

REPERCUSSIONS OF REJECTION

Matthew 12:38-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21 /
Yeshua §§63, 65

God has the amazing ability to bring good out of bad experiences.

God did that in the life of a man here at Grace. 25 years ago, this man was driving down the hill into the city with a loaded .38 on the seat next to him with murder in his heart. He intended to shoot the CEO who, just the day before, refused to pay for the work his construction crew had completed. And to add insult to injury, the CEO taunted this man to take him to court. It was several hundred thousand dollars. It bankrupted and destroyed his company.

Thankfully, this man came to his senses and did not follow through on his murderous intentions. He was distraught and all he could think was that he needed to go to church. That was a strange thought because he was not a church goer. But while he was thinking that thought and driving home, he passed Grace Church and the next day, Sunday, came to church. It wasn't long before he trusted in Christ as his savior. For those of us who knew him, we had the joy of watching the truth of God's Word, the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of the body of Christ transform that man's life.

God brought the greatest good out of a terrible situation.

The day of rejection is the most tragic day in the history of the nation of Israel. It is the day recorded in Matthew chapters 12 & 13. It is the day on which the nation of Israel officially rejected Jesus as their Messiah.

As we studied last week, Jesus came to the nation of Israel claiming to be their Messiah and offering them the kingdom. For a year and a half, the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to do signs and wonders, healings and exorcisms authenticating His messianic claim. In the end, the nation followed their spiritual leaders, the Pharisees in rejecting Jesus. They accepted the explanation of the Pharisees that Jesus was empowered, not by the Holy Spirit of God, but by Satan. In so doing, they officially rejected Jesus and committed the unpardonable sin, the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit.

As a result of their rejection, Jesus' ministry radically changed. He no longer offered the kingdom to that generation and He warned them of judgment to come.

This was the darkest day in Jewish history yet Jesus revealed that out of it, God will bring something good.

As we pick up the story in Matthew 12:38, this is still the day of rejection. Jesus has both rebutted the Pharisees' accusation of Satanic empowerment and warned them of judgment. In an attempt to regain control of the exchange, the scribes and Pharisees demand Jesus perform another authenticating sign. Jesus makes it clear they will receive no more authenticating signs except one.

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NO MORE AUTHENTICATING SIGNS EXCEPT ONE

MATTHEW 12:38-40 (ESV)

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." 39 But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The demand for a sign was a disingenuous tactic by the scribes and Pharisees to regain control of the moment. They had disregarded a year and a half worth of authenticating signs. Jesus rebuked them and informed them only one more sign would be given; the sign of Jonah. The sign of Jonah is the sign of the resurrection.

Until this day, miraculous signs were given to convince the nation of Israel He was their Messiah. After this day, His signs will be for the training of His Apostles to carry on the work of the ministry after Jesus' departure. The final sign Jesus will give Israel proving He is their Messiah King is rising from the dead after three days. The historical, physical resurrection of Jesus on the third day was the final and climactic sign to the nation of Israel that He is their Messiah King.

In verses 41 through 45 Jesus speaks judgment against that generation which has rejected Him.

JUDGMENT AGAINST THAT GENERATION

MATTHEW 12:41-45 (ESV)

41 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. 42 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

After being resurrected and coughed up by the great fish, the Prophet Jonah walked the streets of Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, declaring God's impending judgment (Jonah 3:4). The entire city repented, from the King to the lowliest citizen; 120,000 in all (Jonah 4:11). They had only Jonah's preaching, but they believed. The generation to whom Jesus came had a year and a half of signs and wonders, healings and exorcisms, yet they rejected Jesus. At the Great White Throne Judgment, the Ninevites will testify against this generation for failing to respond to the light they were given.

The Queen of Sheba (2 Chronicles 9) will also testify against this generation at the Great White Throne Judgment. She put time, energy and money to travel from Arabia to Israel in pursuit of the light. Jesus came to that generation and they rejected Him.

It is significant that both these witnesses, the Ninevites and the Queen of the South, are Gentiles.

Not only will this generation be condemned at the Great White Throne Judgment in the future; in their lifetime they will suffer the consequences of their rejection.

43 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. 44 Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation."

Through the ministries of John the Baptizer and Jesus, the nation of Israel was spiritually swept clean and put in order. John and Jesus were preparing the nation to receive the Holy Spirit (a provision of the New Covenant, Ezekiel 36:22-32). With their rejection, the offer of the kingdom (which included the new covenant) was rescinded. Their condition will worsen.

At the time of Jesus' coming, Rome granted Israel a measure of autonomy. Forty years later Israel was destroyed. Jerusalem was sacked. The Temple was destroyed. 1.1 million Jews were killed. 100,000 men were enslaved; most of them died in the Arena or in the mines. Surviving Jews were dispersed all over the world.

Their last state was worse than their first.

All these things took place on the day of rejection. This was the tipping point of Jesus' ministry. Many things changed as a consequence of their rejection, including family ties.

SPIRITUAL TIES SUPERSEDE BIOLOGICAL TIES

MATTHEW 12:46-50 (ESV)

46 While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. 48 But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

At first, this incident seems out of place. Why were Mary and her sons wanting to speak to Jesus? They may have come to take control of Jesus fearing He was out of His mind. After selecting the Apostles and before the day of rejection, Mary and her sons attempted to seize Jesus thinking He was out of His mind.

MARK 3:20-21 (ESV)

20 Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. 21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

It seems Mary and her sons are attempting to do this again for the same reason.

Jesus used this moment to make another stunning statement. He repudiated all natural ties and declared allegiance to His spiritual family.

His people were no longer the Jews. His people were no longer His blood family. Going forward, His people are all those who do the will of the Father. What is the will of the Father at this time in history? Believe Jesus is the Messiah King. All those who believe, Jew and Gentile, become part of Jesus' family. And what is another name for Jesus' family that will emerge out of the rejection of Jesus by the nation Israel?

The Church.

Jesus is signaling that out of the rubble of Israel's rejection a new people is emerging. Directly following this teaching, Jesus moves outside and publicly teaches the first of nine parables revealing the "mystery form" of the kingdom. The "mystery form" of the kingdom is the Church, the family of Jesus that will emerge from His rejection by the nation Israel.

Out of the tragedy of Israel's rejection, God is bringing forth good – the Church!

REPERCUSSIONS OF THEIR REJECTION

The rejection of Jesus resulted in radical changes in His ministry. Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum clearly delineates changes in four facets of Jesus' ministry.

Signs

Jesus no longer performed signs to convince the nation. They irrevocably rejected His Messiahship. Henceforth the purpose of His signs will be to train the apostles to carry on the ministry after His departure. The only authenticating sign Jesus will give the nation is the sign of Jonah which is the sign of the resurrection. The signs went from being for the nation to being for the apostles.

Miracles

The second area of change concerned the people for whom Jesus performed miracles. There were two facets to this change. Prior to the rejection, Jesus performed miracles for the benefit of the masses and did not require them to have faith first. For example, Jesus healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda (Jn. 5:1-15). The man did not even know who Jesus was or what He claimed to be. Faith was not essential for Jesus to perform miracles, because He was performing them to convince people to believe. Following the rejection, He will only perform miracles in response to the needs of individuals, and He will require that they first have faith. The second facet is that prior to the rejection, Jesus told the people He healed to go and proclaim what God had done for them. In Luke 17:14, Jesus sent the Jewish lepers He healed to the priesthood. After the rejection, every time Jesus heals someone, He forbids them to tell anyone what God had done. He did not apply that rule to the Gentiles, but only to Jews. Jesus initiated a policy of silence, and He forbade those who benefited from His messianic power to tell anyone about it. He went from "tell all" to "tell no one."

Message

Before the rejection, Jesus and the apostles traveled all over Israel, from city to city and synagogue to synagogue, proclaiming Him to be the Messiah. After the rejection, Jesus will forbid His disciples to tell anyone that He is the Messiah. When Peter made his statement of confession, *You are the Messiah the Son of the Living God*, Jesus told him and the other disciples not to tell anyone (Mt. 16:16-20). This policy of silence was rescinded in Matthew 28 with the Great Commission. He changed from proclaiming His Messiahship to concealing it.

Method of Teaching

Prior to the rejection, Jesus taught the people plainly. He spoke in terms they understood. For example, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew stated the people clearly understood (Mt. 7:28-29). After the rejection, whenever Jesus teaches the people publicly, He will speak in parables in order to hide the truth. His teaching went from being very clear to being parabolic.

God holds us accountable to respond to the light He gives. Learn from the nation of Israel. Look at the evidence for Jesus in the Bible and in the changed lives of those who

have received Him. Respond to the light by putting your faith in Jesus today as your Savior.