

JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

– *SEPTEMBER 20.* – *MATTHEW 25:31-46.* –

"Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me." – Verse 45.

HAVING given His disciples many parables illustrating the experiences of the Church, the Kingdom class, in their development and preparation for Kingdom honor, it was eminently proper that Jesus should give the parable of this lesson to illustrate the work of this Kingdom after its establishment – to show its purpose, and its effect upon the world of mankind.

Many of us have in the past read the Bible too carelessly. Our minds were sluggish respecting spiritual things. For instance, today's lesson was at one time applied to the Church. We failed altogether to notice that it says not a word respecting the Church, but is entirely applied to the world, to the nations, the heathen. For centuries the Jews had been accustomed to think of themselves as God's nation, God's people. All others they styled heathen, Gentiles, the people, the nations; and in the prophecies God treated the matter from this standpoint. So when Spiritual Israel was received into Divine favor as the Royal Priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, all the remainder of mankind were properly enough to be thought of and described as "the nations," "the Gentiles."

In line with this, our Lord in this parable tells what is to befall after His Kingdom shall have been set up – after the selection of the true Church class to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife and Joint-heir in His Kingdom, in His Throne. This, we notice, is very clearly stated by the Master, saying, "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the Throne of His glory." Who, after proper consideration, will say

that this is a matter of the past? Who will dispute that this is a description of Messiah's Kingdom following His Parousia and His Epiphania at His Second Advent?

APPLICATION OF THIS PARABLE

Then follows a description of the work of the Millennial **[R5530 : page 267]** Age. "Before Him shall be gathered all nations." This means all the people of the world outside of the Lord's holy nation, His peculiar people, the Church. Everybody except the Church will be before His great white Throne of Justice, Mercy and Love; that will be their judgment time.

Six thousand years ago, Adam and his entire race were judged in Eden, and the sentence was death. None of the race are worthy of everlasting life. They are all sinners. In due time God sent His Son to die for Adam's sin, in order that, "as by a man came death [of the entire race], by a man [Jesus] also will come the resurrection of the dead" [the entire race]. "For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive" – "every man in his own order." – 1 Corinthians 15:21,22.

The first order to be made alive in Christ is the Church, called out of the world, separated, "begotten again" of the Holy Spirit. These pass their judgment, their trial, for life everlasting or death everlasting in the present time. Hence the worthy ones, with characters formed pleasing and acceptable to God, will be quite ready to be Messiah's Bride class, joint-heirs with Him in His Kingdom and in His work of judging the world. He has promised that all the faithful shall sit with Him in His Throne – the very Throne pictured in the words of our text – the Throne before which all the nations, all the people outside of the Church, will be gathered.

The gathering of the world will be the result of knowledge. The Time of Trouble will lead on to great enlightenment, in which

all the blind eyes will be opened, all the deaf ears will be unstopped, and the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth. Some there will be who, resisting this knowledge, will decline to accept Christ and will not come into this judgment; but after a hundred years of resistance these will be destroyed.

Those in the parable are such as have accepted Christ's terms and desire to be on judgment, or on trial, for everlasting life. This will include all in their graves, who, the **[R5531 : page 267]** Master tells us, will come forth, not all at once, but gradually. Messiah's Kingdom will exercise its power and disseminate the knowledge of God and of righteousness, with a view to encouraging, helping and uplifting all the willing and obedient. All such may rise more and more out of sin and death conditions – out of imperfection of mind and body and out of immoral conduct to the full image of God, as possessed by Father Adam in the beginning.

It will be the work of the entire Millennial Age to bring this about. Righteousness will reign then, as sin reigns now. That is to say, it will be in control, in the ascendancy; and whosoever will sin then will suffer promptly. Hence all the nations will be avoiding sin. Then the world in general will be a grand place, where "nothing shall hurt or destroy"; where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick"; where the curse shall be gradually rolled away, and there shall be no more crying, no more sighing, no more dying; and where the blessing of God, bringing perfection, will prevail. "O happy Day!" we exclaim. And surely it will be such; for all who live through those thousand years will have a great blessing.

THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION OPERATIVE

But, some inquire, what about the sins of the world? Will there be no chastisements, no punishments, for these? We answer that it will be equally as just for God to forgive the sins of the world for Christ's sake as it has been just for Him to forgive the sins of the Church for Christ's sake. If the one is just, so will be the other; for

God is no respecter of persons, and is equally as willing to forgive the sins of the world as the sins of the Church, when the world, repenting of sin, will turn from it, accepting Christ as their Redeemer.

This does not mean, however, that justice is to be ignored. In the case of the Church, note how the sins of youth may leave their scar and sting to the end of life. And so we may reasonably assume that certain stripes, or punishments, will be permitted to follow the world in just the same manner. It will be from these weaknesses and frailties that they will be gradually raised up to perfection during those blessed thousand years of Christ's Kingdom, when Satan will be bound and not be permitted to deceive any during that period.

But what about heart condition? If conformity to the Divine Law in an outward way will bring blessings to all, will there not still be a difference between the people – some coming heartily into accord with the Father, and others merely outwardly into harmony, because this outward harmony will be the way to restitution, perfection?

Undoubtedly this is correct reasoning. It is along this line that the parable before us teaches; namely, that outwardly the "sheep" and the "goats" will have much the same appearance and demeanor, except to the Judge, the King, who will read the heart and ultimately will manifest to all that there has been a real heart-difference between the two classes, all of whom will have been on trial for a thousand years, receiving blessings from the Kingdom.

THE BASIS OF JUDGMENT

All the while each individual will be making character. This character will be fully appreciated by the Great Judge, and the individual will be rated either as a "sheep" or as a "goat." All the sheep-class will thus be received at the right hand of the great

Jehovah; and all of the goat-class will be rated as out of favor with Him, even though all the while they will be receiving the blessings of the Millennial Kingdom and outwardly rendering obedience to its laws.

Not until the conclusion of the Millennium will the decision of the Judge be manifested. Then great surprise will be shown at His decision – by both parties. To the "sheep" at His right hand He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father [the kind that My Father is pleased to bless and to grant everlasting life! Come,] inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." When God laid the foundation of the earth and planned its human habitation, it was His design to give it to you. Now the time has come for you to enter into this kingdom and to possess it.

This is not the same kingdom as the Messianic Kingdom. On the contrary, it is the kingdom which God gave to Adam, which Adam lost through his disobedience and which Christ redeemed by the sacrifice of Himself. It will be given only to those who will have developed the God-like character – those who will have become the Lord's "sheep" during the Millennium.

Then the other class, the goats of the parable, will be sentenced: "Depart, ye accursed ones [doomed ones], into everlasting punishment." Granted all the privileges, blessings and experiences of a thousand years of contact with righteousness, truth and the Spirit of God, you indeed render an outward obedience, but at heart you have not come into harmony with God. I cannot recognize you as My sheep. I cannot present you to the Father blameless and irreprovable. You must be destroyed; the punishment is the Second Death, "everlasting destruction." The penalty upon you is an everlasting one because there will be no further provision made for your redemption or for your resurrection from the Second Death. You will be as though you had never been. You **[R5531 : page 268]** have failed utterly to

appreciate the goodness of God and to copy His character-likeness. Eternal life is only for those who have God's likeness and God's Spirit. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Both classes, the "sheep" and the "goats," were surprised at what the King, the Judge, declared to be the basis of His judgment. To the sheep He said, "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." To the goat-class He said, "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink; was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not."

Both "sheep" and "goats" claimed that they had no knowledge of any such experiences. When did we minister unto Thee? When did we fail to minister unto Thee? The answer was, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of My brethren, or did it not unto him, ye did it, or did it not, unto Me.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SHEEP CLASS

Now, who are these respecting whom there will be a test upon the sheep-class and upon the goat-class? Will there be people sick, hungry and in prison during the Millennium? Does the Lord wish us to understand that there will be such? We have, on the contrary, always assumed that sickness, poverty, hunger and prisons will then be gone forever. What does it all mean?

The meaning is plain. With the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom all who come into harmony with it will have the great privilege of doing something to help others. The world is blind and starved now, for lack of spiritual food and the anointing eye-salve of the Truth. While the Millennial blessings will be showered upon those who accept the Lord's terms, there will be

others who will need assistance. Those who have the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Love, will be glad to carry the Heavenly Message of reconciliation to all humanity, glad to apply the eye-salve to the blind, glad to unstop the ears of the deaf, glad to help the sin-sick back into harmony with God – to the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom, to the way in which these may be obtained – helping them to cover their nakedness with the merit of Christ.

All who will take pleasure in this work will thus be manifesting that they have God's Spirit and are co-laborers with Him. All these will be the Sheep. On the other hand, those who will be careless in respect to their Vow, and merely enjoy the Millennial blessings themselves, will be of the goat-class and will thus be marking themselves as "goats," and correspondingly will be out of favor with the great King of kings, their Judge, the Lord of Glory.

THE WORLD'S RESURRECTION

The prison referred to in the parable is undoubtedly the great prison-house of death, into which approximately twenty thousand millions already have gone. All these are to come forth. But the Scriptures declare that they will not all come forth at once, but "every man in his own order." Only the Church will be in the First Resurrection.

During the Millennium the awakening from the sleep of death, the prison-house, will come about by Divine Power, of course, but we believe in answer to prayer. Each family circle, as it can prepare for another and another member, will be glad to do so, and will make request for his return. Thus the race will come out of the "prison-house" in reverse order to that in which they entered, and will be acquainted with, identified by, and prepared for by their friends, their relatives.

While the blessing of the Lord will provide an abundance for all, nevertheless we may safely assume that the provision will be in the hands of their fellows. It will be the "sheep" that will be especially interested in, praying for and preparing for, those who are in the great prison-house of death. And by so engaging their time and energy these "sheep" will be manifesting a purpose, a will, in harmony with that of the Creator. God has willed that all who are in their graves shall come forth at the command of Jesus (John 5:28,29), and those in sympathy with God and Christ will be co-laborers with God in accomplishing the work for which Christ died. Any not interested in that work will be lacking in God's Spirit; and this is exactly what is charged against the goat-class. [R5532 : page 268]

He who sits upon the Throne, having redeemed the world of mankind and having provided for the resurrection of all these redeemed ones, counts them as in a certain sense representing Himself – as He says in the parable: "I was an hungered, and ye fed Me; I was sick and in prison, and ye visited Me," ministered unto Me and helped Me.

Likewise the reproof to the goat-class: to these He said, You were not interested in the things of God. Your interest was merely personal, a selfish one. You have enjoyed the blessings of these glorious thousand years, and that is all that God has provided for you. You are not of the kind to whom He is pleased to grant everlasting life. You will therefore, die. You have more or less of the selfish spirit, which is the spirit of Satan, and as God's provision for all who will not be in fellowship with Him in spirit is destruction, this is to be your portion – the Second Death.

The eternal fire is the fire of God's jealousy or anger, which burns against and destroys everything antagonistic to His righteousness. (Zephaniah 1:18; 3:8.) It is, of course, merely a figurative expression representing complete destruction.

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