

Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25: 31-16)

2010 Anno Domini: Turmoil and Triumph

Last year, the wind came... this year, the front moves in. And with it will come not only turmoil for the nation and the world, but blessings and triumph for those sold out to God.

To be honest, meteorology is not exactly one of my strong points. But I have noticed that when the weather is about to change, one of its heralds is a strong wind. This is usually followed by a blast of cold or a big storm, often both. I grew up in Pennsylvania, where the folks have real winters complete with snow and ice and cold. Every year around this time, all eyes turned to Lake Erie to see if the cold front was coming over that body of water, bringing “lake effect” snow with it – in short, a ton of the white stuff, with all the precautions that smart people had to take in order to get through it all.

Last year, God warned us of the spiritual great wind that was coming. This was ordained by Him to wake up believers in this nation, and prepare them for perilous times. However, He also said not to be afraid; sober, but not afraid. This nation that was founded by people who were (for the most part) believers – not Deists, not agnostics or whatever the popular media and revisionist historians are trying to categorize them as today – continues to walk away from its true history, its calling as a nation and the God Who brought this nation into existence. But God’s hand is still there, both on those who are His and who are not. Those who belong to Him will shine in the darkness that will come upon those who do not know Him and are not prepared.

Some have made the parallel between modern America and the Egypt of Moses and the children of Israel; forgetting God’s benefits through Joseph, the Egyptians treated the Israelites harshly as a precursor to God bringing the Israelites out of Egypt and into the land He promised their forefather, Abraham. Today, the true history of America is forgotten as people attempt to purge the nation of the influence of God and the Lord Jesus. Believers are increasingly restricted in the public arena, and outright persecution seems just around the corner.

And yet, America’s spiritual calling is to spread the Gospel to the nations our people came from. It is for this reason that America was created, why the land has been blessed beyond measure by the Lord and why she finds herself in the leadership position she has enjoyed since the end of World War II. God is not about to throw that away; a nation’s spiritual traits are there for a purpose, and He will bring them to fulfillment. And if a nation wanders off the path, God will take action to bring it back to Himself. God *never* throws up His hands and says, “Oh, well – I tried.” All you have to do is look at the nation of Israel, from Biblical to modern times, to see this. For almost 2,000 years the Jewish people have been dispersed throughout the world and Israel as a nation ceased to exist. Today, Israel is back as the countdown clock to the end times and her people continue to return to the land – and will do so in greater numbers. In the same way, America *will* be brought back to her destiny in the Kingdom of God. But in order to do this, God *will* employ the rod of discipline if the nation continues to turn away from Him.

His first step in this process is to turn the rod upon the Church, removing those who serve themselves first and not the Lord. This has been ongoing for the last twenty years or so, and will continue to occur because God always cleans His own house first before moving on to the nations His people are supposed to be presenting Him to (1 Peter 4:17). Jesus' Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, originally set at the End of the Age when the nations are judged, also applies to the church today. The pastures of God contain two types of creatures. The "goats" are those who are in the church only for themselves, who want to make a nice, tax-free pile and live in luxury on the backs of those who in obedience to God contribute to what they believe to be His church or who desire to make an outward show or feed their egos on what worldly respect is left for ministers (which isn't very much these days, unless you're prepared to disobey God's commands). God has been making an example of some of the more outrageous cases as a warning to the rest to repent and return wholeheartedly to Him. Meanwhile, the "sheep" are the remnant of those who have sold out to God, who try to live a holy and separated life that the Lord can use to advance His kingdom and bless in accordance with His Word.

Right now, it's not so easy to tell the difference between the two, because God has been patient with the goats in order to get them to repent and let Him transform them back into sheep, spiritually speaking. But God is beginning to take stronger measures to bring the nation back to its Creator, and God has plans for the sheep. So, the goats will be separated from the sheep, which will be washed and dressed, clean and white, without spot or blemish. The true saints of God will be unmistakably and quite obviously blessed by God in order to be a light in the darkness that is coming and draw people to Him. Michael Card (in his song, *Under the Sun (Ecclesiastes)*), put it this way: "In the face of cold despair, no matter what seems right, remember darkness drives us to the light."

Recall the latter plagues (Exodus 10) sent by God against Egypt, stronger than the initial ones, where a distinction was made between the Israelites and the Egyptians. The Egyptians suffered the full force of the plagues, while the Israelites were left untouched. Those days will return as America is brought through tougher times to bring her back to her destiny in the Kingdom of God. This year, 2010 A.D., will be a year of great blessings for the true saints of God, those who are found doing His work and have separated themselves from the world -- who do not call "conspiracy" everything the world calls "conspiracy," who inquire of their God rather than seek the counsel and wisdom of the world, who are training themselves to depend on God rather than government and who have their storehouses filled for the times to come, not just to keep themselves alive but to be a blessing to others and show them the mercy of God -- and who live in readiness to be the first fruits gathered when He returns.

The Kingdom is coming -- all hands to your stations! Happy New Year!

For the Glory of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ
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