**The World in Darkness—Examples of Rejection (Part 1)**

**Introduction**

Every relationship has benefits it offers its members, and along with these benefits come duties. When God rejects a person, it does not mean that God has totally ceased to relate with such a person in every form, nor does it mean that such a one has been cut off from every form of blessing from God. No. The fact is that, nothing can change the basic fact that God is God of all—for he created all things and they are sustained by his will [Rev 4:11]. The fact is that it is practically impossible to stop relating with God in an absolute sense because his presence is everywhere [Act 17:27-28]. Again God takes care of all creation, including those who are disobedient to him and will not serve him as they ought to and those who hate him [Act 14:16-17; Mat 2:44-45] and everything a man has comes from God [1Co 4:7; Jam 1:17] so how can we cease to relate with God and God with us?

Therefore, God’s rejection of the world, which plunged it into darkness must be understood as a relative or partial and not as absolute, since this is practically impossible. We must understand it in terms of specific benefits men are cut off from which God now, through Christ and his atonement restores to man if he will submit to Christ’s authority.

The following are examples from scripture which illustrate that alienation by or from God does not imply an absolute or near absolute break in relations. These examples also demonstrate some aspects of God’s rejection of men from himself—how, why and the consequences. As you consider these examples, try to define these relationships—broken and restored—in concretely and practically in terms of their obligations, duties, benefits, rights and privileges.

**God and Adam—Driving Adam out of the Garden**

Adam was the first and only man to be created by God and after God had created him, God placed him in the Garden of Eden which He (God) had planted. God put Adam in this garden as the gardener and protector of the garden offering Adam shelter and sustenance (food) as his reward. In this garden however, there were two trees of great value which possessed divine qualities, one, of wisdom (the ability to discern good from evil) and the second, eternal life. God prohibited man from eating of the tree of knowledge, “You must not eat of the tree of knowledge” and the consequence for disobedience was certain death, “In the day you eat of it, you will surely die!” Sadly, Adam disobeyed God and the threatened consequence followed.

God cursed the ground and thus subjected Adam to aging and decay. And on account of his disobedience, God drove him out of the Garden of Eden, “lest he take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever.” [Gen 3:22]. Not only did God drive him out of the Garden of Eden, but God ensured that Adam and in fact no man could by any means reenter the Garden of Eden and eat of the tree of life. Thus, God ensured that no man could ever gain eternal life contrary to his judgment against Adam.

Nevertheless,as is evident in the story of Cain and Abel, Adam and his family still lived in Eden and still had fellowship with God. (The Garden of Eden was only a part of the land called Eden.) And as we can see from Cain’s complaint, Adam and his family, in Eden *(not the Garden of Eden)* were living under God’s protection.

**What Changed with Adam’s Rejection?**

* **Access to the Tree of Life**: Adam lost access to the tree of life [Gen 3:22]
* **Access to the Garden of Eden**: On account of the tree of life in the Garden, Adam lost access to the Garden of Eden [Gen 3:23-24] and along with it, all the benefits of the garden. Now he had to work really hard to eat.
* **Rest—Subduing the Earth**: Fulfilling the command to subdue and replenish the earth [Gen 1:28] became much harder because Adam now had to contend against the curse on the ground [Gen 3:17*c*-19*a*].
* **Rest—Child Bearing**: Fulfilling the command to increase became much harder because Eve was going to give birth through greater pain [Gen 3:16]

**What Remained the Same In Spite of Adam’s Rejection?**

* **Fellowship with God**: Adam and his family still had fellowship with God and worshiped him as is evident from Cain and Abel’s story
* **God’s Care for Man**: God stilled cared for them as even after judging them, he clothed them [Gen 3:21]
* **Living in God’s Presence**: Though no more in the Garden, Adam and his family were still living in Eden, in God’s presence and under God’s protection [Gen 4:14-16]
* **Authority Over the Earth**: God’s command and blessing upon mankind to increase and multiply and replenish the earth and to have dominion over all earthly creatures remained unchanged [Gen 1:28 Psa 8:6-8]
* **Still Servants of God**: Adam and his family were still servants of God as they were still to replenish the earth and subdue it though both tasks had been made difficult.

**Relevant Lessons**

We can see that what Adam lost was the relationship he had with God as his gardener but not the one he had with him as his servant in ruling over the earth. There can be more than one relationship existing between God and a man/men. That one relationship is broken does not mean that all others are broken as well.

**God and Cain—Driving Cain from Eden**

Cain, Adam’s son, killed his brother Abel because he was favoured by God above him. At this time however, there was no express prohibition against murder and so Cain was not killed by God for his horrible act. Instead, God drove Cain away from Eden which Cain had defiled with the blood of his brother Abel which was crying out for vengeance against him.

A fact we may note is that, though what Cain did was one of the most terrible sins one could ever commit, he was not killed because there was at this time no express command against murder. We may also note that sin is punishable even when it is not an express command that has been broken.

**What Changed with Cain’s Rejection?**

* **Loss of Access to Eden and God’s Presence**: Cain was driven away from God’s presence [Gen 4:14]
* **Loss of Power to Subdue the Earth**: Cain could no longer fulfill the mandate of subduing the earth [Gen 4:12]

**What Remained the Same In Spite of Cain’s Rejection?**

* **Still Protected**: Cain was given a form of protection by God [Gen 4:15]
* **Still Living**: Cain was still alive

**Relevant Lessons**

Cain lost part of the essential relationship every man has with God which was established at creation—he could not subdue the earth.

From the fact that Cain was rejected alone and Adam wasn’t rejected along with him, we can see that men can have different levels of rejection—though both Jews and Gentiles needed reconciliation, the Jews were near but the Gentiles were far away. Just as all men after Adam shared in his fate, so too, Cain’s wife and children shared in his fate. This tells us that alienating men does not require every single man to be personally guilty.

**God and King Saul—The Rejection of King Saul**

Saul was anointed king of Israel by the prophet Samuel and received the Holy Spirit after his anointing as king of Israel [1Sa 10:6].

Now Saul was given certain instructions at the time of his call, one of which was that he was to wait for Samuel to come and offer sacrifices before engaging in a certain war [1Sa 10:7-8]. King Saul failed to keep this instruction however [1Sa 13:7-9] and God punished him for this by not establishing his throne [1Sa 13:13-14] forever over Israel, i.e., his children were not going to be king after him. Nevertheless Saul was still king of Israel and God was still with him in this office.

Sometime after this, Saul was given another instruction by Yahweh to destroy completely his enemies the Amalekites [1Sa 15:2-3*a*] and King Saul once again offended. King Saul was to destroy every living thing in Amalek but instead left the best animals and the king of Amalek alive [1Sa 15:20-21]. For this God rejected him as king over Israel [1Sa 15:26] and took away his Holy Spirit which he had been given following his appointment as king over Israel.

Though he was still king of Israel, God was no longer with him and no longer spoke to him again by any means—priest, prophets or dreams [1Sa 28:6].

Now, not only was the Spirit taken from him but an evil spirit from God began to trouble him [1Sa 16:14].

**What Changed, What Did Saul Loose with King Saul’s Rejection?**

* **Continuity/Eternal Life**: King Saul lost continuity, a type of eternal life—the throne of Israel was not to remain in his family forever. He lost the chance he had to establish his throne over Israel forever
* **Communion with God**: God no longer communicated with King Saul even when king Saul called on him
* **Having the Holy Spirit**: King Saul lost the Holy Spirit and got an evil spirit instead

**What Remained the Same In Spite of King Saul’s Rejection?**

* **Recognition as Yahweh’s Anointed**: Though God had rejected him, Saul was still Yahweh’s anointed and nothing could change the fact. Though Saul sought to kill David without cause, David was careful not to raise a hand against him because of this fact for it would surely be an offence against God [1Sa 24:10; 26:10].
* **Kingship over Israel**: Saul remained king of Israel till he died

**Relevant Lessons**

Saul’s rejection was in two stages, first, King Saul lost continuity of the monarchy, his kingdom was not to be established forever.

Second, King Saul was cut off from God’s presence; God ceased to communicate with him and withdrew his Spirit from him. We may note a similar pattern in the rejection of King Saul and man’s rejection from Adam to Cain.

Like Adam lost the chance to gain eternal life and was not going to live forever, so too Saul lost the chance to gain eternal life for his throne—it was not going to be established forever. Nevertheless, Adam lived in Eden, God’s presence and in, the same way, God was still with King Saul.

The rejection that followed that of Adam was that of Cain and it is much like Saul’s second rejection. Cain was driven from God’s presence which was a worsening of the situation brought on by Adam’s transgression *(i.e., sin)*. In the same way, the second time Saul was rejected, matters became worse because God withdrew his Spirit from him and would no longer speak to him.