

God Did Not Reject His People!

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Roman 11:1-2, 30-32

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1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah-how he appealed to God against Israel:

30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. 32 For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Have you ever felt like God has simply decided to give up on you? I know that I have. I have had the sinking feeling that I messed up so bad that God has decided that I cannot enter heaven when I pass here because what I did was so unforgivable. The reality is that that is not the way that God works. Now, don't get me wrong. If we are unrepentant, then yes, we can be forbidden from entering heaven. However, if we mess up and seek His forgiveness, then He is quick to do just that. God desires us to return to Him. He made the path possible for us, so it only makes sense that He would be quick to forgive and blot out our transgressions. We serve a loving God

who sees the very best in us. Even when we go through our mistakes and rebellion, God knows how we will turn out. He doesn't have to worry about whether we will turn ourselves around. He knows the ending. He sees the big picture.

Some people can have this mindset of God leaving them when they go through grief. They feel that God didn't love them enough to "save" or "heal" this person that was suffering. It can be easy to ignore the fact that the greatest healing we can receive is to be able to leave this terrible world behind for a much better one. I can't wait to know that I have left this terrible body behind. I can't wait to have a body that will always be healthy. It will never be overweight. I can't wait to have a body that will never again be sick. I will never have a body in need of surgery. I will never have a body that will suffer cuts or scrapes. I will never have a body that may be forced to have life support to keep "living." To think that I may have tubes hooked up to me to allow me to keep living instead of leaving this world behind to be welcomed by Jesus sounds absolutely terrifying. I feel it would be a fate worse than death. I can't imagine any Christian wishing to just be dangling on by a thread at the end of their life. It's hard for us to let them go, but when we consider how miserable they feel at the time, it may make it easier to understand how God is helping them. That grief will always show up in unexpected ways. You may have lost someone 20 years ago, and you think that you are perfectly fine, but a particular scent or picture may bring up the tears. It's perfectly

fine to grieve a loss, but that doesn't mean that God has abandoned you or that you are a terrible person because you miss them. Talking about those you have lost is a great way to keep their memory alive. The fact that there is someone to miss is a great blessing because it means that the person that has gone meant something to people. I would rather, when I die, have people who want to continue sharing stories about me even if it makes them cry than to be like Ebenezer Scrooge and have no one have anything at all to say about me.

Now let's turn back to our verses for today. ***Verses 1-2. 1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah-now he appealed to God against Israel:***

To truly break this down, let's remember how this started. God was there in the beginning and created everything and everyone. He planned to have constant companionship with us all. Then the serpent deceived Eve and the plan went into dismay. Now sin had entered the world, but God was still open to any who wished to follow Him. Then people began to worship themselves. They became so pompous and prideful that God was sorry that He had ever made them. So, a flood was sent to wipe out the whole world, except for Noah and his family. They would be the promised family to bring humanity back. Things seemed to be okay, but only for a short time because we then

read about the construction of the Tower of Babel in chapter 11. They thought that they were so great that they didn't need God anymore. They wanted to show the rest of the people how great they were. Seeing the arrogance and the result that would come from it, God decided to spread them out and create new languages. This puts a halt on their plans. They would be forced to survive in new environments. Knowing that there would have to be an example to stand out as a true follower of God, we read about the call of Abram, later Abraham, in chapter 12. Promises are made to Abraham about many descendants and a promised land. As we continue throughout the book of Genesis we see time and again where God references being the "God of Abraham." Abraham is promised to be a "Father of many nations." We see this come true because the 12 tribes of Israel come from Abraham. Abraham gave us Isaac. Isaac gives us Jacob. Jacob is renamed Israel. Jacob has 12 sons which are the names of the tribes. This would now serve as a holy nation even though they were far from perfect. In fact, they turned their backs on God so much, that you couldn't blame God for giving up on them, but instead, God does something miraculous. Through the tribe of Judah, we can follow the line down to Jesus. The Israelite people may have embraced the promised land of Canaan, but the followers of Jesus will embrace a new promised land of heaven. God promised to use Israel, and I don't see God breaking His promise. I see more fulfillment now than what I can read about in the Bible. That is because the Bible is completely true, but we get to live out the experience of

what comes after Paul and before Revelation. If you know that God is not done with you yet, why don't you give God a shout of praise!

I want to share these two quotes from the commentary because it really drives the point home. "He will see to it that the glorious promises in which the prophets delighted will come to complete fulfillment." "Even though God deals with Israel in a disapproving way at the present time, He is doing so with the prospect of Israel's restoration in mind."

Let's move on to the other set of verses for today. *Verses 30-32.*

30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. 32 For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

There are people who like to complain about free will and how God should just put an end to evil with the snap of His fingers. Tell me something though. If God did that, would that make people love Him? No. To prove it, let me give an example. Think about someone who works in a grocery store. Do you think a cashier loves absolutely everyone that they work with? Of course not! However, if a no bullying 0% tolerance policy goes into effect, does that automatically make that cashier love those people they disagree with? The evil behaviors were removed under threat of firing, but it didn't bring love into the

equation. It just caused these people who disagree to just never speak. It didn't fix the situation, and in fact, it may have just made it worse. If God removed all evil, would we love Him because we want to or because we didn't know anything else?

Instead, God is merciful enough to give us a choice. He knows what we will choose in the end. Paul drives this home. Did you notice how many times Paul kept using that word? Do you even know what mercy is? This is the best definition I have heard of mercy and grace. Grace is giving us what we don't deserve, and mercy is not giving us what we do deserve. Could you imagine how much worse we would be if God didn't give us mercy? If God gave us exactly what we deserved, then there would be no hope of ever reaching heaven.

The commentator had this to say about the relationship between mercy and the Jews and Gentiles. "The Gentiles had been the unbelievers but found mercy because of the disobedience of the Jews. Now by the mercy of the Gentiles the unbelieving Jews may find mercy. Finally God's mercy reaches to all the world."

God never abandoned His people. God never abandons us! What a mighty God we serve. We serve a God who can keep all His promises. We serve a God who can forgive our sins. We serve a God who will never leave us or forsake us. We serve a God who walks through all the trials of this life with us because He endured it before us. We serve a God who loves us so much that He sent us Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. He literally took sin upon Himself and was away from the Father for a short

time. He was beaten and humiliated but continued to serve the will of the Father because it would make it possible for us to achieve salvation. This man bled and died for our sakes. He rose again from the dead and returned to the disciples because He was fulfilling the promise again to never abandon them. He told them He would be with them until the end of the age. He is with us as well. He will always be here. His fulfillment of that was that He ascended into heaven and sent us the Holy Spirit. That Holy Spirit is with us to guide us. He is here always and forever. He loves us.

So, no matter what is happening, God is there. God has not abandoned us when we grieve. God has not abandoned us when we are angry. When we are going through trials, He is either walking beside us or perhaps even carrying us kicking and screaming, but He is still there. That will never change. You can choose to walk away from Him, but He will never walk away from you.