

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

By
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"A certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: ...and had compassion on him" (Luke 10:33).

Most Bible -lovers have a *special* love for this story, and, having ourselves traveled down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, we can easily visualize the whole event told by our Lord.

It needs to be remembered that the story was originally told to a man who had enquired about "eternal life" (v.25), and, in these few sentences, the Lord revealed the very essence of His gospel. What a Master -Teacher He was, -and still is!

Leaving the details for a moment, we may say that the basic message *behind* the story is that if anyone of us would have "eternal life" we must see that it is *not* a matter of what we can do for *ourselves*, but rather of what Someone Else *has* graciously done *for* us the needy man in our story did nothing to save himself, but could only be grateful for what was being done *for him*. The Bible says that it is "Not by works of righteousness which *we* have done, but according to His mercy *He* saved us" (Tit. 3:5). And that we would say, is the unique genius of the Christian gospel, - and it counters and condemns all those false "gospels" that are around us everywhere. Men love to do something to *earn* eternal life, but that makes proud men prouder, and if *those* are the people to populate heaven, then heaven itself would only be another hell (See 1 Cor.1: 29)! How much better it is to get low now, and just thank our Saviour for what *He* has done for *us!* The story itself sets before us three important truths. First we see

THE PLIGHT OF THE SINNER

We note that the man in question had "fallen among thieves" who had "stripped" him, and "wounded" him, and left him "half dead" (v.30). Possibly he had brought all this upon himself, -not paying heed to solemn warnings, and prevailing *unaccompanied* along the dangerous road, -as. most of *us* have done. We note that it says he "went *down*" to Jericho, and that, we know, is a *fast- descending road*, and exactly like the road of sin and self. And it says he "*fell*" among thieves, - and who of us has not done that? Our father Adam was the first to fall, and all of us have been dragged down with him in that "Fall"! But, apart from that, each one of us has also "fallen in the way", brought down by one vile sin after another. The "thieves of lust and lying and self-indulgence and many others have all done their work, and we have been left "half-dead"! Indeed, as Paul puts it, we are *totally* "dead (toward God!) in trespasses and sins" (Eph.2: 1). Great indeed is the plight of the sinner! The next thing illustrated in our story, (and particularly emphasized!) is

THE IMPOTENCE OF MERE"RELIGION

For the record goes on to tell of long-robed priests and Levites viewing the scene but "passing by on the other side" (vs.31, 32). And how many of *us* have had to learn that lesson, -or *are* learning it! "Religions of all kinds parade themselves everywhere, but we shall have to discover that even our diligent observance of prescribed tenets cannot lift us from the dust, or save a needy soul" Hope may rise

for a season, but the wounds and impotence will still be there, and the inner grief unchanged. Let us settle it, then, that once we have fallen among the thieves we need more than religions and philosophies to help us, for *all* such will only "pass us by on the other side". But now we have the *beautiful* pan of our story, for, in the person of the Samaritan, is depicted for us.

THE POWER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

We cannot here spell out all the details, but we can mention a few of the ways in which He is portrayed to us, and His saving work declared. First we read that "he came where he (the dying man) was" (v.33). Thank God, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1Tim.1: 15). That, we know, is simple history and Christ Himself said, while He was here alongside us, "The Son of man IS COME to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Heavenly Samaritan indeed! Next we are told, "he had compassion on him" (v .33). With Christ, that compassion began in heaven, but how His heart must have ached as. well when, here at *our* "roadside", he saw the countless *evidences* of the plight into which humanity had fallen. That same divine compassion finally took Him to the Cross-where His own pure blood was willingly poured out as atonement for – *our sins* and our follies. Like that first Samaritan, His own garments were "stained indeed" while He worked on us and for us (See Isa.63: 1-2), but, thank God, He did not pass us by. Truly, "*His* compassions fail not" (See Lam.3:22).

We further read that the Samaritan "bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine" (v.34). This reminds us of three very precious verses:

1. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal.2:20).
2. "The Blood of Jesus Christ (wine indeed!) cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John1: 7).
3. "He (the Holy Spirit) shall be in you" (The real Oil of Heaven) (John 14:17).

There, we would say, is the real Christian message. Christ Himself cleanses our sins with His own blood, and then, as the Risen Lord, He comes in to indwell and transform us, -making us "whole" indeed!

Finally, we note the statement that "He set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him" (v.34). The first phrase depicts us as "raised up" and identified with Christ in His ascendancy (as taught in Eph.2: 6), whilst "brought to the inn" speaks of our entrance into His church to enjoy the care and fellowship of His people; -and what an "inn" that is! (See Acts 2:44; Psalm 133). We are told, moreover, that the Samaritan *then* made himself *personally responsible for the future* needs of his saved one, declaring "whatsoever thou spendest more, I will repay" (v.35). The message, here is that CHRIST HIMSELF is our new Sufficiency for all things, and, as John puts it, "We live through HIM" (1 John 4:9). We ask you, then, why not confess your need *to Him* this moment, - taking Him to be the complete answer to your fallen spiritual condition, and the Compassionate Healer of all your wounds? He will not fail you. But you *must* have dealings with *Him, Himself*. The cry of faith will do it.