

be because of an open rebellion resulting from the deception practised upon the people by Satan after he is loosed from the pit; whereas the judgment mentioned in the parable is based upon acts done or neglected to be done toward the saints, which had already transpired at the second coming of the Lord, or before the restoration judgment begins.

¹²The judgment described in the parable relates to deeds done or omitted to be done to some of the Lord's brethren who had been in prison; whereas during the Millennial trial and judgment by Christ none of his brethren will be in prison, for the reason that they will be with him; and the peoples of the world will not be in prison, because none could have a fair and impartial trial while incarcerated.

NOT TO THE JEWS

¹³It does not seem at all reasonable to apply the parable to the Jews: (1) Because during the Gospel age the Jews have not in any sense been the brethren of the Lord Jesus, but on the contrary have rejected him completely; and (2) because the judgment of the parable is based upon what the sheep do and what the goats neglect to do to the brethren of Christ, without full knowledge; whereas the Jews made no pretense of doing anything for Christ or anything in his name.

NOT TO THE NATIONS

¹⁴The judgment of the parable cannot be reasonably applied to the nations of earth as now constituted, such as France, Britain, the United States, etc; for none of these nations is composed entirely of sheep or of goats. The separation does not appear to be that of one nation from another nation. The great court sits, however, in public judgment of those people composing the nations, some of whom are represented under the symbol sheep, while others are symbolized by goats.

NOT A JUDGMENT OF THE CHURCH

¹⁵It can hardly be said that this parable has any reference to the judgment of the church of Christ: (1) Because the Lord's spirit-begotten ones are not distinguished as sheep and goats, but the Lord speaks of them all as sheep (John 10:11-16); and (2) because the judgment of the little flock and the great company does not take place publicly before the nations of earth.

¹⁶Having now eliminated from consideration certain classes to whom the parable does not seem to apply, the question is: To whom does it apply? When and where does the judgment take place, and who is symbolized by the sheep and who by the goats?

THE TIME

¹⁷Time becomes a vital element in the interpretation of this parable; that is to say, the time it was uttered bears relationship to the time of its fulfilment. The

parable was spoken by our Lord in response to the question propounded to him by his disciples relative to his second coming and the inauguration of his kingdom: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the world?" Responding to this inquiry, the Master related the facts as they would appear at the time of his presence and at the end of the world. He showed what would be his attitude toward his servants, both the true and the false; the industrious, active ones, and the lazy, indolent and slothful ones. He distinguished between the wise and the foolish brethren, and pointed out his accounting with and judgment of his servants, all of which appears to be privately rendered, and not before the nations of earth. Then immediately he proceeded to state the parable which relates to another judgment, which judgment takes place before the assembled nations of the earth, this being the parable of the sheep and the goats. Thus he indicates that there is a close proximity between his judgment of his church and the ones mentioned in this latter parable.

¹⁸Our Lord's throne, or judgment-seat, mentioned in the parable does not seem to be that of the Millennial throne which will deal with the living and the dead during his reign, but seems clearly to be the throne or court established to judge the things existing at the time of or during his second presence and before the beginning of restoration. He says plainly: "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."

¹⁹The prophet Isaiah had a vision of the Lord upon his throne of judgment, the time of which seems to be located definitely as shortly after he takes his power to reign. (For discussion of this point we refer the reader to THE WATCH TOWER for November 1, 1922, pages 334 and 335.) We believe the throne described by Isaiah and that in the parable are one and the same.

²⁰The parable reads: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him." Angels are messengers of the Lord. The prophet Isaiah describes in vision the holy messengers around the throne of glory. (See Isaiah 6:1-11) St. Paul speaks of the faithful members of the church as messengers or angels, and the glory of Christ. (2 Corinthians 8:23) St. Jude, quoting from the Prophet, said: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed." (Jude 14,15) In Revelation we read concerning the Lord Jesus, who is "called Faithful and True, and in righteousness . . . doth judge and make war," that "the armies which were in heaven followed him." (Revelation 19:11-14) We understand this picture to represent the Lord Jesus and the saints beyond the veil as well as the saints this side the