**"Behold, I lay in Zion a Stumbling Stone”**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Romans 9:27-33**

**Thursday Evening**

**October 10, 2024**

**Romans 9:27-33**

27 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. 28 For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."

29 And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah." 30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;

31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

33 As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

**27 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved.**

Saints, But the Jews (here called Israel) will not be forgotten. God’s sovereign choice always includes some Jews, but his promises were not a blanket guarantee for all Israel.

Isaiah prophesied that only a small number of God’s original people will be saved. Paul saw this happening in every city where he preached.

Even though he went first to the Jews, relatively few ever accepted the gospel message. Continuing the quote from Isaiah, God will punish his people for turning away from him.

**Isaiah 10:23**

For the Lord GOD of hosts Will make a determined end In the midst of all the land.

**28 For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."**

Saints, In the captivity and the exile, much punishment had been meted out.

If God had not spared a small number of faithful believers, all of Israel would have been destroyed.

But God always saved some. Having chosen Israel, God remained faithful to her.

If he had not, Israel would have been wiped out as completely as Sodom and Gomorrah, the ancient cities that were completely destroyed by God for their horrible wickedness.

**Genesis 19:24-29**

24 Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. 26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. 28 Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.

29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.

**Isaiah 1:9**

Unless the LORD of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah.

Nothing was left of Sodom and Gomorrah. But God never completely destroyed his people.

**29 And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah."**

**Genesis 19:23-26**

23 The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. 26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

Saints, today the Gentiles are the majority in the church, but one day, many Jews too will come to their Savior.

There is a final judgment to come, and God will carry it out. There is no time to delay.

A few will be saved—who of God’s people, the Jews, will become part of that small number? Paul explores this further in chapter 11.

**30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;**

Saints, the gospel was preached to both Jews and Gentiles, but it was being accepted by far more Gentiles than Jews.

The Gentiles did not have God’s law, did not even know God, and were not even seeking him, yet they were being made right with God.

Why? Because they were coming in faith.

**Galatians 2:16-18**

16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

**31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.**

Saints, in contrast to the Gentiles, the Jews tried to get right with God by keeping the law, only to fail.

**Titus 3:3-7**

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

They had incorrectly understood righteousness in terms of works.

They could not keep the law perfectly, therefore they could not keep it at all.

They tried to achieve right standing with God the wrong way—by keeping the law and being good.

Thus some of them became more dedicated to the law than to God. They thought that if they kept the law, God would have to accept them as his people.

 But God cannot be obligated by us.

 The Jews did not see that their Scriptures, the Old Testament, taught salvation by faith and not by human effort—the point Paul made in the first part of this letter.

As a result, they stumbled over the great rock in their path—the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Peter 2:4-8**

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked

8(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)

Jesus was not what they expected, so they missed him. In so doing they missed their only way of salvation.

Jesus is a stumbling block to Jews and to all who by pride would rather have recognition for doing it on their own than for trusting Christ and his goodness.

**32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.**

Saints, some people still stumble over Christ because salvation by faith doesn’t make sense to them.

**Galatians 2:14-18**

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

They would rather try to work their way to God, or else they expect him simply to overlook their sins.

Others stumble over Christ because his values are the opposite of the world’s.

Christ asks for humility, and many are unwilling to humble themselves before him.

He requires obedience and many refuse to put their will at his disposal.

The “rock” has caused them to stumble.

They heard about Christ and misunderstood, so they tripped over the one thing that could have saved them.

**33 As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."**

Saints, Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:16.

Isaiah declared God’s warning of destruction to Israel by Assyria.

Then he said, “I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that causes people to stumble.”

This stone refers to the righteous few and to Christ.

**1 Peter 2:6-10**

6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Some will stumble over him, but those who put their trust in him need never fear that their trust is misplaced.

When we have placed our feet on the Rock of Zion, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, we will not be disappointed.

Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace!**