

THE SCAPEGOAT.

If the goat that was slain represented the saints, the "little flock," did not the scape-goat represent "the great multitude" that come out of great tribulation and wash their robes? After much thought, we had about come to this conclusion, but, on presenting it to others, difficulties became apparent, and we now suggest that the scape-goat represents that portion of the world, or "children of the devil," which are professedly Christian, and on account of whom the multitude of Christians are in the bondage of conformity to the world. It seems that the "little flock" represent the whole church, and will gather the "great multitude" around them as the lodestone will gather the particles of steel mingled in the dust. These particles of steel are treated as dust only till they are separated. So our thought is that the multitude of Christians, mingled with and in bondage to the worldly element, are counted as the scapegoat only till they are separated; then they are exalted to their proper relationship to the saints. "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

We think we see several scriptural facts that will serve to illustrate our view of the case.

First: The meaning of the word scapegoat seems to indicate the idea. The Hebrew word, Azazel, rendered scapegoat, is said to mean devil. This fact has led some to believe that the devil himself is to be the antitypical scapegoat; and does not the definition favor the idea? – One goat to represent the Lord, and the other the devil. Our idea is, that one goat represents the Lord's children, or wheat, and the other the children of the devil, or tares, as in the parable of wheat and tares of Matt. 13.

Second: It seems illustrated by the case of Israel in bondage in Egypt. Let Aaron be as the saint, the mass of Israel the "great

multitude," and Egypt, who held them in bondage, as the scapegoat. Israel suffered with Egypt until they were separated, and the object of all the plagues was the complete deliverance of the "great multitude." But, as has been shown in another article, all Israel were exempt from the "seven last plagues," and therefore [R151 : page 8] the great burden of wrath fell on the Egyptians.

Take the case of the Jewish nation, as Christ found them, on this point. There we see a company of first ripe ones, those who accepted of Christ before their house was left desolate. All who accepted Him afterward, and before the wrath came on them to the uttermost, were wheat, though later ripe, but the chaff was burned with fire unquenchable. It was on that generation that Christ said all the righteous blood should come. Matt. 23:34-36. Does not this put them in the attitude of the scapegoat, receiving the sins at the hands of the priest? It was (as in Egypt) in their extreme calamity, that the Christians escaped from that generation by fleeing to the mountains, when they saw Jerusalem encompassed with armies. Luke 21:21. In this, we see the first fruit, the later fruit, and the scapegoat; and this is no less clear to our mind because the later fruits were the greater number, and because, until they were separated, they were included under the curse on that generation.

It seems clear to us that the manner of the disposition of the Jewish church was intended, in its important features, as a pattern of the manner of the disposition of the gospel church, – that this is the great event to which several types, parables and prophecies point. As in the pattern, there is the first ripe, the later ripe – both wheat – and the tares: the "little flock" not defiled with corrupt churches; the "great multitude," who are defiled by contact with Babylon, but who come out of Babylon, and thus wash their robes from the world spots; and, third, the Babylon element that does not come out, but drink the wine of wrath without mixture, and go down as a millstone

into the sea. It is Egypt, the chaff of the Jewish nation, the tares of the gospel church, or Babylon, that, each in their turn, receive the uttermost wrath, or wrath without mixture, as represented by the "seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." Rev. 15:1.

This uttermost wrath did not come on Israel in Egypt, nor upon the later ripe wheat of the Jewish house. Neither did it come on the later ripe wheat of the gospel church; i.e., the great multitude who come out of Babylon in obedience to the call, and thus wash their robes. Does not the scapegoat represent those who receive the uttermost wrath, and thus bear the sin? They did leave the world by profession, and were a part of the nominal church, or kingdom of heaven, but were tares, or children of the devil, all the time. They were sown among the wheat, but they never were wheat. They never had been even counted holy in God's sight, as are all the wheat, whether first ripe or later ripe. They had never defiled their garments, for they had no garments given them. Nothing can be defiled that was never clean.

The defiled ones are like Esau, who lose their crown, their birthright. Heb. 12:14-17. Once lost, it can never be regained. But Esau was not cast out of the family. He took the place of the younger brother as a servant; and so those who defile their garments with Babylon, lose their crown, but, by washing their robes, become servants in the heavenly temple. Rev. 7:14-15. They come out of great tribulation, as did Israel from Egypt, but they are exempt like them from the "seven last plagues." Jacob and Esau are used by Paul to represent the first-born and later born in the same family, and he makes the defiled one take the place of the later born. But it is evident that the tares do not belong to either of these classes.

Whoever will read the sixteenth chapter of Revelation will see that the seven last plagues do not come on those that repent, come

out from Babylon, and wash their robes, but upon Babylon itself, or those who have the mark of the beast, and do not repent of their evil deeds and give God glory. Verses 9-11. They have no part either as kings and priests or as servants with this gospel crop. The church, order and paraphernalia which they delighted to sustain, because it gave them power to enslave and control the mass of Christians, will go down to rise no more, and they will be lost in the great sea of mankind.

The parallelism between the ending of the Jewish and Gospel ages, and also the idea that the rejected portion of each house is the scapegoat, are sustained in our mind by comparing the words of Jesus in reference to the blood of the righteous: "All these things shall come upon this generation" (Matt. 23:35-36,) and the statement of John in reference to Babylon: "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all [that fear God's name] that were slain upon the earth." Rev. 18:24.

It seems clear that the downfall of Babylon is necessary to the deliverance of God's people, the line between the church and the world, and between truth and error must be drawn, hence Babylon in her fall, not only bears, but bears away the sins of God's people.

We would call attention to the judgment scene of Matt. 25, as having in it the illustration of much that we have said. The scene is laid after the saints have ascended to the Father with Christ who came forth to meet them in the holy place. They are now one in power and glory as were Moses and Aaron, and go forth to execute judgment. The nations are gathered before Christ and those whom He calls "These my brethren." Verses 40-45. That the nations here mean the Christian nations, is evident, because no others have been brought in contact with Christ in the persons of His saints. Here are included the "great multitude" of Christians called the "sheep" and the Babylon element, or tares – the children of the Devil – called

"goats." They are all as the same until they are separated, but as the object of Moses and Aaron when they went forth to execute judgment was to separate and deliver Israel, and to bring Egypt down; so here we see first the separation and the "Come ye blessed" to the sheep, followed by "Depart ye cursed" to the goats.

As we have seen it was after the first three plagues that the Lord said: "And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen in which my people dwell....And I will put a division between my people and thy people," &c. Ex. 8:22-23. Then follows on Egypt the seven last plagues. This looks like the separation of the sheep from the goats, followed by the "fire" on the goats.

Practically, we believe this separation will be fulfilled by the great body of Christians, who are left in the world when the saints or little flock are taken away to meet Christ, cutting them loose from their conformity to the maxims and customs of a worldly church, washing their robes and making them white and thus raising the standard of a pure Christianity to the world. The entrance into the temple in heaven cannot be immediately effected, as Israel was not delivered out of Egypt, until the fulfillment of the seven last plagues. Rev. 15:8.

It would seem that this washed or separated state, while men are yet mortal, may possibly be lost. This is the state of those on "as it were a sea of glass." This danger of losing it is implied in the statement made after six of the seven last plagues are poured out: "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garment, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." Rev. 16:15. The coming as a thief extends over the whole period from His coming to meet His saints until these judgments on Babylon are complete; and it is clear that no man is absolutely above danger of falling until he is immortal.

We are impressed with the thought that a certain class who had been forgiven have that pardon revoked, and so share the fate of the world. The idea of pardon being revoked seems strange to many Christians, as it once did to us, but such an idea is clearly taught by the Saviour in the parable of the two debtors. Matt. 18:23-35. One owed his Lord "ten thousand talents," and "the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." This was because he was willing to pay and could not. The other debtor owed this forgiven one an hundred pence, and he took him by the throat (just as some professed followers of Christ apply the law to their fellow disciples) and in the face of his inability to pay, and his plea for mercy, he cast him into prison. And when his Lord heard it, he was angry and delivered him to the tormentors "until he should pay all that was due him."

Here is a case of pardon revoked; and after giving this illustration the Saviour says, "So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Our sins are forgiven at conversion, but are not "blotted out" until the sanctuary is cleansed and the hands of the priest are laid upon the head of the scapegoat, or until "the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3:19. And the way to retain forgiveness is by forgiving others their trespasses. If we would be on the side of the Lord's goat instead of the Devil's we must follow the Lord's methods of dealing with others. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Matt. 16:24.

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