

Completed

THE FULL PICTURE OF GOD IN
ROMANS

9

DIG DEEPER

YES, NO & MAYBE

1. I've had to face a lot of rejection in my life.

2. During the weekdays, I often feel like I am surrounded by people who don't have a relationship with God.

3. When we reject God, our hearts are hardened.

4. The parable of the sower and the seeds is about witnessing to other people.

5. God does not reject anyone for any reason.

READ: Romans 11:1-12 (NIV)

*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: 3 "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"? 4 And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. **6 And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.***

*7 What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were **hardened**, 8 as it is written:*

*"God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that could not see
and ears that could not hear,
to this very day."*

9 And David says:

*"May their table become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them.*

*10 May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent forever."*

*11 Again I ask: **Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all!** Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles **to make Israel envious**. 12 But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, **how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!***

DOES GOD REJECT HIS PEOPLE?:

Δ (Vs. 1) "Did God reject his people?" - The question is so phrased in the Greek text that it requires a negative answer. Paul is not raising a question. He is driving home the fact that God did not cast Israel away. The word "reject" is ἀποθεῶ (ἀπωθεω), "to thrust away, push away, repel, to thrust away from one's self, to drive away from one's self." The word is used in the Greek classics where Oedipus says, "I charge you that no one shelter or speak to that murderer, but that all thrust him from their homes."

√ (Vs. 1,11) "By no means!/Not at all!" - The Greek μέ genoito (μη γενοιτο), "may such a thing never occur/absolutely not/heck no!" is a crass, street lingo phrase in Koine Greek that Paul uses here and elsewhere for shocking impact.

? Why do you think that many people today believe that God rejects people?



DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

PAUL'S TWO EXHIBITS OF EVIDENCE:

▲ (Vs. 1) **"I am an Israelite myself..."** - God obviously hadn't rejected all Jews, if God was still working with and through Paul.

√ (Vs. 2-4) **Elijah** - After Elijah's spectacular victory over the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Jezebel's threats sent him fleeing for his life. Sulking in a cave forty days' and nights' journey away from danger and consumed with self-pity, Elijah learned that he was not a minority of one. He was not the last prophet in the land. If he had known the whole story, he would have realized that God had reserved for himself a significant number of Israelites.

❗ Why do you think that church people consistently have a difficult time believing that God has many more saved ones than we imagine?

▲ (Vs. 5-10) **"Hardened"** - (ἐπωρωθησαν [epōrōthēsan]) to cover with thick skin; to form a callous. Paul is saying here that all of the works that the Jews were doing had caused callouses, and that God's grace could not penetrate the thick skin caused by their works.

Amazingly, Jesus said something in the parable of the sower that he never said in other story. He said that **the parable of the sower and the seeds** is the key to understanding **all** the other parables about the kingdom of God. In Mark 4:13, Jesus said, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"

❗ How is it that intently doing the work you think will please God causes callouses to form between you and His grace?

❗ How is the parable of the sower and the seeds more about US, and less about witnessing to OTHERS?

▲ (Vs. 11) **"To make Israel envious"** - (εἰς το παραζηλωσαι [eis to parazēlōsai]). The primary difference between God's "jealousy" for Israel and the modern version of jealousy lies in the beneficiary. In modern terms, the jealous person wants someone back for his or her own benefit. In God's case, he wants Israel back for Israel's benefit. He is doing so in order to make Israel "eagerly desire," or be "zealous," to return to him.

❗ Why do you think it is so difficult for church people to accept that all people of all walks of life, with all failures and all kinds of moral problems are not rejected by God?

NOTES:

My Prayers This week:

1. What is causing me to believe that some people are rejected by God?
2. What type of "soil" is my heart in relation to the new seeds God wants to plant?
3. What new aspect of God's character do I understand better this week?

