandments, Exodus chapter 20, by saying, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt with a mighty arm. In other words, before he gives them the commandments before he tells them how to live, he reminds them that he's redeemed them. He has brought them salvation.

Paul quotes in chapter 10 and verse 5, Leviticus 18 and verse 5, those who do these things will live by them. Well, Paul's already argued that everybody sinned and therefore we don't live by them. Just starting off, Leviticus 18 and verse 5, you do these things, you keep the covenant that the Lord your God has made with you, and you, my people, will live long on the land.

That's a refrain that you have in Deuteronomy quite often, and it appears in Leviticus 18:5. But the rabbis applied it by means of analogy or by means of squeezing everything they could get out of it to eternal life by obedience. If you keep these commandments, you will live forever. But did they keep all these commandments? Well, they themselves would admit they didn't keep all these commandments, but they thought, well, God will overlook the bad things.

We do enough good things, right? So, Paul could be using this hypothetically as in principle, yes, or it may be a familiar proof text from his opponents, from debating with them in synagogues, that they like to bring that up and say, well, look, if you do these things, you'll live by them. And we keep these commandments, the Gentiles don't. But in chapter 10, verses 6 through 10, Paul does what a good rabbi would do when somebody quotes a proof text, you cite a counter text.

In chapter 10, verses 6 through 10, he does a midrash on Deuteronomy 30, verses 12 through 14. He makes analogies based on this passage in Deuteronomy so that he can apply it to the contemporary situation. He speaks of ascending to heaven.

He says we don't ascend to heaven for this. In Jewish tradition, Moses ascended not only on Sinai to receive the Torah, as in the Tanakh, as in the Old Testament scriptures, but rather ascended all the way to heaven to bring down the Torah from heaven. And so, as Paul's going to make these parallels with the Torah, keep in mind that in Jewish tradition, it went even further, but it works well for his comparison.

He's going to speak about descending into the deep, by which he means crossing the sea. Literally, in Deuteronomy, does speak about the sea, descending into the sea when the Yom Suph, the sea parted, and Israel descended into the place. But Paul adapts the wording for descending into the deep or the abyss, because it'll make a better connection for Jesus dying.

So, we can see the parallels here between Deuteronomy 30 and Paul's application of this in Romans 10. In Deuteronomy 30, don't say, who will ascend to heaven? Well, in Deuteronomy 30, doesn't say, who will ascend to heaven or who will ascend to bring down the Torah, God's gift. God has already given you that. Paul says, don't say, who will ascend to heaven to bring down Christ, God's gift? In verse 6, the Torah says in Deuteronomy 30, don't say, who will descend into the deep? That is to experience redemption again by crossing the sea.

God has already redeemed you. In the same way, Paul says, don't say, who will descend into the abyss to experience salvation again by raising Christ up from the dead? He's making an analogy between salvation in one place, the way God saved his people, Israel, and the way God saves now between the First Covenant, well, it wasn't actually the First Covenant, the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant. And Moses says the word is near you.

Well, what was the word that was near you? In the context in Deuteronomy, it was the Torah. But Paul says the word is near you. And Paul applies it to the word of his day that he's preaching, the apostolic message, the message of faith that we now preach, verse 8. The word is near you, Deuteronomy says, it's in your mouth and in your heart.

And in the context of Deuteronomy, it probably has to do with reciting the Torah regularly, when you rise up and when you lie down, and I see the way of saying all the time, when you're on the way and when you're at home, and I see the way of saying wherever you are, regularly be speaking about God's word. But for Paul, he's applying it to the word in his day, this message of faith, the message of the good news of Christ, which he preaches. This message is in your mouth, and it's in your heart.

How is it in your mouth? If you confess with your mouth, that Jesus is Lord, how is it in your heart? If you believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you'll be saved. You know, Paul isn't just mentioning the mouth and the heart here in arbitrary ways. When I have taught biblical interpretation, I usually start with verses that people quote out of context.

And by the time we get to this one, people are getting really nervous. And I say, don't worry, this is talking about salvation. You know, you did apply it in the right way then.

But why is Paul wording it, articulating it in precisely this way? Is he saying, well, you have to confess with your mouth? If you are deaf and mute and you can't confess with your mouth, does that mean you're not saved? Absolutely not. That's totally missing the point. The point is, you know, he's mentioning the mouth, the confession of faith, because of the scripture that he's explaining here.

And it's also going to tie into calling on the name of the Lord. If you are unable to speak with your mouth, you can confess Christ in some other way, sign language or whatever. Well, he goes on in verse 11.

Everyone who believes, and here he quotes from Isaiah 28.16, just as he did recently, more fully in Romans chapter nine and verse 33. Whoever believes in him in that cornerstone will not be put to shame. And he's using the Greek translation here.

Normally rabbis mixed and matched whatever translation best fit what they needed to say. But certainly, it's a biblical principle. It's actually beyond that text.

And it has that implication in any case. Will not be put to shame. And Paul is speaking here in terms of eschatological shame, shame before God on the last day.

Will not be put to shame because we believe in him. It's equivalent to in chapter 10 verse 13, just two verses later, whoever calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. So, we'll be saved.

We won't be put to shame. Now he uses everyone because it's going to connect with the text in verse 13 that he's going to quote. Also, it connects with what he's going to say in verse 12.

In Isaiah, it's just the one who believes, but if it's the one who believes, essentially it is whoever believes. So, Paul adapts the wording again. This was a familiar technique.

It was commonly done by people back then. And actually it's commonly done today as well. But in any case, he goes on in verse 12 and continues this emphasis in everyone, he speaks of how he's the same Lord overall.

He's just talked about Jesus as Lord. He's the same Lord over all, both to the Jew and to the Greek and to the Gentile. He's for everybody.

Verse 13, all who call in the Lord's name will be saved. Here he's quoting from Joel chapter two in verse 32, at least in our English version. In Hebrew, it's already in chapter three, but in any case, whoever calls in the Lord's name will be saved.

He links this with his reworded all back to verses earlier in verse 11. It also applies in the context to having confessed Jesus as Lord. Paul knew where he was going with his argument.

So, whoever calls in the Lord's name will be saved. One time I'd actually been up all night talking about the Bible with somebody. And then I walked about eight miles to church the next morning.

I was younger in those days. And then I was just getting something before I was going to go home and take a nap. And I ran into a couple of Jehovah's witnesses.

And one of them, he was saying, well, you know, whoever calls in the Lord's name will be saved. And this is, he showed it to me in Romans 10:13. And he said, you know, back in Joel, it's whoever calls in Jehovah's name will be saved. And I said, well, yeah, in Joel, it is whoever calls in the name, the name, the divine name.

But look how Paul applies that here in this context. Actually, I was very tired. My brain was very tired.

I was just praying, God, please give me wisdom. And there it was right in the context that we confess Jesus as Lord. So, I said to him, you see, if you don't believe Jesus is divine, well, then you're not really calling on the name of the Lord for salvation.

And he didn't know what to say. But I think here he's applying it the same way that it's applied in Acts chapter two and verse 21, that the time has come of the outpouring of the Spirit, your sons and daughters prophesying. Therefore, the same time that Joel spoke about, this is the era of salvation, that whoever calls in the name of the Lord will be saved.

Well, what does it mean to call in the name of the Lord? And as he goes on with his message there in Acts chapter two, Peter explains that the name of the Lord in which you're to call, the name of Kurios is the name of the Lord seated at the right hand of the Lord. My Lord is seated at the right hand of the Lord, who's also the risen one who's at God's hand. And therefore, in verses 38 and 39, he calls on them to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name.

In other words, calling on the name of the Lord in a, well, the name of the Lord in whom you're to call is the name of Jesus. But that was pretty radical since most Jewish people would say, no, this is for Gentiles to be converted. And he's calling on them to be converted.

Whoever calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. And you are calling on the name of Jesus. And then in verse 39, he says at the end of this, as many as the Lord our God shall call your sons and all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Well, that's picking up the end of the quote from Joel. So, everything in between he's doing in Midrash, he's explaining that text from Joel, that part about whoever calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. And he does, I believe Paul is doing the same thing here.

This may have been a tradition of interpretation among early Christians. And why not that it should go back to the day of Pentecost or so. Romans chapter 10, verses 14 through 17.

In verses 14 and 15, he has another sorites, another chain. He really likes these in Romans. He has these in Romans more than anywhere else.

But he says, okay, we need to call on the Lord's name to be saved, verse 13. Well, how can we call on him without believing in him? And how can we believe in him unless we hear of him? And how can we hear of him unless he's preached? And how can anybody preach unless they're sent? And here he quotes a scripture to show that in fact, they are sent. How beautiful on the feet, sorry, how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news.

That's from Isaiah chapter 52 and verse seven. It's the context of proclaiming a new exodus that God has made a highway in the wilderness and is bringing his people back to Zion. And it's a time of restoration.

And Isaiah 52:7 specifically speaks of the good news of salvation, the good news of peace, the good news, our God reigns, which is the good news of the kingdom of God. And so, Paul is saying it is preached. How can they hear unless it's preached? How can they preach unless they're sent? Well, some are sent and the message is being preached.

And, you know, Paul himself was doing that. And so were others and so must we. But in 10.16, he points out, that not all who heard believed.

To believe you have to hear the message. And again, we're not meaning this, you know, if you're deaf, you're excluded, but you have to receive the message. Somebody has to bring the message or it has to be made available to you.

But just because hearing makes you able to believe doesn't mean that everybody who hears does believe. And so, he quotes Isaiah 53.1. Well, not all who heard believed because as Isaiah says, who has believed our report or our message that he's been talking about in the context. You may notice that Isaiah 53.1 is soon afterward in the context of Isaiah 52:7. Paul is thinking in terms of the context of these texts, as well as, you know, various other Jewish interpretive approaches that were used in his day.

And so, he comes to verse 17. Faith comes from hearing the message. It's not automatic like he shows in verse 16, but faith comes from the message.

Now this is a text that sometimes gets quoted out of context. Faith comes from hearing. So, you have to go to church and hear somebody preach it.

It's not enough to read it or, you know, listen to the Bible on tape or something. Actually, that's missing the point. The point is just that the message has to be brought to you.

If you have a translated Bible, you know, you're reading it yourself, and you're still getting the message. But the word that he's referring to here in this context is especially the message of the gospel and the importance of bringing the gospel to people. But he's also showing here the issue of responsibility.

Chapter one of Romans, well, the Gentiles had enough knowledge in creation to be responsible to know that idolatry is wrong. That doesn't give them the gospel in creation, but it gives them enough knowledge to know that they're responsible for worshipping created things that are just obviously designed by something greater than themselves. Verse 18, he says, Israel has heard, and therefore Israel is responsible.

And he backs this up by quoting Psalm 19 in verse four, where their voice has gone out into all the world. Well, what does that mean? You might think it means, well, the good news has gone out and everybody's heard the good news. And you have something in Colossians where representatively the gospel is going out all over the world.

But this is a difficult one. There are a variety of different approaches to this. But the context in Psalm 19, in verses one through four, it's the witness of creation, just like you had in Romans chapter one.

Maybe this implies universal responsibility. It implies universal responsibility for our sin. We should know better, but it doesn't necessarily imply that everybody's heard the gospel, the good news.

God's, maybe he's appealing by analogy to the witness of creation, showing that just as God wanted himself to be known, and as earlier in Romans nine, God wanted himself to be known through Pharaoh, through his acts in history, God desires for this to be universally known. Or maybe he's saying, if this makes the Gentiles responsible because they have this message in creation, how much more Israel who has the law, in fact, Psalm 19 goes on to speak of that, not only God's word in creation, but in chapter 19, verses seven through 11, Israel has God's word in the Torah and the Scriptures. In any case, verses 19 through 21, in chapter 10, verse 19, Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 32:21. And it's from the context of God as Israel's rock, Deuteronomy 32:15 and 18.

And the context also in Deuteronomy 32, God is judging Israel, and God welcomes another people to make Israel jealous. Just like Paul comes back to the cornerstone text, whoever believes in him will not be ashamed. Paul is going to come back to this in Romans 11.

Paul is going to elaborate on making his, God making his people jealous through another nation that is not God's people. So, God is welcoming other people to make his people jealous. So, this text will be important.

Paul goes on in verses 20 and 21 to quote Isaiah chapter 65, verses one and two, or parts of Isaiah 65, one and two, where God says, I'll be found by those who didn't seek me. And actually, Paul undoubtedly knows how that goes on. Something that isn't necessarily in his quote, but is in Isaiah 65.1, a nation that didn't call upon me.

Well, he's been talking about calling on the name of the Lord. So now, whether in Isaiah's context, that's talking about Israel who didn't call on him and therefore now they're turning back to him, or whether it's talking about Gentiles. And there is some precedent in the context, Isaiah 56 and some other passages around there where God is making himself known to Gentiles as well.

But he goes on then in quotes from Isaiah 65 and verse two, which talks about Israel's disobedience. So, all of this leads into chapter 11. Lest you think that because Paul is arguing so, so hard, the Gentiles are welcomed into God's people, lest you think that that means God doesn't care about the Jewish people anymore.

In chapter 11, he comes back around and talks about God's continuing plan for the Jewish people. You know, in Paul's day, they had to make a big point of arguing about the inclusion of the Gentiles. Because if you read the Old Testament, what we call the Old Testament, it's primarily applied, primarily addressed to Israel.

And so where did this change take place? So, Paul has to articulate this in more detail. Now, when I said what we call the Old Testament, what we call the New Testament, the scripture that was given before Jesus came isn't technically a testament. It contains a record of the covenant.

But, you know, for instance, the stories about David and so on, that's not the covenant that God made with his people Israel. And the New Testament, what we call the New Testament, I don't have any better words for them, but just to point out the New Testament, what we call the New Testament is not a covenant itself. It reports the covenant.

But saying the scripture before Jesus came and the scripture after Jesus came is a bit too cumbersome. And just for the sake of intelligibility, I just use the common nomenclature. But Romans chapter 11, God's continuing plan for the Jewish people.

Paul wants to make sure that people don't misappropriate what he says. So, lest we think he's only lecturing the Jewish Christians in Romans 11, he begins challenging the Gentile Christians. And they were actually the majority of the church.

So, this is going to be very significant for them. He says that God still has a remnant in Israel, and still has a plan for his Jewish people to turn to him. And actually, you Gentiles are just converted to our Jewish faith and heritage anyway.

You were grafted into our tree. You're grafted in and you're in. But it was our tree to begin with.

And it's even easier for us to be grafted back in than for you to be grafted in to begin with. So, Paul wants to provoke Israel to jealousy by initiating this end time ingathering of the Gentiles. This jealousy should then bring the Jewish people in.

So, you have Jewish people being saved, Gentiles being saved, Jewish people being saved. And when Paul speaks of a remnant, he doesn't mean that that can mean only like just a handful of Jewish people. The remnant is used in contrast to Israel as a whole.

God's covenant had never saved individual Jewish persons who didn't keep the covenant. That had never been true in the Old Testament. Even in the Old Testament, Gentiles had periodically joined the covenant, and joined God's people.

Rahab became part of Israel. We read about in the book of Joshua. Ruth became part of Israel.

Possibly David's bodyguard, Cherethites and Pelethites, they seem to have been Philistines. Uriah the Hittite probably became part of the people of God. So, we have a number of people in the Old Testament.

Obviously, it's a small number. But think of the wilderness generation, where Joshua and Caleb were faithful. But much of the generation wasn't when they first went into the wilderness.

And so there's a remnant within that generation who's really serving God. I think some of the others learned their lessons as time went on. But at some point, you had a really small remnant.

Joshua's generation as they're coming into the land, look, these people are zealous for God. Well, the remnant now is probably pretty close to the entirety of the ethnic people of Israel. They're walking in the covenant.

But you have exceptions even there, like Achan. Achan betrays his people. He hides loot under his tent.

His family knows about it. And so, his family ends up being destroyed with him. And there's a deliberate contrast there with Rahab, who betrays her people but comes into the covenant of God.

And she hides the spies on her roof, in contrast to Achan hiding loot under his tent. And her family knows about it. And it brings about the deliverance of her whole family.

So, you have these things already in the Old Testament. But what you sometimes have in the prophets is a prophecy of this being spread even more. And so sometimes what you have, certainly in the first century, here you have those who are ethnically Israel, but within that, you have the remnant, whatever size it was.

Plus, you have these Gentiles who were not ethnically part of Israel, but it became part of God's covenant with regard to salvation. So, you have overlapping circles or ellipses, however, you want to put it. God's covenant had never saved individual Jewish people.

It had been a corporate covenant, but God also made the way of salvation known. And even Gentiles were welcome. The foreigner who's in the land talks about in the Pentateuch.

So, God's promise did provide, however, favor for the people of Israel in some other respects. In chapter three in verse two of Romans, chapter nine, verses four and five, we already saw that, including the continuity of God continuing to reach out to them and call out to them. Looking in more detail, Romans 11, one through five, speaking of a remnant, Paul presents himself as an example.

I am an Israelite. I am a Benjamite, from the tribe of Benjamin. That's very consistent with what we have in the Acts, where it gives his Jewish name as Saul, who was a famous Benjamite king.

We also have, Paul gives himself as an example. Then he goes into Elijah's protest during a period of national apostasy when most of Israel, the northern kingdom, had turned away from God. And Elijah protests, God, they're not, I alone have left the prophet of the Lord.

This was a time also when Elijah was quite discouraged. Fire had come down from heaven and Jezebel still didn't repent and actually said she was going to kill him. So, Elijah's pretty discouraged.

I alone have left the prophet of the Lord. He should have known better. Obadiah had actually already told him, I hid a hundred prophets by fifties in the cave.

You know, you're not the only one. But Elijah felt like he was the only one. Later rabbis looked at this and they said, this was something bad Elijah did because he was accusing God's people.

But Paul takes it in a very different direction. Elijah protests this, I alone have left. And God responds, there's 7,000 in Israel who haven't bowed the knee to Baal.

In other words, there's a remnant within Israel. There are those who have not turned aside to false, false god, false deities, and those who serve the true God. And in the same way, Paul says, there's still a present remnant, verse five.

And again, what he means by the remnant is something other than all Israel. Actually, the percentage in his state of Jewish believers was probably higher than the percentage through most of history from the third or fourth century until the 20th century. Now we have an increasing number of Jewish believers in Jesus.

But Paul had a reason for stressing the remnant, not that God isn't saving any Jewish people now, but that it's just not all Israel yet. But the fact that there are some who are saved, well, God hasn't rejected his people. Chapter 11, verses eight through 10, the blending of passages, verse eight, that was common in ancient Jewish practice.

So, he's going to blend some things here. Spirit of stupor comes from the Greek translation of Isaiah 29 and verse 10. They don't understand, they have this spirit of stupor.

And also, he's going to use language from Deuteronomy 29, verse four. God has not given you eyes to see and ears to hear even to this day. Then he's going to go on and link together another text.

He's just talked about, how you don't have eyes to see or ears to hear. Chapter 11, verses nine through 10, he's going to quote from Psalm 69, verses 22 and 23, which also talks about not being able to see. Except again, he's going to blend a little bit of text.

The word trap is from Psalm 34 and verse eight, which also has the word snare and so Paul can connect it. Paul just, knows scripture backward and forward. Now, sometimes when they would blend texts like this, it was inflation accidentally from their memory, but they say, well, we're still quoting scripture.

But sometimes they did it deliberately to evoke the entire passage. Well, what is Paul doing here? I think he intends to evoke the entire passage of Psalm 69, because that's one of the psalms of the righteous suffer, like Psalm 22. The psalm of the righteous suffer, could be prayed by anybody who's suffering unjustly.

They haven't done anything wrong. They're crying out to God for vindication, but it applies par excellence to the most righteous of sufferers, to Jesus. And actually, in God's providence, some of the details do fit Jesus pretty well.

But he, Paul must know about this because he actually quotes Psalm 69 again in chapter 15 in verse three, when he's going to apply it again to Jesus as the righteous sufferer par excellence. Romans chapter 11, verses 11 and 14, he deals with provoking Israel to envy. It recalls his quotation from Deuteronomy 32:21 in Romans 10:19, 'I'll make you jealous by another nation.'

Well, one reason for Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, isn't like saying, well, this is the only reason I care about you Gentiles, but he's addressing the Gentiles in verse 13. One reason that he cares about the Gentiles and his ministry to them is in verse 14 and is an apostle to the Gentiles. Through them, he would provoke his people to jealousy.

The term can also mean zeal. While earlier, Paul spoke of them having zeal without knowledge, but this is going to be a good zeal, a good jealousy. The prophets had promised an end gathering of the Gentiles.

Well, now that's being fulfilled through Jesus. So, this should be something where the Jewish people look around and they say, wow, the prophecy is coming to pass, and look, these people are becoming followers of Israel's God. And it's through Jesus.

He may make a more specific point that he may even be saying, well, look, these Gentiles, some of them are being even more zealous for God than we are for our God. And therefore, that may provoke them to jealousy. Paul believed that through his ministry, and you know, if time went on, well, time will go on, but if history before the second coming went on, we can put it that way.

If history kept going after Paul, well, still, these Gentiles are being gathered in and people are reaching the Gentiles and they're turning to Israel's God. Surely the Jewish people should see, wow, there are more people who worship our God who are Gentiles now than there are of us. And this is through Jesus who was a Jewish prophet and maybe, you know, this is from God.

And then they would turn to faith in Jesus. But that never happened. Why didn't it happen? Because the Gentile Christians didn't follow also what Paul said in this chapter to the Gentile Christians.

Paul warned Gentile Christians against boasting against the natural branches. And what did Gentile Christians later do? They spoke about how we as the Gentile church have replaced Israel and Israel is cursed, Israel is under judgment. And not that God

doesn't judge, including judging Israel, happened in the Old Testament, happened in the New Testament, happened in the year 70.

But saying, we replaced them and who cares about them? This is a cursed people. Now, most people wouldn't say that today, but through much of church history, actually, that's what happened. So eventually pogroms you have during the Inquisition, you had Jewish people being baptized sometimes and held underwater until they drowned to make sure they couldn't recant the confession of Christ.

You had Jewish people being burned on crosses, just horrible things. Now you had people speaking against that, of course, in the name of Christ also. But there was such a history of so many atrocities committed in the name of Christ against the Jewish people that it's not surprising that the Jewish people haven't turned.

But the hope that Paul states was not a conditional hope, maybe in terms of what generation it comes in, but Paul believed that there would be a turning, that they would see something different. And we have that opportunity today as well to show that we worship the one true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of the prophets and that we're not being mean to Jewish people or to any people, but we're reaching out to everybody and we're fulfilling the spirit of the Torah. And we're living for God in a way that actually will provoke people to jealousy, people who want to do right and see the power of God at work in our lives.

Well, he speaks of those who've been grafted in. What does it mean to be grafted? You would graft from one tree into another, sometimes to promote the health of the tree. You could graft a wild olive shoot onto a domesticated tree.

Meanwhile, the branches that weren't producing, you could prune them off. The new graft was called contrary to nature, and that's how Paul speaks of this here. Well, Jewish people often compared their people to an olive tree.

In fact, there was a synagogue in Rome with a name like the olive tree, although we don't know what century it comes from exactly. He speaks of Gentile believers as being grafted in. We're like spiritual proselytes.

We become children of Abraham. We become part of God's covenant of salvation. But he says, don't look down on broken-off branches.

Paul may have intuited, or Paul may have inferred that this church in Rome that's been a largely Gentile church from 49 to 54 may already be headed in the direction of saying, okay, we can do this without the Jewish element. And that's really what the Nazis tried to do. They actually worshipped old Aryan gods.

I mean, the high-level Nazis, they weren't doing this as Christians. But they wanted to take over the state church. And first of all, the Jewish Christians were forced out.

And anybody who tried to talk about the Jewishness of the church or the heritage in the Old Testament of the church and so on, it was very Marcionite in this way. They spoke of the Reich church so that Jesus was a Gentile and so on. There were people who said this.

One of the Nazi theologians argued that, well, Galilee of the Gentiles, it was all Gentile. They've been forced to convert to Judaism. Of course, archeology shows us that the Judeans had settled, and resettled Galilee at this point.

But they came up with a lot of things to de-Judaize. And we need to be careful because there's still some of that legacy, anti-Semitic legacy in some biblical scholarship. Now, you know, I love the Greek and the Roman background, but you can't exclude the Jewish background either.

And certainly, the Old Testament background, because that's right at the heart theologically of what the New Testament was about. So, in verses 25 and 26, you have the Jewish people turning to God. We read here that this happens when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

In other words, when the good news of the kingdom has been spread among all the nations, and then the end will come. Acts 3 talks about the Jewish people turning when they repent. In Romans 11, it seems to be something similar to what we have in Acts where when the Jewish people haven't repented, it gives an excuse to go to the Gentiles.

Acts 13, Acts 18, Acts 28. In the same way in Romans chapter 11, Paul expects a turning of the Jewish people at the time of the end. And in God's plan, he's allowed it not to happen before so that there's more time for the Gentiles to be gathered in.

But this turning of the Jewish people is an expectation of the prophets. Some people interpret it here in chapter 11 and verse 26. Some scholars interpreted that the converted Gentiles are what he means by all of Israel, or the converted Gentiles plus the Jewish remnant.

And while I believe that you're going to have, obviously, a lot of converted Gentiles, it can't mean less than that when he's talking about the fullness of the Gentiles. This is something more than the remnant. This is like as many Gentiles as we can possibly reach when the good news is preached among all the nations.

But in the context, everywhere else in Romans 11, when he's talking about Israel, he's talking about the Jewish people. When he's talking about salvation, presumably

he's talking about what he means elsewhere in Romans as well. So that will come through faith in Christ.

And so, he's expecting a turning to faith in Christ. Now, the exact details of that, does it happen just before he comes back? Or some people think it's after he comes back. But it looks like, well, in my opinion, it looks like when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, you have a turning of the Jewish people to faith in the Messiah.

That turning to faith and turning to God was a prerequisite for the consummation, sometimes in the prophets, in Acts, and I suggest it may be here as well. But anything I say, pretty much somebody holds a different view. So, I'm not trying to be ungracious to other views, trying to summarize them, and trying to show how I think it fits together.

But in any case, all Israel contrasts with the remnant. Does it mean every individual Jewish person who's alive at that time? Not really necessarily. Mishnah and Hedron, 10:1, talks about all Israel shall be saved and then goes on to elucidate which Israelites would not be saved because of this reason or that reason, including the Sadducees, because they didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead.

So, it means Israel as a whole, though, the Jewish people as a whole. And it adapts the wording of Isaiah 59, verses 20 and 21, where he speaks of my covenant with them. Well, actually, some of the language, my covenant with them, comes from a restoration context in Isaiah 27.9 or Ezekiel 36.26. But much of the language is from Isaiah 59.

When he speaks of deliverer coming from Zion, might suggest, well, there are reasons why this is debated as to whether it comes after before or figurative or literal or whatever. But I think it's talking about the Jewish people turning as a whole. In chapter 11, verses 30 to 32, it was common to summarize the themes of a section at the end of the section.

And here, Israel and the Gentiles seem to exchange rules of disobedience, just like you had in chapter 9:25 and 26 implied there. Now, I'm not going to conclude at this point with the doxology, chapter 11, verses 33 to 36, even though it does conclude 9 through 11. It's celebrating God's sovereignty in history and how, just as God has exquisitely designed creation, and exquisitely designed our lives, God has exquisitely designed history to bring about his purposes.

Even though these people disobey and these people disobey, God is ultimately going to bring about his purposes and nothing will stop that. Great doxology, but it also sets the stage for the next section of Romans, chapters 12 through the end of the exhortations. Because of that, I'm going to save that doxology in more detail for

there, just so you can see how, even though it's really part of this section, it also sets you up for the next one.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session 11 on Romans 9:17-11:32.