

The Kingdom revisited

• Last week I stirred up a little discussion by saying it appears that all individuals within the “sheep” nations of Matthew 25 would be allowed entrance into the Millennial Kingdom. I based this on Matthew 25:34—36

³⁴“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ ³⁵‘For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; ³⁶naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’

Others point to Matthew 25:37 to make the case that only the righteous of those sheep nations will gain entrance into the Millennial Kingdom.

“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink?’

They would also point to the Matthew 24:40—41 and say this is when all the wicked will be taken out of the world before the Millennial Kingdom and by this we know everyone entering the Millennial Kingdom will be a believer.

⁴⁰“Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹“Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

First, if only the truly saved were allowed entrance into the Millennial Kingdom then what is the point of the judgment of the nations? If the nations are judged for their actions and only truly saved individuals of those nations are allowed to go into the Millennial Kingdom then the end result will be the same whether there is a special judgment of the nations or not. This special judgment seems to be a reward for righteous actions.

Second, the coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the Tribulation is likened to the days of Noah. Those who were in the ark were saved and those who ignored the plea to enter the ark were swept away to eternal damnation. Those who entered the ark were saved physically but it did not save them spiritually. It’s very possible that at least one of the eight who entered the ark will be condemned to hell. Those who disobeyed God lost their lives physically as well as spiritually. To carry this analogy into the judgment of nations, those in the sheep nations were in an ark so-to-speak. They did the right things and were rewarded for their obedience. However, they still need to make a spiritual decision to follow or reject Jesus Christ. This will be done at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

I will make a concession. I believe that those who are righteous in a goat nation will have the opportunity to enter the Millennial Kingdom even though the goat nation is condemned. In the same way, those who are evil within a sheep nation will probably be condemned even though their nation was blessed. These would be ones who wanted nothing to do with helping Israel even though their nation did. We see this in our own nation. In the recent past we as a nation were friendly towards Israel even though many within the country despised helping Israel at all.

In conclusion, the judgment of the nations possibly gives credit for works of righteousness. They are given an opportunity to enter the Millennial Kingdom but does not guarantee eternal salvation. We know there will eventually be many unsaved in the Millennial Kingdom who will be given the opportunity to become true believers. Having an unsaved person enter the Millennial Kingdom is not a real stretch considering within a few years there will be many thousands of unregenerate souls in the Kingdom.

God has judged nations in the past. Old Testament history is replete with instances of God's judgment upon Babylon, MedoPersia, Greece, and Rome. His judgment of nations does not necessarily affect the personal salvation of people within those nations. There may have been some saved people in Babylon when it was

destroyed. And there doubtless will be some saved people in those nations which will be classified as "goats" in this coming judgment. God is going to save Israel as a nation, but there will be many apostate rebels in Israel who will be destroyed. In the present dispensation God's direct dealings are with individuals and only with nations in a providential way. In Old Testament times He dealt with the nations directly as well as with individuals and He will do so again in the coming Kingdom. The "sheep" nations do not receive personal salvation simply because they were kind to the Jews, for no sinner will ever be justified by his works: these nations are permitted to enter into the earthly Kingdom of Christ as nations because of their treatment of Israel. As to individuals, no doubt all out of every nation who oppose and reject the Lordship and Kingship of Christ will be destroyed from off the face of the earth. Charles F. Baker *A Dispensational Theology* pp 609—610

Acts 20:1—6 Back to Greece

- After Paul's stay in Ephesus (over two years) he left to go into Macedonia. He probably revisited Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. His last visit was about 5 years ago.
 - Paul had hoped to stop in Troas and minister to them before sailing on to Macedonia.
 - He also hoped to meet up with Titus to receive a report about the Church at Corinth.
2 Corinthians 2:12—13 ¹²Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, ¹³I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.
 - He was continuing to collect an offering for the poor saints in Judea (Acts 11:29; 1 Corinthians 16:1—4; 2 Corinthians 8:1—7; Romans 15:25—27)
- He spent three months in Corinth until the Jews plotted against him. Instead of sailing for Syria, he went north back to Macedonia.
- Those traveling with Paul went on ahead to Troas while Luke suddenly shows up in verse 5.
- Paul and Luke traveled from Philippi to Troas and they stayed there seven days.
 - On the day before leaving, Paul was preaching to the believers long into the night. Eutychus, a young man sitting on the third floor, fell asleep, fell out of a window and to the floor and was picked up dead. Paul fell on him and raised him from the dead.
 - Stam sees this story as symbolic of today's church. Paul has been preached a long time (2,000 years) but the church of today has fallen asleep under his preaching and has fallen from her lofty position. It is only through Paul that the churches of today can come back to life.
 - It's not clear why this story is included. It is impossible for us to know if Stam's interpretation is correct or not because it's meaning is not revealed to us. It does make the stop at Troas more interesting and makes it become more real to us. It may also be included because of Luke's occupation as a physician.

Acts 20:13—38 Paul's goodbye to the Ephesians elders

- Paul and his traveling companions worked their way from Troas and south along the coast to Miletus, about 35 miles from Ephesus.
- Paul stayed in Miletus and called for the elders in Ephesus to meet him. It was there they had a very touching and sad "last" meeting. (Some say Paul later visited Ephesus and point to 1 Timothy 1:3 however since the Holy Spirit seemed to be giving him insight concerning the future, I'm thinking he did not go back to Ephesus after this). Paul's heart was heavy because:
 1. He felt this would be the last time he would be seeing them (verse 25).
 2. Savage wolves would come into the flock and divide the congregation with false doctrine (verses 29, 30).
 3. Paul knew he would go to Jerusalem and be bound (verse 22).
- Paul mentions what he has been preaching:
 - Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Verse 21). We are use to seeing repentance used in the context of John's baptism and relate it to the Kingdom Gospel. Because repentance is nothing more than a change of mind, Paul's use of repentance is nothing more than the act of changing your mind about God. This happens at the moment of salvation.

- Preaching the Kingdom (verse 25). This is the Kingdom of God which includes those destined for the Millennial Kingdom and those in the Church, the Body of Christ. Verse 24 clearly states he was preaching the Gospel of the Grace of God not the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Acts 21:1—14 Paul's trip to Caesarea

- Paul left Miletus and worked his way by ship to Tyre in Syria. He stayed in Tyre for seven days.
- The disciples (the text says: “through the Spirit”. More on this later) pleaded with Paul not to go to Jerusalem because of what would transpire there but Paul understood that it was the Lord’s will for him to go.
- They sailed their way south to Caesarea and there found Philip the evangelist and his four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.
 - Philip met up with the Ethiopian eunuch in Gaza, (Acts 8:25—40) then he worked his way up the coast of the Mediterranean Sea until he arrived at Caesarea. It was now almost 25 years later that Paul and his traveling companions stayed at his house
- While staying with Philip, Agabus the prophet came from Judea and met them there.
 - This appears to be the same prophet who in Acts 11:27—29 predicted a great famine would occur. It was through this prediction that the decision was made to help the poor saints in Judea. They were now poor because they had sold all they had in preparation of the Tribulation and the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom. Since Israel rejected her King, there would be no kingdom. God sent Agabus the prophet to sustain these kingdom saints through gentile believers.
 - Agabus this time showed Paul and those believers that Paul would go to Jerusalem and be bound and be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles.
- With this prediction Paul’s friends and brothers in Christ begged him not to go to Jerusalem. Paul was more than willing to go to Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - He had not only talked with Jesus Christ face to face, probably many times, but he had gone up into the third heaven and saw what was waiting for him. This was his motivation.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:14** For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;
- With this they said “The will of the Lord be done”.
- Notice that verse 4 says that the disciples in Tyre told Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem then in verse 14 that the will of the Lord be done. How do we reconcile these two verses?
 - Some say the Paul was out of the will of the Lord when he went to Jerusalem and while there he fell into the sin of becoming a Judaizer (Stam, Barnhouse). I believe they took this path because they do not allow for the Jews to still be practicing under the Mosaic Law. They believe the Mosaic Law had been done away with and to go back under the Law was a sin.
 - I believe, as Baker, that he was completely within the will of God throughout Acts 21. First, those doing wrong in the Bible are called out for their sin and the consequences are pointed out. This is not true about this time in Paul’s life. Second, we can see the prophet Agabus saying this would happen and those disciples in Tyre coming to the realization that this was the will of the Lord in verse 14. I believe verse 4 is not referring to the Holy Spirit but their own spirit when they told him not to step foot in Jerusalem. There is no capitalization in Greek manuscripts and the interpreter must decide the meaning.

Originally taught at Bethesda Sunday School June 14, 2009

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