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## INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED. IS THERE NO HOPE FOR POOR JUDAS?

*Question.* – I have read the TOWER article (Apr. 15, '96) in which you give reasons for believing that Judas had many opportunities above others of his time and nation; and that hence, while the nation crucified our Lord "ignorantly" and may be forgiven, Judas sinned against light and has therefore no hope, and has died the Second Death – the penalty of wilful sin. But I find it hard to give poor Judas up. Am I wrong in this; or is it an evidence that I have *more love* than others?

*Answer.* – By reason of the fall our entire race has suffered depravity both of mental and physical tastes – likes and dislikes; and many are by heredity disposed to call the good evil, and the evil good. Christianity does not select the least blemished amongst men, but oftener the more blemished; the less blemished often feel a self-complacency and satisfaction which hinders them from coming to God as repentant sinners and realizing that they can be justified only through the imputed merit of Christ. But those who do come to Christ, and hear him, soon learn how imperfect are their own depraved conceptions, and seek and obtain *his mind* to thenceforth be instead of their own judgments. "We have the mind of Christ," says the Apostle – it is our "new mind," we are "transformed [R2131 : page 102] by the renewing of our minds" so as to be able to "prove [know] what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God." – Rom. 12:2.

Your question indicates that however much you have submitted your judgment to God's will on some questions, you have not submitted on this point. The reason seems to be that you are deceiving yourself into thinking that your sympathy with Judas is the *true* love which the Scriptures everywhere enjoin as the essence of Christian character. But you are deceiving yourself. To love an evil thing is on

a par with hating a good thing. Both are wrong; both are sinful; both are evidences that the depraved mind is not renewed, remodeled, transformed into the mind of Christ. As well might the drunkard or the libertine claim that his *love* of evil things indicates more true love.

The mind of the Lord, inculcated by his Word, teaches that we are to love the beautiful, pure, true, noble; we are to love (in the sense of sympathizing with) the weak, penitent and oppressed who are seeking for the paths of truth and righteousness; but we are to "hate iniquity" and "every false way" and all the meanness and sin which is wilful, against light and of the devil.

Cease to pride yourself upon your love for one of the most detestable characters known to the pages of history, of whom our Lord who so loved (sympathized with) the world that he laid down his life for it ( – and greater love hath no man than this) said, "It had been better for that man if he had never been born." Adopt God's standpoint, as the Apostle says, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, he that doeth righteousness is righteous [and approved of God], but he that practices sin [knowingly, willfully] is of the devil."

For our part we have no thought of ever becoming more loving than the Lord: we accept his definitions, and seek to be conformed mentally thereto – the image of God's Son. We want to love just as he loves and just what he loves, and we want to hate what he hates. Of him it is written, "Because thou hast *loved* righteousness and *hated* iniquity; therefore the Lord, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Heb. 1:9.) "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?...I hate them with a perfect hatred." – Psa. 139:21,22.

We are glad that neither Satan nor Judas nor any other creature will ever be tormented to all eternity. We are glad that a full, fair opportunity for coming to a knowledge of the Lord and of the way of righteousness will be granted to every member of Adam's race; but we are glad that, on the contrary, all who rejoice not in the truth but rejoice

in iniquity will be utterly [R2131 : page 103] and everlastingly destroyed in the Second Death. We abominate Satan, who for over six thousand years has wrought unrighteousness and gloated over the evil and pain and sorrow which he has wrought, and who with clear knowledge of the redemptive work has for eighteen centuries opposed the Kingdom and the great salvation. The person who could believe in Satan's conversion after all this battling against the light and the truth has a perverse mind, very sadly blinded by the god of this world.

### **SEEN MORE CLEARLY.**

*Question* (1). – In a recent number of the WATCH TOWER you show quite to my satisfaction that mother Eve was not reckoned as a separate individual, but as part of the body of Adam as much as before she was taken from his side, and that thus the one sacrifice, once for all, covered her in him. But now I want to ask two questions: Is not this presentation a *little* different from the presentation on the same subject in MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., page 123?

*Answer.* – Yes; this statement is a little different from that in DAWN, and the next edition, now on the press, will show a few words of change on the page referred to. While the point is comparatively unimportant, and does not vitally affect any part of the plan of the ages, yet we spare no pains to present the truth as clearly and as fast as we see it. The trunkline of truth, the plan of the ages, is not only the best and safest route for the consecrated mind to travel in coming to a knowledge of the things which were, the things which are and the things which shall be, but, more than this, it is *the only through route*. Along this route, here and there, are side-tracks and switches which may require and must have straightening and alignment with the main track; but these are all "betterments," not impairments, of the road. But, anyway, we have never claimed for the DAWN verbal accuracy or infallibility. It is our enemies who cannot refute the general teaching of the divine plan, that seek to divert attention and arouse prejudice by crying, "Infallible!" The divine plan of the ages is so grand, that all the

consecrated who see it realize that God is its author, whoever may be its promulgators, connected with the various steps of its presentation. Such rejoice with the clarifying of its every detail.

Changes in the *language used* in expressing the *same* thoughts have been made in several instances. (Notably VOL. I., pages 106, 107, 140, 157, 240, 279, 321 and foot notes of pages 124 and 288 – the latter formerly an appendix. Also note *addition* of foot note on page 150.) These alterations of *language* are all, we trust, beneficial to the readers. They were made necessary by reason of two things: –

(1) *Enemies* have tried to put a false light upon our words, and to pick out sentences or portions of a sentence to use against the truth and to misrepresent the general teachings of DAWN; – thus we have been misrepresented by some as being "Universalists," by others as teaching a *second individual* chance or trial for all of Adam's race, by others as being in agreement with their blasphemous doctrine that God is the author of all sin and wickedness.

(2) *Friends* have honestly misunderstood our teachings. Unused to reasoning on religious subjects, many failed to see the *two* distinct parts of the one salvation; (a) the part between Justice and the *ransom* given by our Lord Jesus for *all mankind* by which he "bought" the whole world, and became Lord and Judge of all, with the right or power to grant lasting *life* to whomsoever he will; and (b) the part of salvation which relates to the purchased race, and the terms upon which they may individually avail themselves of the grace of their Redeemer, and obtain from him the life-everlasting which he (by virtue of his ransom sacrifice) has the right to give to all who comply with the terms of the New Covenant.

Our constant aim is to have the teachings of the WATCH TOWER and MILLENNIAL DAWN so expressed, that, like legal documents, they cannot be misunderstood. That we have not always succeeded does not discourage us; for we find that the inspired words

of Scripture are frequently wrested by false teachers, and misunderstood by God's honest children. The difficulty encountered by the legal profession in *stating* matters so that they *cannot be misunderstood* is witnessed by the frequent contest of Wills. A case in point is the broken Will of the noted lawyer-millionaire, Hon. S. J. Tilden. Yet, presumably, his Will was the most painstaking paper he ever prepared.

We cannot hope that the plan is yet so stated that a "wayfaring man" cannot misunderstand our meaning and enemies cannot misrepresent us. We trust that no false pride, nor false ideas of infallibility, will ever hinder us from declaring the truth, the whole truth, relating to God's plan, as he shall give us to see the truth.

*Question* (2). – Would the fact that, as pointed out in *Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices*, the Church, the Bride of the Second Adam, joins in his sacrifice, have any bearing on this question?

*Answer*. – No; for it is only *after* we have been "justified" by the ransom price that we are *called* to be his bride, joint-sacrificers and joint-heirs with Christ.

### **THE DATE OF JESUS' BIRTH.**

*Question*. – It appears that a considerable number of Seventh-Day-Adventists are reading MILLENNIAL [R2131 : page 104] DAWN [The Lord be praised!] and are finding that their dates and theories are faulty. They are writing to the editor of the *Sabbath Herald* for help and further proofs. The editor sees what many of his readers do not see probably; viz., that the *date of Jesus' birth*, as clearly and forcibly set forth and proved in DAWN, VOL. II., *utterly destroys* the back-bone theory of Seventh-Day-Adventism in re the "Cleansing of the Sanctuary" – by showing as VOL. III. does, that they have not only misunderstood the *nature* of the "cleansing," but also the *time* of it, which they fix in 1844 instead of 1846 A.D.

The article referred to throws a lot of dust for the eyes of its readers, but really makes only two points, which I will thank you to answer.

(1) He claims that the date of Dionysius as given in foot note on page 54, DAWN, VOL. II., is incorrect.

(2) He claims that "two years before Augustus' death" Tiberius "was allowed the celebration of a triumph in Rome, and was then clothed by Augustus with PROCONSULAR POWER, *which was understood by all the people as CO-SOVEREIGNTY with himself.*"

I see that the first point is of no consequence, as it no more bears on the subject than does the date of my birth. But the second point is of consequence; if it proves Tiberius to have begun his reign two years before the death of Augustus.

*Answer.* – (1) The foot note referred to is in error, evidently a slip of the editorial pencil or by the compositor. It should read, and will be found in later editions, as follows: – **[R2132 : page 104]**

The year A.D. was fixed upon as early as the sixth century by Dionysius Exiguus and other scholars of that period, though it did not come into general use until two centuries later.

However, as you suggest, this has *no bearing whatever* on the subject, and might just as well have been the twelfth or any other century.

(2) The editor of *Sabbath Herald* finds his dates and reckonings all out of harmony with the testimony of Luke 3:1-3; – the *only* positive date given in connection with our Lord's birth and ministry, by which it can be connected with reliable Roman history. Like many others this editor has been misled by Josephus' unreliable dates, and having adopted them and fixed his theory thereon, as do many others, he must needs cast some discredit upon Luke's statement.

There is not a shadow of doubt as to when Tiberius *began his reign* (A.D. 14); but this editor (and many others), having a false theory and date to uphold, claims that Tiberius began to reign and that his reign dated two years before he was recognized as Emperor, two years before the great Augustus had vacated the office by death.

The so-called proofs of this, which you quote, are absurd, and find their only strength in the ignorance of his readers: the editor evidently thinks that the words "*proconsular powers*" will be misunderstood by his readers to mean *imperial power* – a totally different thing. That the fallacy and weakness of the argument may be seen we quote from the *Standard Dictionary*, the highest authority, the meaning of proconsular and proconsul, as follows: –

*"Proconsular.* – The *dignity*, office, or term of office of a proconsul."

*"Proconsul.* – A Roman official who exercised consular authority in one of the provinces, or as commander of an army – though *not a Consul.*"

Illustration. – "Judea was henceforth to be incorporated into the province of Syria, with the *Proconsul* ...as supreme head *under the Emperor.*"

So far from "*proconsular powers*" signifying that Tiberius was made the Emperor, or that he shared imperial honors with the Emperor, these words signify an officer *under* the Emperor. And, indeed, there were several Consuls and Proconsuls in the great Roman empire. Nor would the vain and ambitious Augustus Caesar, who changed the order of the calendar so as to perpetuate his name in one of the months with the most days and at the high noon of the year, be the kind of man likely to grant one mite of his honor or office to another, until death.

The fact is that students of chronology are quite at a loss for anything that will fix the date of our Lord's birth with *positiveness*, except it be this statement of Luke 3:1; and we accept it implicitly, as God-given, for our instruction. Besides, Luke was an educated man and shows himself to have been well acquainted with the general affairs of his time. He connected the beginning of John's preaching of the Kingdom of heaven at hand with the reign of Tiberius Caesar for the very purpose of locating or fixing the event chronologically; and it would be passing strange if he would purposely misstate the matter. There is no question, in secular histories, as to *when "the reign of Tiberius Caesar" began*; the only people to raise a question about it are those who, following the inaccurate records of Josephus, want to twist Luke's plain statement into harmony with a date two years earlier.

The beginning of the "Seventy Weeks" (490 years) of Israel's favor (Dan. 9:24) was so obscure and indefinite that the Jews could not and did not know *positively* when to expect Messiah. No doubt this was of divine intention. Had the fulfilment of the *time* of this prophecy been apparent to the Jews, doubtless they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Only a few dates as far back as the beginning of those Seventy Weeks can be accurately fixed, and they by reason of notable eclipses recorded in connection with them. **[R2132 : page 105]** Recognizing the fulfilment of the events of the *seventieth* week, and getting the date thereof from Luke 3:1-3, we are enabled to reckon back and know exactly when they began, regardless of the inaccuracies of records and the multiplied disputations of chronologists.

The best answer to such criticism is the re-reading of the plain statements of MILLENNIAL DAWN. On this topic see VOL. II., pp. 54-72; VOL. III., Chap. 4.

FRIDAY, THE CLOSE OF OUR LORD'S 3½ YRS.' MINISTRY.

*Question.* Mr. Totten writes as follows: –



"A brother writes us under date of Nov. 18, '96, – 'By the way, have just ended a long correspondence with Russell; he has had to throw up the sponge on both the 3½ year ministry and Friday crucifixion!"

Mr. Totten gives a few lines of comment on the above. Now as a personal favor I ask if your opinion on these matters has *changed in the least* from that presented in DAWN?

*Answer.* There is not a word of truth in the statement. It is "out of whole cloth" like Mr. Totten's Astronomical and prophetic misstatements exposed in our issue of May 15, '96.

We have not changed our opinion in the least from the presentation of these subjects in DAWN; we see not the slightest shadow of reason for any change on either subject.

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