

GOD'S LAST DESIGNS

The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, in chapter 11: 25 to 32, wrote: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

The Deliverer will come from Zion, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob!

This is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.

Concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but concerning election, they are beloved for the sake of the patriarchs: for the gifts and the calling of God are without revocation.

For just as you were once disobedient to God, but have now obtained mercy because of their disobedience, so these also have now been disobedient, that they also may obtain mercy because of your mercy.

For God has consigned them all to disobedience, that he might have mercy on all."

In this text, the Apostle reveals a mystery to us, a word that presupposes enigma, secret, that which reason cannot explain or understand.

And then he makes some statements like: "that partial hardening has happened to Israel, until...". In other words, the hardening was not total and will not be definitive.

And he continues: "And thus (in this way, in this manner, in this manner), all Israel will be saved..."; the Apostle affirms that because God has hardened, been severe, with the people of Israel so that the Gentiles, through mercy, will be saved, in this way, after the entry of the Gentiles, He will also use mercy and save all Israel.

And he further states: "Concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but concerning election, they are beloved for the sake of the patriarchs; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."

What do you mean? Enemies and loved ones?

It is obvious that the people of Israel, after being expelled, massacred and spending almost two thousand years away from their territory, faced great persecution, suffered genocide, went through terrible wars such as, for example, the famous Six-Day War, where their state, recreated less than 20 years ago, faced the fury of several enemies around them that had been established for centuries and even thousands of years, and yet, they achieved victory; it cannot be denied that these people count on the supernatural help of God; there is no denying that these people exist by the mercy, love and purpose of God.

We also have to consider that the Israelite people, even going through all the hardships already mentioned, over the years managed to maintain their religion, the worship of their God.

Another fact that also occurs is that, although most of them do not accept the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, my first experience with the Holy Spirit was through a conversation with a Jew; I also know the story of a person who obtained a true

miracle, and recognizes that this miracle was the work of Christ, through an act, a simple word spoken by a Jew.

But someone must be thinking: Weren't they the ones who killed the Lord Jesus by the hands of wicked people? Yes. But on the cross itself the Lord already said: "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO."

The Bible teaches us, through the Apostle John, in his Gospel, in chapter 12: 37 to 41, or rather, gives us an explanation about the unbelief of the Jews, as we will see below: "And although he had done so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him, that the word of the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled which he said: Lord, who has believed

our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah also said:

He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they cannot see with their eyes and understand with their hearts and turn and be healed by me.

This is what Isaiah said because he saw his glory and spoke about him."

So, it was God Himself who did not let them come or understand the work of the Lord Jesus.

In fact, it is also obvious that people all over the world read the Bible and understand that from the book of Genesis, through the Psalms, through the Prophets, they speak and give testimony about Jesus Christ, his sacrifice, the salvation he provided, with the exception of the Jewish people who cannot believe.

When Pilate gave them the opportunity to choose between the Lord Jesus and Barabbas so that one of the two would be released, they chose Barabbas and even said: "And the people answered: His blood be on us and on our children!" (Apostle Matthew, chapter 27: 25).

It is logical, it is evident that we are not here wanting, in any way, to justify those who caused all the suffering of the Jewish people.

Returning to the text, the Apostle Paul teaches: "For just as you were once disobedient to God, but have now obtained mercy because of their disobedience, so these also have now been disobedient, that they also may obtain mercy because of your disobedience."

That is, we, who were formerly disobedient and enemies of God, have now become friends, obtaining mercy in view of their disobedience; this, so that they also may obtain mercy in view of the mercy granted to us.

In the same chapter 11 of the Epistle to the Romans, in verses 12 to 15, the Apostle teaches: "Now if their transgression resulted in riches for the world, and their failure, riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness!

I am speaking to you Gentiles. Since I am the Apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke my own people to jealousy and save some of them.

For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?"

The truth is that "God has consigned them all to disobedience, that he might have mercy on all."

The fact is that all men, both Jews and Gentiles, are imperfect and sinful.

We know good and evil by nature, but we cannot stop ourselves from doing evil.

And only by accepting the salvation given by Jesus Christ, his death on the Cross in our place, can we reconnect or reconcile ourselves with God.

We Christians, what have we done to be saved, accepted by God as Children? Nothing.

And what could we do? How could we achieve such HONOR of being made children of God, the Lord and creator of all things? Would we be able to pay any price?

Would all the treasure in the world pay?

Here is what the Prophet Zechariah prophesied in his book, in chapter 12: "The sentence pronounced by the Lord against Israel. This is what the Lord says, who stretched out the heavens, who founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him.

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the peoples around it, when they are in the siege against Jerusalem, and also against Judah.

In that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured; and all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

In that day, declares the Lord, I will strike every horse with terror and its riders with madness; I will open My eyes upon the house of Judah and strike every horse of the people with blindness.

Then the leaders of Judah will say to themselves, "The people of Jerusalem have the strength of the Lord Almighty, their God.

In that day I will make the princes of Judah like a burning fire among the wood and like a torch among the stubble; they will devour all the peoples around them, right and left, and Jerusalem will be inhabited again in her own place, in Jerusalem itself.

The Lord will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be exalted above Judah.

In that day the Lord will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and the weakest among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the Lord before them.

On that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

And I have poured out my spirit of grace and supplications upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced; they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son, and shall weep bitterly for him as one weepeth for a firstborn.

On that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddo.

The land will mourn, each family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart.

All the other families, each family apart, and their women apart."

The penultimate paragraph of this text by the Prophet Zechariah, where it says: "And concerning the house of David...", has as its subtitle, in most Bibles, "The repentance of the inhabitants of Jerusalem".

And further on, it says that God will pour out his spirit of grace and supplications upon them.

And again: That they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him...

Will it be on this occasion described by the Prophet that the Lord will pour out his spirit upon the Jewish people and remove their spiritual blindness from them?

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Biblical texts extracted from the JOÃO FERREIRA DE ALMEIDA translation – Revised and Updated.