

GOD'S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lesson Twenty-Two

THE JEWS' REJECTION OF GOD'S CALLING

Burden to Impart:

Because of jealousy the Jewish leaders rejected Christ, their Savior, and because of unbelief the Jewish people have rejected God's calling to them until now. Because of their rejection of Christ, God in mercy opened the door for the Gentiles to be saved.

Memory Verse: "...It was necessary for the word of God to be spoken to you first; since you thrust it away and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

Facts to Teach:

1. God's chosen people were the children of Abraham, the Jews. The Lord Jesus sent his disciples to the Jews first, not to the Gentiles (Matt. 10:5-6). God sent His Son and the Apostles to the Jews first, for they had received His oracles (Rom. 3:1-2; 9:4-5).
2. When Christ ministered He was not opposed by the Gentiles, but by the Jewish leaders: the scribes, the Pharisees, the elders, and the high priest. They saw the signs that Jesus did and should have believed on Him and received Him as their Messiah. Instead, their evil hearts were jealous because many people followed Him and believed on Him (John 11:45-47). Thus, having rejected their Savior, they plotted His death and had Him crucified by the Romans.
3. After the Lord's resurrection and ascension He poured the Holy Spirit down upon His disciples so they could testify of Him to the people. They firstly testified to the Jews in Jerusalem. Although thousands of Jews believed on the Lord through their testimony, their leaders again were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles, threatened them not to speak of the name of Jesus, and beat them (Acts 4:2-3, 5, 16-18; 5:40). They finalized their rejection of Christ by stoning Stephen (Acts 6:12; 7:59).
4. The Apostle Paul also preached the gospel firstly to the Jews. Due to their jealousy they again rejected his testimony and persecuted him continuously. Nevertheless, this was according to God's plan, for their rejection of Christ forced His servants to preach to the Gentiles. Many Gentiles gladly received Christ as their Lord and welcomed His Word (Acts 11:18; 13:44-48).
5. The Jews did not receive Christ because they did not believe on Him. They did not have faith. Instead, they trusted in their own righteousness and goodness (Rom. 9:32-33). Having rejected Christ, their hearts became hardened and completely insensitive to God and His Word. So, God "gave them a spirit of deep sleep, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, until this very day" (Rom. 11:7-8).
6. Although as a nation the Jews have rejected God's calling to Christ and His salvation, the door is still open to whoever would turn his heart to the Lord and believe on Him (2 Cor. 3:15-16).