

A RATIONAL RESPONSE
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Romans 12:1-8

1. Romans 9, 10, and 11 contain Paul's explanation of the current situation related to God's plans for the ages.
2. We are currently part of the Church Age, a period of time when both Jews and Gentiles have the opportunity to become children of God, as well as the Bride of Christ, through repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Paul did not want his readers to think that God's covenant promises to the Jewish people were now forgotten because that could never be.
4. If God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob could be withdrawn what hope would you and I have related to the promises and commitments found in the New Testament?
5. Thankfully, as Paul stated, "...the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." Romans 11:29.
6. Chapter 12 through 16 contain exhortations, instructions and encouragement that Paul sets forth; all of which rest on the theological and doctrinal foundation he has laid in the chapters we have already looked at.
7. Before I deal with the passage we just read I want to point out a couple of troubling truths found in the Bible.
 - a. Paul pointed out that prior to the return of Jesus Christ, towards the end of the Church Age, a great apostasy would occur. 2 Thess 2:1-3
Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first.
 - b. I believe Jesus was referring to this time in Matthew 24:9-13
"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 "At that time many will fall away (apostatize) and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12 "**Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.** 13 "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."
NOTE: The preacher's job is a lot easier when those he is preaching to actually love the Lord Jesus and each other.
 - c. If you and I want to grow in our knowledge and understanding of God's Word we need to settle one important issue, and that issue has to do with our willingness to do God's will. John 7:16-18
So Jesus answered them and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 7 "**If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know** of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself."
NOTE: Multitudes of professed followers of Jesus Christ remain biblically ignorant because they have not settled the issue of who is in charge.

8. With these thoughts in mind let us examine the passage before us.

I. A pleasing presentation. 1

- A. Note first of all that Paul begins with an admonition for us to do something.
- B. What he wants us to do is in response to what God has done. Eph 2:1-10
And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 **But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),** 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
- C. As an act of gratitude and worship we are to present our bodies, our whole beings, to God as living (in Christ) and holy (because of Christ) sacrifices.
- D. We can make this presentation because in Christ we are both pleasing and acceptable to God.
- E. This presentation constitutes our spiritual service of worship, or the only reasonable and rational response to the mercy and grace of God.

II. A total transformation. 2

- A. In this verse Paul admonishes us to do and not to do.
- B. He wrote, "Do not be conformed to (shaped by) this world (present age)."
NOTE: Many professing Christians are both in the world and of the world, and that reality marks them as the enemies of God. James 4:4
You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
- C. Rather than being conformed or shaped by this present age we are to be transformed, (metamorphosis) by the renewing (complete change for the better) of our minds.
 - 1. Col 3:1-4
Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.** 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

2. Phil 4:8-9

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **dwelt on these things**. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, **practice these things**, and the God of peace will be with you.

D. Many struggle to know what the will of God is, that which is good, acceptable, and perfect in His sight, because they have never presented themselves to God as a living and holy sacrifice, nor have they turned their backs on this present age and all it represents.

III. A fruitful family. 3-8

A. What a great word picture Paul paints of what should be true of every New Testament congregation.

B. God intended churches to be made up of:

1. Totally surrendered and committed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Members who understand and live out what the will of God is.
3. People who humbly accept and fill their place in the body of Christ in keeping with their spiritual gifts and the measure of faith they have.
4. Individuals who see themselves as one body in Christ and individually members one of another.

APPLICATION

1. Personally I would rather be the pastor of a small group of believers whose lives are characterized by what we have covered today, than to be the pastor of a large church filled with mostly uncommitted, confused, and conflicted people who cannot decide, or even discern, what God's will for them is.
2. On the other hand I would be happy to be the pastor of a larger group if that group was characterized, for the most part, by what should characterize a body of genuine followers of Jesus Christ.
3. The problem is that achieving that goal is difficult in light of the current state of what constitutes evangelical Christianity in America and the West.
4. Yet, I remain hopeful, that we will see a genuine moving of God in the midst of the current apostasy.
5. May that moving of God begin right here in PHBC, and if not here, somewhere.