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Topic: Romans 11:1–25: "Israel and the Church share the same root!"

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Well, today's program will proceed as follows: We'll give Brother Goldner a few minutes to greet us, give a brief report, and simply speak freely about whatever is on his mind, and then there will be a short sermon.

We've heard a wonderful testimony. God bless you, Brother Goldner. God bless you.

He fought in all four wars as an officer in the army, particularly on the Golan Heights, where most of the tanks were left behind. He was there. And behold, God has preserved him. And for that too, we are grateful. May He bless him and preserve him and his whole household until he is so fully and completely surrendered to God's purpose, and Israel is restored to its place in the plan of salvation, and all things are brought to a close, and the Lord can establish His Kingdom as King.

When we reflect on Israel's return, we all say: It is no coincidence, it is not oppression, it is not the hardships, though these may well be present; it is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. For God blesses all nations throughout the earth, but if Israel is to be blessed by God, it must come to the land of Israel to be blessed there. Such are God's ways and God's plans. We must respect them as they are. And we are also grateful that God has a certain order, and that not everyone can do as they please, but God says: "***My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.***" [Isa 46:10]

We shall briefly consider a few scriptures and then give glory to the Lord. From Ezekiel 36, I shall read another passage concerning Israel. Ezekiel 36, verse 24:

[24] ***For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.***

We could read a great many Bible passages concerning this matter, including those stating that it is to happen at the end of days. And from these we recognize that we are truly living in the end time, and that God is bringing His work with the church to a close in this final age, so that He may then reveal Himself anew to the people of Israel, so that the Word from the prophet Ezekiel—no, not Ezekiel, but Zechariah—may be fulfilled: "***that they will look upon Him whom they have pierced, then they will mourn.***" [Zec 12:10]

Zechariah chapter 12, verse 10:

[10] ***And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.***

It is not merely a matter of them looking upon just anyone who has been pierced; it is a matter of us knowing who it is who was pierced, and that the Lord Himself became man and reconciled us to Himself and paid the price for it.

I would now like to read from Genesis. Genesis 15. These are familiar scriptures, yet they should serve to deepen our understanding and strengthen our faith. After all, we sang in the third hymn: '*I look up to heaven, where You are praised in the heavenly choir.*' Here we read in Genesis 15, the second part of verse 5:

[5] ***Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.***

We read verse 6 as well:

[6] ***And Abraham believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.***

It is not merely a matter of us looking up to heaven, of us hearing God's Word; that is part of it, but it is not the whole story. If we do look up to heaven and are privileged to hear the Word of God, let us believe it, even if it seems impossible to us. "***Abraham, look up to heaven, count the stars.***" Yes, he certainly could not do so. And then: "***So countless as the stars of the heaven and the sand by the sea, so shall thy seed be.***"

I shall now read from Genesis chapter 12, simply to show us that God has taken responsibility for all nations, and we are included in these promises of the Lord God. Genesis 12, verse 3:

[3] ***And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.***

Amen. Not just one people, but all peoples, all tribes, all languages, all the peoples of the earth shall be blessed.

And we believe that from all peoples, tongues, and nations, the one people of God will emerge as the great church of the Almighty, in whom there is no respect of persons. Oh yes, we rejoice in this. What benefit would we have gained had we remained outsiders? As Paul explains in Romans 9, the covenant, the Word, the promises, all were given to the people of Israel, whilst we all stood on the outside. But then we realize that God bestows His grace, that He spreads it beyond all boundaries

throughout the whole world, so that, as the prophet Isaiah said, "***all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.***" [Isa 52:10]

So the Lord began with the people of Israel in order to extend the blessing to all nations, and bring it to them, and in the end, to pour it out again in abundance upon Israel.

I shall read from Galatians 3 on this subject, from Galatians 3, verses 8 and 9. Galatians 3, verses 8 and 9: Here the apostle explains, Galatians 3, verses 8 and 9:

[8] ***And the scripture foreseeing...***

What was the Scripture? The Word we have just read, which is recorded in the Holy Scripture, as God spoke it to Abraham. I shall read it again:

[8] ***And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.***

Hallelujah. Amen. And verse 9:

[9] ***So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.***

It is faith that matters. If a Jew does not believe the promise given to him, that promise cannot be fulfilled in his life. God can only act where what He has promised is believed by a people or by individuals, and that is why it is written: "***Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.***" [Gen 15:6, Rom 4:3, Gal 3:6]

Nor is it the nations in general. One cannot say that this or that nation is a Christian one. In name, that may be the case, and then we would find that in all the Christian nations—I do not wish to exaggerate, but in my estimation, 95% of those in the national churches, the state churches, the nominal Christians, that 95% have absolutely no connection with God, have had no experience of salvation with God, and are living their lives without God under the umbrella of Christianity, but not under the umbrella of the Most High or in the shadow of the Almighty.

Otherwise, God would have become their comfort and their hope.

Try talking about Christ with your fellow citizens, who are, after all, apparently Christians. Well, where does that lead you? You get the impression that you are talking about things that, in a way, mean absolutely nothing to these people, they have no connection to them.

See, God chooses, God draws people from all peoples, tongues, and nations to form a bouquet of His church. And there will be white, black, yellow, and brown people among them, as we have read: "***In thee shall all nations be blessed... so then they which be of faith...***" [Gal 3:8-9]

Not those who come from Switzerland, not those who are from here or there, but then they which be of faith, wherever they may come from, those who receive faith through the inspiration of the inspired Word that is proclaimed, who then suddenly become believers, "***they are blessed with faithful Abraham.***" [Gal 3:9]

I would like to read on from Galatians 3, verses 21 and 22. Galatians 3, 21 and 22:

[21] ***Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.***

You can see what it is all about: it is about new, divine, eternal life. The law merely condemns and judges the person who is separated from God and has fallen into sin, so that they may cry out for salvation, and thus experience God's grace, becoming believers and be saved.

The law can only say: you may do this, you must not do that. And lo and behold, those who were not allowed have transgressed, and those who were allowed have also transgressed. No one was able to keep the whole law. So someone had to come who was able to fulfill the whole law, in order to take upon Himself the punishment that the law rightfully demanded for our transgressions, so that we might go free.

That is the message of salvation of our beloved Lord. And then we read in verse 22:

[22] ***But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.***

Here faith is personally bound. It is not a faith that floats somewhere in our minds, but a faith in the Almighty God, who has revealed Himself to us personally as Immanuel in Jesus Christ.

How often have I said: Whoever saw Abraham, saw Abraham. Whoever saw Moses, saw Moses. Whoever saw any other prophet, saw that prophet. The question is: who saw whom? Who saw God revealed in the flesh in Jesus? Only those to whom He revealed Himself. The others said: "we know him, his mother, his brothers, and his sisters, they all live amongst us."

What is written in Micah: "***whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting***"? [Mic 5:2]

Micah 5, where it is written that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem.

The apostle elaborates on this in Hebrews, in chapter 7, referring to Melchizedek and interpreting his name there. I shall read it to you in relation to the Word that was written in connection with Abraham. Here we read of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:

[1] ***For this Melchizedek, king of Salem…***

What is Salem? Jerusalem.

[1] ***…priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him.***

Who blesses? You see, a task had to be fulfilled here. God is many things: God is creator, God is sustainer, God is judge, God is king, God is many things. Here the point was to celebrate supper. Melchizedek had bread and wine. And so he went out to meet Abraham, to celebrate the supper with him.

It then continues in verse 2:

[2] ***To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;***

[3] ***Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.***

Who could it be? Everything had a beginning at some point, and even if it was at the very beginning, everything began at some point. This creation did not exist at some point, and then it came into being. But here is one who has neither beginning nor end. He can only be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, in whom all things have their existence. [Rev 22:13]

From Psalm 2, I would like to read the well-known Word, Psalm 2, in connection with the birth of the Savior, who had to become a son, so that we too might become sons and daughters, verses 7 and 8 only, Psalm 2, verses 7 and 8:

[7] ***I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.***

[8] ***Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.***

As regards the term 'decree' or 'God's counsel', we can read about it, for example, in the prophet Isaiah, chapter 46, verse 10. Isaiah 46, verse 10:

[10] ***Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.***

God has simply ordained it thus. God has made a decision, and in this decision, the nations are also included.

I would like to read on this from Isaiah 65, verses 1 to 3, Isaiah 65, 1 to 3:

[1] ***I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not.***

Do you see what this is about? There were people who had no relationship with God, who did not seek Him, and therefore could not find Him, who were not drawn by Him.

Perhaps let me add to that straight away from Hosea. You are all familiar with these scriptures after all. Hosea, here in chapter 1, Hosea chapter 1, the last two verses, and then also chapter 2. Hosea 1, verses 8 and 9:

[8] ***Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.***

[9] ***Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.***

So there were peoples who did not belong to God, who were not His own. "***Not My people.***" And then in Hosea chapter 1, we read verse 10:

[10] ***Ye are not my people, it will be said to them, ye are sons of the living God.***

One could indeed read a great many scriptures and prove time and again, or put upon a lampstand, the way in which God had already arranged everything in the Old Testament. There is no need for discussion on this matter, provided we found grace with God and received enlightened eyes of the heart to be able to look into this divine counsel. However, there are in fact more people who obscure God's counsel than there are those who shed light on it.

A Word of the Lord came to Job, a very severe rebuke, in Job 38. Here I shall read from Job 38, verses 1 and 2, and then verses 31 to 33. Job 38, 1 and 2:

[1] ***Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,***

[2] ***Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?***

[3] ***Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.***

There are people who give the impression that they draw from an inexhaustible wellspring, and that they could even instruct the Most High. And here the rebuke is uttered by the Lord Himself from the whirlwind. Job is the one being addressed, a man of God, a tried and tested man of God, who could exclaim: '***I know that my Redeemer lives***' [Job 19:25], and yet everything went back and forth, the trials weighed heavily upon him. And lo and behold, the Lord speaks to him from the whirlwind and asks: "***Who is this that darkeneth counsel***"— not his own, but God's plan of salvation.

Beloved, we must realize that people who belong to God are part of God's plan of salvation. We are not merely talking about something, we are part of it, we are part of this work of God that is unfolding in these days and will come to completion. So:

[2] ***Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?***

[3] ***Gird up now thy loins...***

Indeed, who could possibly instruct God? And then God gave Job a further lesson to take with him, in chapter 38, verses 31, 32, and 33. Here it says:

[31] ***Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?***

[32] ***Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?***

[33] ***Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?***

Here the Lord really took Job to task. For as you know, the three so-called friends had nothing but accusations to hurl at him. And Job was already in distress, and the more they said to him, the greater his distress became. He needed an answer, not one rebuke after another. When someone is in distress, you must not kick them whilst they are down, you must help them, stoop down to their level, and call out to God together, so that the Lord may help.

We see that God speaks here of His omnipotence. "***Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?***" [Job 38:31-32]

That too is in the Bible, have you noticed? That too is in the Bible. "***Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?***"

Then comes the most important part, this Job always had a retort and a reply to every remark addressed to him. And here he is asked: "***Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?***" [Job 38:33]

That is a good question. Today, there are plenty of Bible interpreters and exegetes, but few who actually live out what is written in the Bible. Yet, there are plenty of interpreters. Not just those who interpret signs and the stars. There are also a plenty of Bible interpreters.

But few, very few, are called and enlightened by God to truly recognize what it is all about, what God spoke through the mouths of the prophets and set before the eyes of those who can believe in both the Old and New Testament.

And Paul writes: "***the gospel of Jesus Christ is folly to the Jews and the Greeks.***" [1Co 1:23]

What do they want? They want worldly wisdom. The Jews want signs. [1 Cor 1:22] Everything happened, signs and wonders took place, yet it was not enough.

Do we know the laws that apply in heaven? Have we understood that God has given us a handbook, instructions to guide us on our way, a description of how everything is to take place? Our God is a faithful God.

It was Job who obscured God's plan of salvation with words spoken without understanding. Whoever wishes to have God's plan of salvation illuminated should refrain from their own words and comments, but allow themselves to be guided by the Spirit

of God from word to word, from scripture to scripture, from the Old to the New, and from the New to the Old. And lo and behold, then a complete picture will emerge for us of the whole plan of salvation of our God, which has been proclaimed to us by grace.

In Acts chapter 20, Paul expressed this once again. Acts chapter 20, verses 25 to 27:

[25] ***And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.***

[26] ***Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.***

[27] ***For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.***

So, what was the source of his certainty? What was the basis of his clear conscience? With what did he wish to stand before God? In the fact that he had proclaimed the whole counsel of God, thereby giving his listeners and readers the opportunity to have part in what God is doing here on this earth.

Let us now turn to Romans chapter 11, a truly wonderful word. No other chapter compares to this one when it comes to insight and clarity regarding the people of Israel and the nations. Romans chapter 11, we shall read verses 1 to 6, and then verse 11:

[1] ***I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.***

[2] ***God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,***

[3] ***Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.***

[4] ***But what saith the answer of God unto him?***

And here, I would like to pause for a moment. Not only is this God's answer to him, the divine response addressed to him is also God's answer for you and for me, for the Word is addressed to us all. And so, this is the answer for all of us:

[4] ***But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.***

[5] ***Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.***

[6] ***And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.***

Even with the people of Israel, it will be grace and not the law, grace and grace again, according to the Word of the Lord which he proclaimed to Moses: "***I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.***" [Exo 33:19]

Now the relationship and the transition from Judaism to the nations, and then back again from the nations to the Jews. We read about this in Romans 11, verse 11:

[11] ***I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.***

Let me pause here for just a moment. There must come a time with a New Testament church which will provoke jealousy in Israel towards the church. The things, the supernatural things, that the Lord God will do before the rapture of the bride church will be so mighty that Israel will be provoked to jealousy by what God will do.

Well, let us read on. God has his ways and means, and will bring everything to pass. I will read it again:

[11] ***…for to provoke them to jealousy.***

[12] ***Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?***

Do you see what this is about? The full number of the Gentiles. This phrase is so beautifully expressed, that once the full number of the Gentiles has come in, then Israel as a whole will be saved. [Rom 11:25-26]

Once again:

[12] ***…how much more their fulness?***

Now we are being addressed:

[13] ***For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:***

[14] ***If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.***

[15] ***For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?***

Which scripture from the Old Testament comes to mind now? Pardon? Which scripture from the Old Testament are you thinking of now?

I'll read verse 15 again:

[15] ***For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?***

Who knows the word from Hosea 5, the final verses, and then the opening verses of Hosea 6? It is written here in the prophetic word: Hosea 5, 15 and 16:

[15] ***I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.***

[1] ***Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.***

[2] ***After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.***

Is that not a marvelous word? God spoke these words through the mouth of the Old Testament prophet.

I'll tell you how it is: God is an all-knowing God. From all eternity, he was able to establish and determine what would happen, and to have the entire course of events written down in advance, because he is the guide and determiner of this whole course of events.

Do we all believe that? But of course we do.

God doesn't just start planning today. His plan is an eternal plan. What a marvelous thought:

[2] ***After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.***

One day with God is like a thousand years for us. So it is written in the Psalm, so it is written in 2 Peter 3. One day with God is like a thousand years for us.

Two thousand years have passed. On the third day, God will help, bringing life from the dead.

Let me emphasize this once more. My beloved brother Goldner, the Jews, whether from Russia, Ethiopia, or from all over the world, are returning because God is drawing them. Why did they not come 500 years ago? Why not sooner? Now is the time, and that is why they are coming now, because God will reveal himself to them there. This is stated, for example, in Zechariah 4. We cannot go into that now.

So, God will restore his people Israel to their rightful place. And both the church and Israel share one and the same root.

And I shall now read this to you from Romans chapter 11. I shall read verse 15 once more, bearing in mind the word of the prophet Hosea, and then continue:

[15] ***For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world...***

Let me say this here: The reconciliation took place on the cross of Calvary.

But first, the Lord did say: "***Go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, do not go into the way of the Gentiles.***" [Mat 10:5-6]

And then the moment had to come when one thing came to an end and the other began, as Paul then explains in Acts chapter 13, saying: "***Now the word holds true: I have made you a light to the Gentiles…***" [Act 13:47]

And so on.

And then it says: "***When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and as many of them as were ordained for eternal life believed.***" [Act 13:48]

This reconciliation with all humanity accomplished by God on the cross of Calvary has taken its course in the plan of salvation, and for that we are grateful.

[15] … ***What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?***

I read on:

[16] ***For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.***

[17] ***And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;***

[18] ***Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.***

One cannot fully fathom the meaning of this word. Who is this root? Read it in Revelation 5: "***the Root and the Offspring of David.***" [Rev 5:5, Rev 22:16]

"***A shoot will spring up, or a branch…***" [Isa 11:1]

You can look it up in the prophet Isaiah, where it is clearly recorded in two places. He is both the "***Root and the Offspring of David***." [Rev 22:16]

Everything is founded upon Him; everything has been brought together in Him, Jews and Gentiles. All who are part of God's plan stand on the same ground of God's revelation and are nourished by the same root, for the sap, after all, flows through the root and reaches right into the branches. After all, in no tree does the sap flow from the branches back to the roots; rather, it comes through the roots and gives every tree the life and the fruit that will later be found on it.

So, God began with Israel. With Jesus, what was promised to the tribe of Judah: "***out of you shall come forth to me the one who is to be ruler in Israel.***" [Mic 5:2]

He shall "***tie the donkey's colt to the vine***." [Gen 49:11]

Everything is already written in the Old Testament, and so we give thanks to God that we, too, are sustained and nourished. We may sometimes feel barren, as though we lack true life. Let me say this: the Word of God is spirit and life. [Joh 6:63] Wherever it is believed, and the Lord receives the thanks due to Him, there it will

bear fruit and will not return void, but it will accomplish what it was sent to do. [Isa 55:11]

God began with the people of Israel, and with the people of Israel He will end. In between lies the time for the church from every tongue and nation. On this subject, I shall read only Romans chapter 11—I could also read Acts 15 and a few other scriptures—Romans chapter 11, verse 25:

[25] ***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 fullness of the Gentiles be come in.***

Hallelujah! Amen. Not forever, but "***until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in***."

[26] ***And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:***

[27] ***For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.***

Oh, we could read on, read on and on, and delve deeper into this.

Let us summarize: God has a plan for His people, for the people of Israel as a whole, and even within that whole there is, first and foremost, the chosen remnant. Just as there are those who are called and chosen within the church, some will share in the first resurrection, others in the second. Everything has been beautifully and clearly arranged by God.

And indeed, we are seeing it come to pass before our very eyes that God is bringing His people home, as He declared through Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 30, that Israel would be scattered among the nations and then gathered together again. We are living in this very time of which our Lord also spoke, saying: "***Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.***" [Luk 21:32-33]

We are the generation that is now privileged to witness all this, and how glad we are that God is gathering the people of Israel, how glad we are that the Lord is building His church from all churches and denominations, from all confessions and fellowships. He is calling out people, people to whom He can reveal Himself, entrust His Word and His promises, who take His covenant seriously, who receive the forgiveness of sins and new life from God, and thus become part of God's plan of salvation in our day, to experience the completion.

We are equally delighted that the people of Israel are returning. After all, we are connected to no other people on earth as closely as we are to Israel. There is no child of God who identifies so closely with their own country and government as they are to the people of Israel. For every citizen of this earth, provided they are a true child of God, Israel comes first, and only then, as far as I am concerned, comes the nation to which one belongs, or, if one has ever changed it, the nation of one's own choosing.

So we bless Israel from the bottom of our hearts in the name of the Lord our God. And we also pray for the full blessing of the Almighty God in these days, so that what we have read may be fulfilled, that the "***fullness of the Gentiles be come in***." [Rom 11:25]

In the end, all things must come to pass, and then the Lord will come from Zion. Oh, how many scriptures I could still read from the Old and New Testament! I can only say one thing: praise be to the Lord, the Almighty God, who has revealed His will and His counsel to us in this way, and has granted us understanding and insight.

And we do not presume to speak in our own words about what God has said and promised, but we turn to Scripture and again to Scripture, and let God speak to us time and time again, so that He may instruct us and we may be informed, namely from Him, through His Word and through His Holy Spirit. Then no one will be tossed to and fro any longer, no longer swayed any wind of doctrine, but firmly rooted. [Col 2:7]

And lo and behold, we feel that the root sustains us. We are sustained; the root nourishes us. Even today, God wishes to revive us; today He wishes to bless us anew. May His life flow through every branch, so that we may bear fruit to the glory of His name. Amen.