

INTERESTING QUESTION

"HE WENT TO HIS OWN PLACE"

Question. – I notice an article in THE WATCH TOWER which says that Judas died the Second Death. Can a man die the Second Death until he has passed from death unto life, until he has been spirit-begotten, until he has once been in Christ Jesus and free from condemnation?

Answer. – Judas and all the other Apostles occupied a peculiar place or position, different from other Jews of their time, because they were in contact with our Lord Jesus, the Great Light. They saw that Light, and were responsible in proportion as they saw it. For any of them to sin as Judas did against that Light, would be a very reprehensible thing. True, Judas had not been begotten again of the Holy Spirit; for spirit-begetting was not possible until Pentecost. But this does not prove that he could not die the Second Death. On the contrary, we know that during the Millennial Age there will be some who will not receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit, but who will die the Second Death – the death that will be destruction. Their responsibility will lie in the fact that they will be brought to a knowledge of the Truth, with the opportunities which it will give them of coming into full harmony with the Lord. If they respond to those opportunities, they may attain everlasting life; if they do not respond, they will die the Second Death.

Such an opportunity was given to Judas. For a long time he responded favorably; but afterwards he rejected the blessings that were his portion, and ignominiously proved himself a traitor to the One who was his Benefactor. Jesus was to be the Judge in the matter; and we have His words, calling Judas the "son of perdition." (John 17:12.) He said that it would have been better for that man if he had never been born. (Matthew 26:24.) This would not be true if Judas

were to have an opportunity during the Millennial Age. The Scriptures say that he went to his own place. (Acts 1:25.) His own place was not Heaven; for it was not open to anybody yet; his own place was not Restitution; for that has not yet come. His own place was the only place then open – the Second Death.

PRESENT STANDING OF THE CHURCH

The Ransom-price, the Ransom-sacrifice of Jesus, has not yet even been *paid* over, or applied, for the whole world of mankind. If it were, the whole world, redeemed by that payment, would be in His hands. The world has not yet been in our Lord's hands. The time, however, we believe is near when through the strength of that Sacrifice, He will ask the Father, and the Father will give Him "the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." (Psalm 2:8.) That will be the time when He shall have paid over the Ransom-price. He *laid down* the Ransom-price when He died, but did not *apply* it. The world is still under condemnation. Only the Church has escaped that condemnation thus far.

The Church escapes from that condition of condemnation by the *imputation* of the benefits of that Ransom which is not yet *paid* over. If the Church could have the merit of Christ imputed to her down through the Gospel Age since Pentecost, the same merit, we believe, could be imputed before Pentecost; for our Lord had made the consecration of Himself, and, so far as the type goes, He had already slain the bullock. That is, the consecration of our Lord at Jordan represented the killing of the bullock in the Atonement Day type; it was the giving up of His earthly life. This was done when He was thirty years of age, before He had called these disciples. It was then that the Father recognized and accepted His Sacrifice; for He gave our Lord the begetting of the Holy Spirit. If that Sacrifice had not been accepted then the Father would not have begotten Him of the Spirit.

THE APOSTLES' STANDING DURING OUR LORD'S MINISTRY

The Holy Spirit was given as an evidence that what Jesus had given to the Father was accepted. What He did at Calvary was merely the finishing of that work which He began at Jordan. Our Lord treats the matter from this standpoint, and in discoursing with His disciples tells them that they might pray to God as their Father. No Jew had ever done this before. The Jews thought that Jesus' claim to be the Son of God was blasphemy, and took up stones to stone Him because of this. (John 10:31-33.) Whoever said, "Our Father," was making himself to be a son of God. No Jew, so far as we have any record throughout the Scriptures, ever made use of such expressions; they were a House of Servants.

Then again, Jesus addressed His followers, His disciples, as though they had been accepted of the Father. He was the Father's Agent, and He received them in harmony with the Father's arrangement. He declared that "No man cometh unto Me except the Father draw him"; and, "No man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." He made these statements before they had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This was treating them as though they had the full initiation into the Divine Family. Our Lord declared that "he that believeth in Me hath everlasting life." (John 6:47.) All these disciples had believed on the Son. As long as they would hold Him in the Scriptural manner – hold to Him by faith, according to the terms of this Gospel Age, faith and consecration – they might count that they had the life promised to His faithful followers. If any would abandon **[R5684 : page 142]** Him, as Judas did, of course he would pass back again from the *imputed* life to the death condition.

REJECTION OF KNOWLEDGE A SERIOUS MATTER

Judas was a New Creature in the reckoned, or imputed, sense of the word in which all the disciples were said to have passed from death unto life. It was to the new life that they had passed, not to

Restitution life; for the Lord said to these same disciples that they who had followed Him would sit upon twelve thrones (Matthew 19:28), thereby implying that they had passed to that life which would be the condition of the enthroned. Speaking of them, then, from the standpoint of the New Creation, this was possible because in our Lord's contract unto death, which He entered into by baptism, He really gave up all of His earthly rights. It was possible in the tentative form, the Father purposing that not many days after Jesus' ascension they would be endued with power from on High. – Luke 24:49.

Hebrews 6:4-8 does indeed refer to the Church, but it does not enumerate the only conditions on which any will die the Second Death. All of the Church are liable to this condemnation. If they would sin wilfully, if they would fall away so as to deny the very Foundation of God's favor – the Ransom-sacrifice of Jesus – they would die the Second Death. This Scripture does not say that there are no other conditions on which the Second Death will be inflicted. We see that the Second Death will be inflicted on some in the Millennial Age.

