

a Bible Lesson from LUKE 19:1-10:

WHO SITS UPON THE THRONE OF OUR HEARTS AND LIVES?

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I. A SCRIPTURE – TURN FROM THE WORLD’S IDOLS BACK TO LORD!

Evil is ever trying to enslave and destroy men’s lives and souls with idols of the world. But The LORD is ever ready to forgive us, if we turn from the world’s idols back to Him. As we read in I JOHN 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!”¹

II. INTRODUCTION

Who sits upon the throne of our hearts? Who do we follow? Our Redeemer, The Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST? Or do we have a false god in our lives that we bow down to? Is our worship divided? Then we can not be secure in our salvation at The Cross, for our Lord requires that we put away all such false gods and serve Him alone! For unless The Almighty sits upon the throne of our hearts and is Lord of our lives, our souls are in danger both now and for all eternity! If we serve money and possessions, instead of GOD, we are serving idols.

Of this sin, Saint Tertullian writes, “The principal crime of the human race, the highest guilt charged upon the world, the whole procuring cause of [Divine] Judgement” upon men “is idolatry!”² Now the question is, CHRIST is not upon the throne of our hearts, then who or what is? In the society in which we live today, many serve the false gods of money and possessions, rather than The Lord.

Thomas Watson said, “The soul is a spiritual thing, riches are of an earthly extract; and how can these fill a spiritual substance? How man does thirst after the world, but, alas, it falls short of his expectation. It cannot fill the... longing of his soul!”³ Only The Creator can do that! That is because the whole within us is GOD-shaped. And that is because it is GOD-made.

But the quest for idols, in this society especially those of money and possessions, to fill that deep place within us is all too common! And not only outside The Church, but often within The Church as well. And so today let us honestly ask ourselves before The Almighty, “O my JESUS, do I have the idols of money and possessions upon the throne of my heart, rather than Thee? If not, then Lord, keep me from such sin. And if so, then O Lord, purge me and make me clean!”

III. IDOLS OF ALLURES OF WORLDLY WEALTH AND PASSING PLEASURES!

Consider the encounter of Zacchaeus the wealthy tax collector with The Messiah JESUS as recorded in LUKE 19:1-10. Not in that Roman system, tax collectors were empowered to collect as much from the citizenry as they could, so long as the minimum required was then given by him to the government. What the tax collector collected,

¹ 1, KJV, I JOHN 1:9.

² 2, Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, entry “Idolatry, p 360, 6th entry. “Tertullian (c. 200, W), 3.61.”

³ 3, Alcorn, “Money, Possessions and Eternity,” Chapter 4, “The Dangers of Materialism,” p 41, Introduction, 1st quote, of Thomas Watson.

minus what was required in taxes for that district, was all his. So there was no control on how much the people might be afflicted with in their tax burden.

In LUKE 19:1-5 we read, “And JESUS entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see JESUS Who He was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way!”⁴

As John Wesley observes, Zacchaeus is “The chief of the publicans,” the head “commissioner of the customs. A very honorable as well as profitable place” indeed!⁵ If a tax collector was rich in that system, it was because he oppressed the people. Add to this that remnant Israel was a most unhappy occupied nation under Roman military control. So he was also hated by the people because he, though being a Jew, was a traitor to his own people – a collaborator. The deity that Zacchaeus served was not JEHOVAH, but money and possessions. The throne of his heart was occupied, not by GOD, but by idols of the allures of worldly wealth and passing pleasures!

IV. THAT JESUS WAS GONE TO BE A GUEST WITH A SINNER!

We next read in LUKE 19:5-7, “And when JESUS came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner!”⁶

As John Gill comments, “CHRIST knows where His people are, and where to find them, where they commonly dwell, or where at any time they are, He being GOD omniscient: besides, the bounds of their habitations are fixed by the determination and appointment of GOD, and were foreknown by CHRIST, Who, before the world began, was... knew [where] His saints would dwell” on earth and then in Heaven. So JESUS went to the placed where He foreknew this lost sinner would be in that tree on that day, and looking up, calls to His lost sheep, “Zacchaeus, come down!”⁷ So CHRIST calls all of His people away from their idols and to Himself, as Zachaeus, so also us!

How scandalous all the right people of the neighbourhood found this to be, that The Master of Righteousness should enter into and sit down to eat and drink with this publican Zacchaeus! We can hear the faithful men of faith beating their chests and saying to The Apostles, “Does not The Teacher know what kind of a sinner this man is?”

⁴ 1, KJV, LUKE 19:1-4.

⁵ 4, Wesley, “Notes on The Whole Bible,” LUKE 19:2, p 230.

⁶ 1, KJV, LUKE 19:5-7.

⁷ 5, Gill, “Commentary on The Bible,” LUKE 19:5, p 520-521.

We might hear The Lord turn and answer them, “Do you not know, that The Son of Man has come, not to rescue the upright, but the fallen?” But if we are willing, like Zacchaeus, to turn from our false idols, we but need take hold of The Grace of GOD! As He called to Zacchaeus, so also to us, “My son, put down those false idols of money and possessions, and come, follow Me!”

V. THIS DAY IS SALVATION COME TO THIS HOUSE!

We end with LUKE 19:8-10, “And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto The Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And JESUS said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost!”⁸

As Wesley observes further, “Zaccheus is a proof, that it is possible by the power of GOD for even a rich man to enter into The Kingdom of Heaven!”⁹ For Zacchaeus takes hold in joy and thankfulness of the forgiveness of GOD. He confesses. He repents. He vows restitution. He receives absolution. He is restored back into The Kingdom of GOD. Now we might hear the self-righteous scoffers listening at the door and peering in through the windows say in indignation, “This man is not worthy to be justified before The Almighty, nor to be again part of The Church!”

But they forget, that as Saint Paul writes in ROMANS 3:23, “For all have sinned, and come short of The Glory of GOD.”¹⁰ What then is left, as it was under The Old Covenant as it is under The New Covenant, but to resort to The Grace of GOD? As Paul says in EPHESIANS 2:8-9, “For by Grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of GOD: Not of works, lest any man should boast!”¹¹ Always by GOD’s Grace, salvation comes to the house of any who cast down their idols and kneel before The Lord at The Cross of CHRIST!

VI. IN CONCLUSION

The LORD warns through His prophet in EZEKIEL 18:20, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die...!” But then The LORD says in EZEKIEL 18:21-22, “But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.”¹²

⁸ 1, KJV, LUKE 19:8-10.

⁹ 4, Wesley, “Notes on The Whole Bible,” LUKE 19:1, p 230.

¹⁰ 1, KJV, ROMANS 3:23.

¹¹ 1, KJV, EPHESIANS 2:8-9.

¹² 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:20-22.

The Lord is forever knocking upon the doors of our lives, calling us to put aside our idols, and receive His Mercy by His Grace. If we listen closely, we may hear The very Word of GOD calling Zacchaeus down from that tree in our Gospel lesson, as He calls all of us, as in EZEKIEL 18:23, “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith The Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?”¹³

If we turn from the world’s idols – money, possessions or whatever they may be for us - and cast them down from the throne of our hearts, we too may receive the salvation of The Lord in our lives and souls! As with Zacchaeus, so with all of us, as Saint John says in I JOHN 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!”¹⁴ May it be so for all of GOD’s people forever! In The Name of GOD The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost.
AMEN!

¹³ 1, KJV, EZEKIEL 18:23.

¹⁴ 1, KJV, I JOHN 1:9.

VII. REFERENCES

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