



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

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Israel's Place in God's Plan Saved Like the Gentiles (Part 1)

Brian R. Kenyon

Israel was chosen to be God's people, not because they were anything special, but because God loved them and wanted to reveal Himself to the nations through them (Ex. 19:5-6; Deut. 7:7-8). Israel's special status, however, was conditioned upon their keeping God's covenant and commandments (Deut. 7:11-26). Despite God's constant out-stretched arms of mercy toward His rebellious people, they continuously rebelled against Him (cf. Isa. 50:2; 59:1-2), which resulted in their captivity (2 Kgs. 18:9-12; 25:8-12, 21). The Law of Moses pointed to Christ and the gospel system of salvation (Gal. 3:24-25). If anyone truly lived by the Law of Moses and accepted its promises (cf. Isa. 2:2-3; 7:14; 9:6, etc.), he or she would accept Jesus as the Christ and obey the gospel (Gal. 2:19; Rom. 7:6). Generally speaking, the Jews of Paul's day refused to accept Jesus, insisting instead that their physical lineage to Abraham perpetually made them God's chosen people (Jn. 8:33, 39 cf. Mt. 3:9). Although Israel is no longer God's people, individual Jews can still be saved the same way as the Gentiles, through the gospel!

National Israel Rejected

Paul answered a resounding, No!, to the question, "Has God cast away His people?" (Rom. 11:1a). The first example he used to support his answer was himself, for "I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Rom. 11:1b). Saul of Tarsus was about as Jewish as a man could be in the national Israel of his time (cf. 2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:4-6), staunchly rejecting Christ like the rest of them (Acts 7:58; 8:3; Gal. 1:13-14). Yet, he was saved (Acts 22:16; 1 Tim. 1:12-16). The second example Paul used was Elijah (Rom. 11:2-4). That weeping prophet encountered a very rebellious Israel in his day. Ahab and Jezebel went on a rampage to destroy God's system of worship and His prophets, including Elijah, which caused him to think he was alone (2 Kgs. 19:10-14). However, God informed him, "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (Rom. 11:4 cf. 2 Kgs. 19:18). Both Paul and Elijah were the extreme minority of Israel who were actually faithful to God, thus proving that God had not "cast away His people." Further, even "at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work" (Rom. 11:5-6).

God rejected national Israel because they sought right standing before Him based on "works of the law" rather than on Christ (Rom. 11:6-10). Note the distinction Paul made between "Israel" and "the elect" by writing, "Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it" (Rom. 11:7). The "elect"

obtained justification because they sought it by God's way, through the gospel (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). National Israel was hardened to the gospel. They were "blinded [hardened, ASV]" by their own rejection (cf. Pharaoh, Rom. 9:17). They were in a state of deep sleep, or stupor (i.e., apathy, mental dullness cf. Deut. 29:4; Isa. 29:10). They were trapped in the Law of Moses, the very thing that was designed to lead them to Christ and obedience to the gospel (cf. Ps. 69:22-23; Gal. 3:1-5, 24-25). This necessitated the casting off of national Israel, but all was not hopeless!

Individual Salvation Offered to Israel

God did not change covenants in order to make Israel fall. Instead, that which caused Israel's fall, the gospel of Jesus Christ, was designed for Israel's salvation (Rom. 11:11). A change of covenants through Christ was necessary for the Gentiles to be brought to salvation (cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 2:14). It was this very change in covenants that provoked the Jews, leading to their rejection of the gospel and subsequent fall (cf. Rom. 10:1-4). Paul reasoned, "Now if their [Israel's] fall is riches for the world, and their [Israel's] failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their [Israel's] fullness!" (Rom. 11:12). In other words, since the fall of the Jews brought blessing to the rest of the world (i.e., salvation to those outside Israel), what might be expected of individual Israelites' salvation? Israel's "failure [diminishing, KJV]" was caused by their own rejection of the gospel. Their "fullness" will be the result of their accepting the gospel.

All individual Jews who are to be saved must be saved in exactly the same way as all other people, through the gospel of Christ! Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13 cf. Acts 9:15; 13:46-48; Gal. 1:15-16; 2:7-9), which was magnified even more when seeing the good God had done because of Jewish rejection of the gospel (cf. Rom. 8:28)—He made the way for all the world, including individual Jews who formerly rejected Him! Paul still wanted to "save some of them [fellow Israelites]" (Rom. 11:14 cf. Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1). Paul likened the obedience of the gospel by those Israelites who formerly rejected God's choice of salvation as a resurrection: "For if their [Israel's] being cast away is the reconciling of the world [because it opened salvation to Gentiles], what will their acceptance [of the gospel] be but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11:15).

Paul then wrote, "For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches" (Rom. 11:16). This change of metaphors to "firstfruit" still teaches the same truth and sets up the next section about grafting-in branches. If the first converts to Christ and New Testament Christianity (Jews and proselytes on Pentecost, Acts 2:36-38, 40-41, 47) were acceptable, so would all future converts (cf. Jn. 17:20-23). God has no other plan to save, except that which is involved in "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:16); "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" (Acts 2:38); and every other passage connected with salvation (Mt. 28:20). All who are saved must be saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ, not by the old law or by a restoration of national Israel!

Conclusion

Although many who read this article have obeyed the gospel of Christ, we must not, like Israel of old, rest on our laurels and reject His will to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5:16). We too can fall from grace if we seek righteousness in any other way than living in harmony with the gospel (cf. Gal. 5:4). May we ever seek to fulfill God's will of being "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:39).



Thank You, **Tommy Brooks**, for coming our way and challenging us with the good news in our recent Gospel Meeting! Thanks also to those who, without respect of person, participated and showed support for the truth! May the Lord help us make proper application!

Upcoming Events
December
3 — "Walk Out of Darkness" event
9 — SFA Holiday Party
16 — Youth group holiday caroling & party
January
15-18 — FSOP Lectureship
February
23-25 — YES Weekend (Valdosta)

PRAYER LIST

Current: Casey Potvin is still struggling with bad migraines and is having tests. Brenda Lynn sprained her knee and is in a lot of pain Sarah (Debbie Bush's daughter) was in an auto accident

Continual: Toney Wilson (upcoming medical tests), Debbie Bush (struggles); Antoine & Marcella Swain (health); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Bobby Simpson (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Jim Turner (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health); Ronnie Lynn is recovering from neck surgery.

Shut-ins: Joyce Burbage, Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French and Barbara Jones

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list! We had several request prayers for strength and forgiveness during the Gospel Meeting last week: Ingrid and Jeff Stewart, Andre Medley, George Davis, Tommy Brooks.

Welcome: Alethia Medley has placed membership here at SFA! Let's make her feel loved and welcome here as part of our family! She also requested prayers as she wants to be restored as an active member of the Lord's body.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE THANKSGIVING COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECT!

"But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

(Hebrews 13:16)



Walk Out of Darkness/ Suicide Prevention Walk

Join us on Sunday December 3 as we share the Hope of Christ at this annual event!

We need volunteers to come to the event to encourage walkers, and we need volunteers to donate items to be given away.

Items needed: granola bars, fruit, small packs of crackers or snacks. We also need coolers to hold the water while at the event. See Rick Kenyon with any questions.

Fellowship in Service: Please join us on Sunday November 26 5:00 pm to sign cards to be sent out to encourage those in need: the sick, shut ins, visitors, etc. All are welcome to join us! We will not be having snacks during this time until we can get back into the fellowship hall.

Scheduled to Serve in November

Designated Elder	David Anderson
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Wednesday, November 22, 2023

Announcements	Tyler Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Andre Medley
Devotional / Invitation	Brian Kenyon
Closing Prayer	Terrance Dindy

Sunday, November 26, 2023

10:30 am Sermon	Brian Kenyon
God's Righteousness Revealed (Rom. 3:21-26)	
6:00 pm Sermon	Kurtis Leaks
Reward from Obedience to God (Gen. 22:15-18)	

Those to Serve 10:30 am

Greeters	Bingles
Song/Pray before class	Frank Hamby
Announcements (both)	Brian Kenyon
Song Leader (both)	Andre Medley
Bible Reader/Prayer	Josh Potvin
Lord's Table (both)	George Davis
Closing Prayer	Steve Tydings
Open/Close Building	Jason Hendrix
Attendance Cards	Cam'ron/Caelen
Sound Booth (both)	Derek Williams

Those to Serve 6:00 pm

Greeters	Fifes
Announcements	David Anderson
Song Leader	Andre Medley
Bible Reader/Prayer	Tucker Sweeney
Closing Prayer	Josh Estridge

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

Announcements	Stacey Paulin
Song Leader / Prayer	David Williams
Devotional / Invitation	Vince Daugherty
Closing Prayer	David Deal

How We Are Giving

November 5	\$10,215.00
November 12	\$7,738.00
November 19	\$7,065.00
Contribution Average	\$7,079.61
Weekly Budget	\$7,410.00

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!

Happy ~~T~~HANKSGIVING

T Thanks be to God for His indescribable Gift! (2 Cor. 9:15)

H Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. (Proverbs 3:13)

A All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Rom 8:28)

N No good thing will be withheld from those who walk uprightly (Psalm 84:11)

K Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. (Proverbs 4:23)

S Salvation belongs to the Lord, Your blessing is upon your people. (Psalm 3:8)

G God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son (John 3:16)

I "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)

V Verily, Verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:24)

I In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

N Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, To Him be glory in the church of Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3: 20-21)

G Go into all the World and preach the Gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)



Happy Thanksgiving!

Youth Section

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

"The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard."

Psalms 19:1-3

Doesn't matter if you are in America, Africa or Asia; Go outside at night and let the stars give you a lesson on their Creator!- VD

HOLIDAY PARTY- DECEMBER 9 AT 5:30 PM

Wear your most festive holiday attire, and bring a white elephant gift for a gift exchange!

There is a sign up sheet on the office door for the food. Come join the fun!



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South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.