

## "BROUGHT DOWN TO HELL"

– *MATT. 11:20-30.* – *SEPTEMBER 15.* –

**Text: "Come unto Me, all that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." – V. 28.**

TODAY'S STUDY links well with the closing of our lesson of a week ago. We there heard Jesus say that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the Great Judgment Day of a thousand years, in which He will reign and give the world a full knowledge of God and a full opportunity of returning to Him – more tolerable for the Sodomites than for some who have enjoyed greater privileges and rejected them.

Today's study tells of how our Lord upbraided the city where most of His mighty works had been done, because they repented not, because they did not note the power of God in their midst and gladly receive the Message, the indications of Divine favor. Such, Jesus declared, will be less prepared to appreciate the Kingdom in the future than will some who have never known Him. Tyre and Sidon, heathen cities, would have repented with far less preaching. It is but in harmony with Divine justice, therefore, that when the Great Day of God's favor and of the Messianic Kingdom shall dawn, the people of Tyre and Sidon shall have things still more favorable than the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida.

Capernaum, above all the other cities of Palestine, was favored, because there our Lord did most of His miracles, and uttered more of His wonderful words of life than anywhere else. In this sense of the word Jesus declared that Capernaum had been exalted up to heaven – highly lifted up in point of privilege and Divine favor and blessing. This being true, it meant that in justice Capernaum's fall would be proportionate. She would fall from the heights of heavenly privilege and favor down to hell – to the grave.

And so today we find it difficult to locate that once great and beautiful city, so thoroughly has it been obliterated, brought down to the dust. Hearken further to the reason for this denouncement: "If the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day; but I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for thee."

Let us not mistake the lesson: While only those who fully accept Christ and consecrate their lives to His service will receive the spirit-begetting, or any share in the Heavenly Kingdom, all the remainder of mankind who come to any knowledge of the Lord and His mercy and blessing, and who refrain from rendering homage and from striving to walk in God's way, will proportionately disadvantage themselves in respect to the future life and the great blessings and privileges and opportunities to be brought to all mankind through Messiah's Kingdom and its reign of a thousand years.

### **"I THANK THEE, O FATHER"**

It was in Jesus' day as it has ever since been, that not many of the great or rich or wise or learned had ears to hear the Gospel Message. The difficulty with this class is that the things of the present life so fill and satisfy that they have no hungering for the better things. They have their consolation now, they have their pleasures now; they say, Soul, take thine ease now, look out for number one, and do not feel too much interest in or concern for other people and their troubles; there are millions of poor, groaning fellow-creatures, and if you stop to sympathize with them you will mar your own pleasure.

Thus it has been that the majority of the followers of Jesus in every Age have been chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. There are two ways of viewing this matter. On the one hand we can rejoice with the poor and less influential who have received the Gospel Message, that doubtless their poverty, etc., were favorable factors to their advantage. And, similarly, we can sympathize with the great and rich

and learned, that their earthly blessings are blinding them to the still greater opportunities of this Age, so that not many of them will be of the Kingdom class – not many of them members of the Bride company, joint-heirs with Jesus in His Messianic Kingdom.

But hearken again to the words of Jesus – how peculiarly they read: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy **[R5075 : page 249]** sight." How strangely those words once sounded to us, when we supposed that all who failed to receive the Message of Jesus, all who failed to make their "calling and election sure" to membership in the Bride class – all such would suffer some kind of an eternal torture!

How strange it seemed that Jesus should thank the Father that these things were hidden from some of the grandest and noblest and most brilliant of our race! We could not understand. But now, how clear! how plain! Jesus was preaching the Kingdom, and all who rejected His preaching rejected the Kingdom, and will lose it. This does not mean that they may not receive ultimately a blessing *under* that Kingdom, when it shall rule the world, and when all that are in their graves shall come forth to receive those very blessings which Jesus died to procure for them – the blessings of a trial, or judgment of a thousand years, to determine whether they will be accounted worthy of everlasting life, or of everlasting death, destruction.

Now we see what Jesus intimated, namely, that there is a wisdom in God's course in this matter which is not apparent on the surface. Had those rich and great seen fully, distinctly, clearly the true situation, it would have increased their responsibility; their condemnation in not receiving and accepting Christ would have been greater. Besides, some of them, of strong character and determination, might have been impelled thereby to take a course of still more violent opposition than they did take; or, if they had known and seen the Truth, it would have made them either opposers or defenders of it. If they had defended

Christ, then He would not have been crucified, and the Divine Plan would not have been carried out; or, if they had intelligently permitted His crucifixion, they would have had a tenfold condemnation. St. Peter declares that the extenuating circumstance connected with our Lord's crucifixion was ignorance. He declared, speaking by inspiration at Pentecost, "If they had known, they would not have crucified the Prince of Life."

### **FEW KNOW THE FATHER OR THE SON**

All men are to be brought to a knowledge of God. The Scriptures declare, "The knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth." Jesus declared that no one can know the Father except as first they come to know the Son, or as the Son reveals the Father to him. Hence those who have failed to recognize Jesus as the Son of God have not yet come to the full appreciation of their privileges. Blessed are our eyes, that now they see, and our ears that now they hear, that we may know Messiah, and through Him know the Father; and Jesus may come in to us and sup with us, and we with Him. – Rev. 3:20.

We are glad that all mankind in due time will be brought to a clear knowledge and full opportunity. But oh, how much greater is our blessing, besides the privilege of now being the sons of God, and joint-heirs in his glorious Kingdom! We may well rejoice with the Lord in His thanks to the Father, not only that some cannot hear, see, or understand, but also that some of us can hear, see and understand the Divine Message *now*, and thus share its blessing.

The special call of God through Jesus, therefore, is to the poor, the broken-hearted, the heavy laden, the unsatisfied: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

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