

WHAT MANNER OF SPIRIT ARE WE OF?

Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" 55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of." 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village. (Luke 9:51-56)

The great sin of the Samaritans, in the eyes of James and John, was that they did not receive the Lord Jesus. In their misguided zeal, they asked if they might be permitted to burn up the village entirely.

But how did the Lord answer? In the most startling way possible. For he not only rebuked their impetuous self righteousness, but He furthermore told them that they did not know what manner of spirit they are of! What an amazing statement! It is one thing for someone to be told that they err in some matter, and are in need of correction. But to not even know the manner of the spirit you are of is a statement so deep and so foundational, as to strike at the core of one's mind and being.

Indeed, James and John had walked and talked with Christ, being taught by Him continually and seeing and participating in the divine power that the Father wielded through Him. Yet for all this, they were still blind to the heart and spirit of their heavenly enrollment! Of course, they later received the revelation at Pentecost, being filled with that very Spirit of holiness, and their eyes were then open to the gentle city from which they now strode forth as ambassadors.

Truly the brothers' condemnation of the village finds its parallel in our present time, as fearful imprecations and dire curses are uttered at those who do not receive the Lord. Such people are still considered worth of being utterly burned up, and many a "village" has gone up in fearful fiery agony within the hearts of believers.

And so I ask – do we know what manner of spirit we are of? To those who believe that the Lord is coming to torment multitudes in cruel endless agony – those very souls He died for – do you believe His answer today would be any different today than it was on that dusty road?

When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword ?" 50 And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered and said, "Stop ! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him. (Luke 22:49-51)

Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear ; and the slave's name was Malchus. 11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath ; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:10-11)

How often do the disciples of the Lord think that the sword (the word of God) is a weapon to attack and condemn with! Yet we see Peter's actions, thought zealous indeed for Christ, actually

resulted in the removal of the man's ear, symbolizing his misuse of the word actually taking away someone's ability to hear the word!

We still see this today, as those who are full of misguided zeal mishandle the sword, cutting off spiritual ears instead of filling them with good news. We think we are defending Christ as Peter did, but in reality we are striking his very image! This is another example of *not knowing what manner of spirit we are of*, and even as Jesus corrected Peter and healed the ear of Malchus, so He continues to touch many ears that have been destroyed by the harsh handling of the word by His own disciples.

And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. 12 But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." 13 And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." 15 The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? 16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" 17 And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him. (Luke 13:11-17)

How many times have we been told that salvation shall not extend beyond the grave, nor beyond the end of this present age? The Father's redeeming power is said to end with the last beat of the fleshly heart, and the chance for salvation (though indeed, salvation is not something that happens by *chance*) shall expire for all upon the Kingdom being established fully in the earth. Unwittingly, the words of that pitiless ruler are echoed. "There are six days (millennia) in which God's plan shall unfold. Come and be saved in one of them. But there shall be no healing on the seventh."

How far we have lost our way, if we fail to see the tender mercies of our Lord! To think that His compassion shall cease, and his kindness dry up upon a certain fixed date is to claim He changes, and turns, and acts inconsistently. But God is not inconsistent, nor is He cruel. To heal upon the day of rest is to show forth the excellence of Him whose rest it is! That which our Father was, He also is, and ever shall be. He has not changed from the true gentleman that straightened the back of the afflicted woman and restored her in the sight of all.

This ruler, perhaps pricked to jealousy or indeed maybe truly zealous for the law, used the form, the outline, and the shadow of Christ as justification for withholding mercy, though mercy itself is a manifestation of the *substance* of Christ!

It is so easy to have the form of a thing and not the substance. It is so easy to examine a frame and think you know the picture it exists to display. In the same way, the fallen mind of man grasps hold of any pattern, any formula, or any rule, that we feel has the ability to elevate us in some way. Is there a prayer we can pray, a day we can celebrate, a lawful requirement we can fulfill, that will raise us up yet more? In this we forget that only in Christ does the Father raise anything up - and in Him *all things* are raised.