

How Will Jewish People Today See God's Hands?

As we grow in our walk with the Lord, our priorities change to match those of our God, and we find ourselves rejoicing as He rejoices, weeping as He weeps.

We see this in Paul's letter to the Romans where, in just a few short verses, Paul goes from declaring the pinnacle of all promises, "*Nothing can separate us from the love of God in our Lord Yeshua the Messiah*" (Rom. 8:39), to the depths of despair, "*with unceasing anguish in my heart*" (Rom. 9:2).

What brought Paul to this point?

To understand, let us briefly consider the theme of the book of Romans: "*The righteousness of God revealed*" (Rom. 1:17). How does God reveal His righteous character? Through the Good News. God's character is seen as He graciously saves lost people through their faith in the sacrifice of Messiah.

This message was not something that Paul formulated just for the Romans but rather *the* message he preached everywhere he went. This teaching was his way of introducing himself to Roman believers whom he had never met before (15:22-23). However, as Paul preached, some were hostile to his teaching. In fact, Paul received many charges and allegations which he addresses in his letter to the Romans (3:9, 6:1 and so on).

What About the Jews?

The most grievous of these charges is expressed in Romans 11:1: "*I ask then, has God rejected His people?*" In light of the number of Jewish people who had not yet accepted Yeshua, some were asking the question, "What about the Jews?" This allegation is of such significance that, if left

unanswered, would undermine the validity of the Good News.

Why is this charge so serious? Because it questions the very character of God. All throughout the Old Covenant, we see God's promised salvation to Israel (Joel 3; Zech. 12-14; Is. 61 and so on). If all of these promises are null and void because of Israel's unbelief, why would any of us believe a promise from such a God?

After all, if a car salesman sold you a lemon, would you want to buy another car from him? Through Romans 9-11, Paul dives into this topic, arriving at the conclusion that No, "*God will not forsake His people,*" (Rom. 11:1) but that one day, as spoken by the prophets, "*all Israel will be saved*" (Rom. 11:26).

The Plight of Israel

This brings us back to Paul's sorrowful declaration in Romans 9:2. Because Paul believed God's unending promises, he had a great burden for his fellow Jewish people who were currently still in darkness, unwilling to accept God's only provision of salvation in Messiah. Although Paul was called to be an "*apostle to the Gentiles*" (Rom. 11:13), he writes emphatically of his sincere love and burden for Israel.

The love of God cuts both ways. If you are a believer in Yeshua, nothing can separate you from God's love, and as such, you are "joined at the hip with God," the pain that touches His heart now touching yours as well. If Messiah's love constrains your heart, then you too will share in His burden, weeping over Jerusalem, even as Yeshua wept (Luke 19:41), and continues to weep to this day.

Paul shared this burden for his people, and even though he had frequently been the recipient of persecution from them, he expressed, "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is for their salvation*" (Rom. 10:1). This is where real spiritual confidence comes from: If we will weep with God, we

will pray to God, and then we will hope in God according to His sure promises. Thus, we are *“more than conquerors through Him who loved us”* (Rom. 8:37)!

The Passion of God

Some might think, *“Who has the time to care for something else? I have all the burdens I can bear already.”* Though it is true that we live in a busy, difficult world, when the love of God sincerely constrains your heart and the sorrow of that love moves your heart, you will find the time to pray, the money to give and the strength to do.

Paul went so far as to state, *“For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Messiah for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh”* (Rom. 9:3). Paul knew that only Messiah could die for sins, but he felt as Moses did for Israel’s plight (Ex. 32:32). This explains how he could *“die daily”* (1 Cor. 15:31), and *“spend and be spent”* for the sake of the Good News (2 Cor. 12:15). The love of God constrained his heart and fulfilled his life.

If, like Paul, you are called to the Gentiles, and may have had little experience with Jewish people, you can still join God in His burden. That is, if the love of Messiah constrains your heart. A love for Jewish people is not only for people like Paul, or for those serving in Jewish ministry, but for all believers willing to open their heart to the passion of God who says of Israel, *“All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people”* (). All day long, God is beseeching His people to return to Him. *“Come back, O Israel, back to the God who loves you!”*

But how will Jewish people today see God’s hands? Through God’s people! If your heart is yielded to God’s heart, then your hands will serve as His hands to reach out to Jewish people and to all people around you as you demonstrate the

great love of God and His faithfulness to His promises. “God will never forsake His people whom He foreknew” (Rom. 11:2)!

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