

The Lord Remembers You—Even When You Feel Abandoned By Him!

Have you ever felt abandoned by God due to prolonged difficult circumstances? Perhaps it was financial difficulties, health issues, or family struggles? Whatever the nature of the suffering, what was your response? (1) Disappointed with God (2) Anger towards him (3) Discouraged and Depressed (4) Patiently waited on him to bring deliverance in his time.

In this post, my purpose is to encourage all of us when facing trials of a prolonged nature to display response # 4—Patiently waiting on God to bring deliverance in his time. But that's easier said than done. How can we develop such a godly response—especially when there seems to be no relief from trials? I believe the answer lies in embracing this biblical truth:

God never forgets his children. He remembers them even if they "feel" abandoned by him!

Examples of God remembering his people.

Noah. The first time we read the Lord remembering his own is in Genesis 8:1, "**But God remembered Noah.**" The "But God" stands as a shining light against a very dark background. The previous verse tells us, "The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days" [Gen 7:24]. The entire world was wiped out by the flood. And Noah and all those in the ark were still locked up inside and unable to get out.

One can only imagine what was going on in their minds since they were locked up in the ark—especially when one realizes how long they were in the ark. Genesis 7:6, 11 says Noah was 600 years old when the flood came on the earth (a week after he entered the ark) and Genesis 8:13-15 tells us that it was a little after he was 601 years old when he came out of the ark. So, their total time inside the ark was a little over one year! *That*, folks, is a long time to be holed up as everything around was dying!

Yet, we are told that God remembered Noah. The word "**remember**" does not mean that God forgot Noah as though he had memory loss. According to one Hebrew and English lexicon, it refers to "remembering with kindness, granting requests, protecting, delivering." And in this context, it refers to God keeping his promise to deliver Noah through the flood [Gen 6:17-18]. And now, God was putting his promise into action.

Abraham. "So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he **remembered** Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived" [Gen 19:29]. God, in his kindness, heard Abraham's petition for his nephew Lot [Gen 18:16-33] and delivered him when he destroyed the two cities—Sodom and Gomorrah.

Israelites in Egypt. In Exodus, as God's people were suffering in the land of Egypt as slaves, they "groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he **remembered** his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them" [Ex 2:23-25]. And God, in his kindness, raised up Moses, who would eventually bring the nation out of Egypt.

Hannah. In 1 Samuel 1:11, we read about Hannah, a godly woman, yet childless, pleading with the "LORD Almighty" to "look" on her "misery" and "remember" her by giving "her a son." And later in the same chapter, we are told, "LORD **remembered** her" [1 Sam 1:19] and caused her to become

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"pregnant" and enabled her to "give birth to a son" who she named as "Samuel, saying, Because I asked the LORD for him" [1 Sam 1:20].

Psalms. The Psalms repeatedly record how God remembered his people while they were in distress and delivered them or, in some cases, relented in punishing his people for their sins.

Psalm 98:3 "He has **remembered** his love and his faithfulness to Israel."

Psalm 105:42 "For he **remembered** his holy promise given to his servant Abraham."

Psalm 106:45 "for their sake he **remembered** his covenant and out of his great love he relented."

No wonder the people often praised God—like this one example shows, "He **remembered** us in our low estate *His love endures forever*" Psalm 136:23.

Repentant Thief on the Cross. Perhaps the most heartwarming picture of all the examples in the Bible of God remembering people with kindness is illustrated by Jesus's response to the repentant thief on the cross. The scene is Jesus hanging on the cross, bearing our sins and suffering in great anguish.

And in that situation, one of the two thieves who were also crucified by his side cried out, "**Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom**" [Lk 23:42]. Would you notice Jesus's astounding response? "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" [Lk 23:43]. Not tomorrow, not next month, not a few years from now, but "today" Jesus promised this repentant he would be with him "in paradise."

Imagine what joy the repentant thief must have experienced when he heard those words! And also imagine the unspeakable joy he would have experienced a few hours later as he died and went into heaven where Jesus was already waiting for him!

Brothers and sisters, *this* is how God remembers those who look to him for deliverance!

What God Does Not Remember.

In case, the above examples of God remembering his people are not enough, here is something that brings the greatest comfort to troubled hearts. This same God who "remembers" his people, promises to *never* remember the sins of all who turn to him for forgiveness by embracing his Son, the Lord Jesus as their Savior.

Hebrews 10:17 records this promise, "**Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.**" And the basis on which God promises to never remember our sins anymore is this: Jesus "offered [himself] for all time one sacrifice for sins" [Heb 10:12].

All our sins are buried under the blood of Jesus. No more fear of judgment as no more price needs to be paid as Hebrews 10:18 so clearly puts it, "**And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.**"

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That's the most significant source of encouragement for all of us—especially during times when we feel abandoned by God! God promises to never "remember" our sins in a way that will cut us off from his presence. What joy! What comfort!

What God *Does* Remember.

However, this joy and comfort will not be experienced by those who reject Jesus. Since they die without their sins forgiven, they are left to face God's judgment in the future. At that time, God *will* remember and bring up *all* their sins as a basis for their eternal punishment in the lake of fire, which is another term to describe hell. Revelation 20:11-15 gives the details.

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

The statement at the end of verse 13, "Each person was judged according to what they had done" teaches us an important truth. The sins one commits today will not be forgotten but brought up as a basis for punishment in the future if they die unforgiven.

This means every sinful thought, word, and action committed will be brought up. Also, this includes the failure to do the right things 100% of the time! *That* is a massive amount of sins one has to bear on their own on the Day of Judgment. The fact of the matter is nobody can pay the full price for their sins on their own, because nobody is perfect. That's why all who reject Jesus will end up paying the price in the lake of fire for all eternity.

So, the choice is clear.

In repentance and faith, one can go to Jesus the Savior while they are still living, have their sins paid in full, and in that way make sure Jesus will not remember their sins in the future. And that way, they can also be confident they will spend eternity with Jesus in heaven.

Or one can reject Jesus now and carry all their sins and face Christ as the Judge on the coming Day of Judgment. On that day, Jesus will remember every sin as he condemns them to the lake of fire, also known as hell. And there, they will experience what it truly means to be abandoned by God for all eternity.

What will you choose—Jesus remembering you in kindness as your Savior or Jesus remembering your sins as your Judge?