

The Three Eternal Destinies #209

The Witness of Creation and of Man

And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage. But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. (Dt 4:19-20)

God has given all that He has made as a heritage¹ for all the people of the earth. Creation is for the nations to consider (Acts 17:26), that is, the nations around Israel all over the earth, both then and today as Ps 19:1-6 attests. Acts 10:35 — The only things the nations have which represent God, the true God, are man (in His image) and creation (which reveals His glory through His handiwork, Rom 1:18-20). Rom 2:6-10,12-16 is speaking of the nations who live by the natural law (Gen 3:16-19,22; 9:5-6,12-17), which is the age-lasting covenant He has made with man upon which the Rev 20:11-15 judgment will be based. The names of all who live according to this natural law will be found in the book of life.

Dt 4:19 — The nations all have equal opportunity, regardless of their location or circumstances (Gen 10:5,21,31-32; Acts 17:26), even in the jungles of Africa, to find the true Creator, and to live according to the natural law of conscience. Ps 8 — All creation shows His handiwork, and there is no one who will have an excuse for not honoring the Creator. But neither the animals nor the sun, the moon, the stars and the planets can be a medium to represent the Creator personally, as only man is the very representation of the Creator (Gen 9:5-6).

¹ Heritage — what is or may be inherited.

The Worth of Man

The intrinsic² value or worth of man is based on his fundamental nature, while it is yet uncorrupted and still retains a witness of the Creator — the essential inherent³ quality of moral choice, which Gen 3:22 describes. A tree in itself has no intrinsic worth. A tree has value as it is, but none that is gained or lost by its own choices, even as the sun and moon and stars and animals don't make choices as a man does. The inward character, quality, and intrinsic worth of a human is maintained by conscience, to the point that it becomes fixed eternally — “still” (Rev 22:11).

Rom 1:21-23 — To think a tree or an animal or an object of wood or stone has intrinsic worth makes one a fool. To chop down a tree or kill an animal does not incur bloodguilt. Only killing a man incurs bloodguilt, and capital punishment is required.

Rom 1:21 — Men know the truth about God through the witness of creation (verses 19-20), but choose to suppress it (verse 18; 2 Ths 1:8). Rom 10:18; Ps 19:1-4 — Even with all this evidence in creation, people refuse to recognize their Creator and glorify Him as God.

The reason man worships animals or the sun and moon and stars is that he thinks that they can reason. But a tree or an animal or the moon and the stars can have no thought about the Creator, and cannot adequately represent Him to other creatures made in His likeness (Gen 3:22). Only man can represent God, for man is made in His likeness. Although he is now fallen short from the glory he could have had, especially if he had eaten of the tree of life, which he could not do after he had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man can still retain His likeness.

If man (male and female) had eaten of the Tree of Life, they would have been able to live eternally with God, as companions. But God had an eternal plan in His

² Intrinsic — essential nature, as the essential character of one's constitution.

³ Inherent — existing in something as a permanent or essential attribute.

infinite foreknowledge, knowing that the expanse of the created universe had to be filled (since He created the universe to be filled) with His highest creation, man, created after His own image and likeness (Gen 1:26-28), if they would obey, as the Son of Man, the Second Adam, was obedient, without any fault, not fallen short of His glory.

Gen 1:28 — This mandate to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth was repeated in Gen 9:1-7, and will be extended to the universe in the Eternal Age. Even after the Fall, and after the Flood, man (or at least Noah and his family) retained the likeness of his Creator to the degree that man was still acknowledged, noticed, and approved by God in Gen 9:1-7 as His representation and likeness. For God made man in His own image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27) and said, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with My representation,” even after the Fall. Did God (as Augustine would have us think) want to fill the earth with depraved men? Even though in Gen 6:5, God saw evil continually in the rest of humanity (as it will be also in the last days, 2 Tim 3:1-5), Noah held his original likeness to and characteristics of God (Gen 6:9).

Fallen Man Can Represent God

A representative is a servant who stands or acts for another through delegated authority; he is an authorized sent one, serving as a typical or characteristic example of the one who sent him. But man can only represent God to the extent that he is not depraved (unjust or filthy), and is still able to maintain a good, working conscience (Rom 2:6-16; Gen 3:22). To that extent, fallen man is still able to serve as a specimen⁴ of what God is like, at least to the degree that he is not fallen (has not corrupted himself) from his usefulness to represent his Creator. If this were not possible, there would be no need for a judgment (Jn 5:28-29; Mt 24:31-46; Rev 20:12-15).

⁴ Specimen — individual or sample taken as an example of a class or whole; something that obviously belongs to a particular category; something noticed by reason of an individual distinguishing characteristic as belonging to a group or whole.

Gen 3:22 — “Like us” (Gen 1:26) — a specimen of His own image and likeness. Those who *do* maintain themselves as a specimen of Him will be found in the book of life, for their deeds are recorded there in the books. Man is the only creature that can communicate with the Creator. Not that fallen man can have a reciprocal relationship with God outside of Messiah, but God can see man in his willingness and his conduct according to what is written in the “books” in Rev 20:12. These, whose names are written in the book of life, did not depreciate⁵ to the point of becoming worthless to the Creator. To be worthy of the nations of the eternal age, a man’s life must prove his worth.

Rom 3:23 — Man is fallen short of His glory, deficient, lacking radiance due to sin. His glory is dulled, but not completely. Man is still able to correspond in some degree to His likeness, being an example to all others who are fallen short as well, but are living according to the conscience God put into man, which is the natural law inherent in all mankind. All who do good encourage and confirm one another. God will not disregard (pay no attention to; treat as unworthy of notice) man’s circumstances in life. He will take everything into consideration at the judgment.

To *re-present* is the ability to present again, after the Flood, the image and glory of God. Even though it is a somewhat faded glory of Him, it is still not *ichabod*. Even though it is not 100%, it is not departed. But Rev 21:8 shows man who is no longer a specimen of the characteristics of the Creator (Rom 1:24-32).

God’s Actual Presence on Earth

But we in Messiah have a higher glory (Jn 17:22) to support and encourage one another by. As Paul said in 2 Cor 5:18-21, we are ambassadors of Messiah, which the world (Gentiles) cannot be. We are those who are able to represent our Master to the extent of reconciling them to Him so He can bring them to the Father (1 Tim 2:5; Jn

⁵ Depreciate — to diminish in worth or value; become degraded.

13:20; Mt 10:40-41). An ambassador is one who can represent the One who sent (entrusted, authorized, delegated) him to a recognizable degree — not with faded glory, but enough glory to do the work of priestly service to our Mediator and Advocate.

In His infinite foreknowledge, God knew that man would fall (Rev 13:8, NKJV). This is the reason He put both trees in the midst of the garden. The Man Yahshua was already in our Father's mind before the world was created, as One who would rule the universe, ruling over the people of the nations who would never hear the gospel from Him or His sent ones (Mt 10:40-41).

Our Master's sent ones are those in Jn 7:18 who are *not* seeking their own Satanic glory (2 Cor 11:4,13-15). Verse 15 — Satan's servants have to be like *him* to be his representatives, otherwise they could not make "disciples" for Satan to cause the growth of Rev 18:1-4, which is full of Satan's servants (except those who will come out of her).

The Body of Messiah on the earth today must be His actual presence as the Body, His Spirit manifest in His Body, which is His representation on earth (1 Jn 4:1-5). God didn't have "Plan 1" and then "Plan 2." His plan was the same from the beginning (Rev 13:8).

Dt 29:29; Ex 20:5-6 — Everything is passed on from fathers and mothers, both positive and negative. The firstborn and siblings model their mode of life from their parents to the following generations (Mt 27:25).

Man Needs a Light

Dt 4:19, as Ps 19:1-3, is very plain and understandable. What creation speaks to the people who would never have the opportunity to hear the gospel in their own language (Rom 10:14-18) leaves man without excuse to not believe in the Creator (Ps 19:4; Rom 1:18-20; Ps 8:3). His craftsmanship (or craft-*deity*-ship), like the sun, is a shining symbol of the Creator. Ps 19:5-6 — Nothing is hidden from its heat, just as with the witness of Mt 24:14, nothing is hidden from its light (Mt 5:14-16). But Paul in Rom

10:18 is referring to creation (Ps 19:4), so we know that Mt 24:14 was in abeyance or, as Acts 1:6-7, it was not for him to know the times or seasons when Mt 24:14 would occur in history future.

Dt 29:29 — Israel heard but was disobedient, but a remnant did believe and obey the gospel. But the time for Acts 1:6 would be in abeyance, since Mt 21:43 did not take effect in the first movement of the Spirit in the first century, as Rev 2 & 3 tells the story. Rev 3:4 — In all the first communities, apostasy occurred, as Paul prophetically announced in his letters (2 Cor 11:3,13-15; 2 Tim 3:1, etc.).

Acts 1:6-7; Dan 2:44; 7:24 — These last days will show many remarkable signs of the end of the age (1 Pet 1:5). Dan 12:4,9 — If Daniel is a sealed book it can only be unsealed to those who make up the nation in Mt 21:43, which will be a holy nation and a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9) who will do something enormously outstanding. They will be a special people who will proclaim the praises of Him who called them out of darkness (Lk 1:78-79) and into His marvelous light (the light of the world, Isa 49:6). Rom 10:19-20 — They will be a “foolish nation” — as if the Gentiles (goyim) could be Israel! How foolish can you get? Yet we are God’s holy people. Who do they think they are? (Hos 1:8,10; 2:10-12,23; 1 Pet 2:10)

Through these special people, God will fulfill His promise to Abraham (Hos 1:10; Gen 22:17; 32:12; Isa 49:8). Hos 2:21-23 — The desolate inheritance, the dry and parched land of the rebellious, will in the coming age be provided rain, and Israel will once more produce its fruit (Isa 27:6). But the foolish nation must first produce the fruit (Mt 21:33-43).

Hos 3:1-5 holds out the promise of a redeemed Israel (Mt 19:28). Gomer (his unfaithful wife) must be reclaimed (Hos 1:3; 3:4; Rom 9:25-26). Hos 2:19-20 — Betrothal is a binding oath, the last step before the wedding and then the consummation that follows into the next age and forever.

So His special people (agents) in 1 Pet 2:9-10 will do their job (Acts 26:6-8; Isa 49:6,8; Mal 4:6; Ecc'cus 48:10-11; Mk 9:11) to bring about the restoration of Israel's betrothal (Acts 3:21).

The Judgment Rendered

Rom 2:14 — Some Gentiles who do not have the Law still do such things as the Law requires, such as honor their parents, etc., which indicates that they believe in a basic moral or natural law (verse 15). They know within their heart that there is a difference between right and wrong (Gen 3:22). This is the law of conscience — co-knowledge with God. Jews and Christians have the Law and are held accountable more than Gentiles. Rom 2:16 — All alike will have to give an account on the Day of Judgment according to what is written in the books — whether their name is still in or is taken out of the book of life. God will judge not only the Gentiles' actions, but their motives or secrets as well. But 2 Cor 5:10 and 1 Cor 4:5 is the judgment for the Holy, while Rev 20:12-15 is the judgment for the nations or "Gentiles."

Rom 2:6; Pr 24:12; Ps 62:12 — God will render to each one according to his deeds — eternal life for those who persist in doing good (Rom 2:7; Job 14:14), but indignation and wrath for the self-seeking (selfish, proud, arrogant) who do not obey their conscience or regard the truth of moral judgment, but obey evil. You see the judgments rendered to them in Rom 2:8-10 (Rev 20:12-15; 21:8; 14:10-11; Mt 25:41).

Render — to pay, return, give back, to give in return or retribution.

Retribution — recompense, reward, as punishment in the hereafter.

It would have been better for Judas if he had not been born, but the greater guilt is upon those who are born in her and have heard and heard, but would not allow the Word to enter into their heart, but disobey Messiah (Jn 3:36; 2 Ths 1:8-9; 1 Pet 4:17). The wrath of God remains upon them. They must endure God's wrath forever and ever, which is what *remains* means in Jn 9:41 (NRSV).