

PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT
Matthew 18:23-35

By Joseph Edwards II

Mat 18:23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, “Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all”. 27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, “Pay me what you owe!” 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you all”. 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you? 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

This is one of the “Kingdom of Heaven is like” parables which teach on certain aspects of the Pathway to Salvation.

In the parable, Christ describes a servant who was forgiven his debt by His Master, but in turn, does not forgive those who are indebted to him. When the Master learns of his servant’s lack of forgiveness, the Master holds the servant accountable and reinstates the debt his servant owed Him. The Master then casts the servant into prison until he pays his debt in full.

Here is the spiritual message of the parable:

The King (Master) represents Christ and the debt represents the sin debt of death that we owe to Christ.

Because of mankind’s spiritually marred and carnally minded condition we have from birth, mankind does not have the ability to be truly forgiving of others. Because of this deficiency, Christ will fully collect the debt of death from each of us so that we will be born again as a child of God. Only then will we be like the Master and be truly forgiving of others.

Christ's work at the cross earned Him the legal right to collect mankind's debt of death which resulted from the sins we commit. Christ has become mankind's near-kinsman redeemer.

In this age, Christ is collecting mankind's debt only from the Elect believers. In the final age, Christ will collect the debt from the rest of mankind.

In the parable, the Unforgiving Servant represents believers who have been called out from the world but not chosen. They are many:

Matt 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen...

The Fellow Servants who witness the Unforgiving Servant's actions represent the Elect believers (Rev 6:11). They are few and have come out from the many who have been called. They were originally no better than the unforgiving servant and because of such, the Master collected the full payment of their sin debt earlier (in this age). Because the Elect believers pay the debt early, they are also called the First-Fruits of Christ's harvest of mankind. As a result of the Fellow Servants' making the full payment of death to the Master, the Fellow Servants were born again with a new spiritual nature – the nature of the Master. Now the Fellow Servants are just as forgiving as the Master. In other words, they have been converted from the old marred vessel into a new vessel:

Jer 18:4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

This scripture below also applies:

Mat 7:1-6 Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, let me remove the speck from your eye?; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Because the Fellow Servants have become like the Master, the plank that was in their eye is gone. They can now see clearly so as to remove the speck that is in the eye of the Unforgiving Servant. For this reason, the Fellow Servants report the actions of the Unforgiving Servant to the Master so that the Master (and themselves) will remove the speck from the Unforgiving Servant's eye. This salvation event will happen in the final age (the Lake of Fire age) after the Unforgiving Servant pays the "last penny" of His debt:

Mat 5:26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

Once the full debt of death has been paid by the Unforgiving Servant, he, too, will be born again and be given the nature of the Master. The final age will be his time of conversion (second death, **Rev 20:14**).

So why do Called but NOT Chosen believers have a more difficult time of judgment than the “Called and Chosen” believers?

The parable says that the Unforgiving Servant is given over to the tormentors and **Mat 24:51** says that those who are cast into the Lake of Fire will have weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is true because in the final age, the Day of the Lord will be poured out in wrath prior to the Latter Rain of the Spirit being given. When the judgment of the Day of the Lord falls, the non-chosen believer will still be unsaved. Their child of God will still be in the womb waiting to be born when judgment falls.

However, for the Elect, the order of the Day of the Lord and the Latter Rain of the Spirit is reversed. For the Elect, the Latter Rain of the Spirit comes BEFORE the Day of the Lord arrives. This happens because the Elect’s number of days between the Early and Latter Rains is “shortened”:

Mat 24:22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

Peter made this statement about judgment:

1Pe 4:17 For it is the ripe time for the judgment to begin with the house of God; but, if first with us, what shall be the end of them who yield not unto the glad-message of God?

Peter implies that the judgment of those who are not saved in this age will be more difficult than those who are saved now.

The verse below also supports Peter’s statement that the non-chosen believers will have a more difficult time during their judgment than the Elect. In fact, the non-chosen believers will even have “weeping and gnashing of teeth” during their judgment:

Mat 24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

When Christ comes to a non-chosen believer upon their bodily resurrection, the Day of the Lord will commence for them. Christ will come to them as a thief in the night while they are dwelling in peace and safety.

1The 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

However, their dwelling in peace and safety is based upon their false belief that they are saved. Unknown to them, Satan has made them spiritually worse than before they were called out from the world (**Mat 12:43-45**).

Paul was warned of this time of apostasy which would befall the church. He was told that shortly after his death, grievous wolves would come into the church (**Acts 20:29**) and would not spare any of the flock (including the called out Elect). This apostasy was caused by the spirit of anti-Christ entering the church. Now when Christ comes to an Elect believer, they are in this fallen away spiritual state. It is for this reason that the Latter Rain of the Spirit comes before the Day of the Lord. Otherwise, the Day of the Lord would come to them as a thief in the night and would result in them receiving their portion (salvation) with the unbelievers in the final age. If this were to occur, no flesh would be saved in this age (**Mat 24:22**). But for the Elect's sake, their days are shortened so that they will receive their salvation early - prior to the Day of the Lord falling on them. As a result, the Elect do not have "weeping and gnashing of teeth" during the time of their judgment. They will have entered into the rest of Christ and will be protected by the ark, just as Noah and his family were.

But since the non-chosen believers remain lost and under the GREAT DELUSION that God sent to them upon their resurrection, they will have "weeping and gnashing of teeth" when the Day of the Lord comes to them:

2Thes 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked (Man of Sin) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 12 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 13 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

What is the LIE that God is causing them to believe?

The verse below gives the clue as to what the LIE is:

2Cor 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

The LIE that comes from the Great Delusion is that Satan is actually Christ. The doctrines which Satan feeds to the called out believers (leavened bread) are highly deceptive because they are very pleasing to their carnal minds.

Matt 13:33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

In this short parable above, the leaven that the woman (carnal nature) places into the 3 measures of meal is HIDDEN in the loaf once it is fully baked. All called out believers will consume this leavened bread believing it to be the true bread from heaven. But it is not. The leavened bread is a deception from Satan. After the called out believers consume this bread, they will commit the Abomination of Desolation and will become a Man of Sin. In this fallen away spiritual condition, all called out believers (including the Elect) will dwell in Peace and Safety believing that they are saved when in fact, they are not. The truth is they have been made “worse than the first” (**Mat 12:43-45**). They have committed adultery with Satan and are no longer the “chaste virgin” Christ requires His wife to be.

2Cor 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to ONE husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Now, back to the question of why the called but NOT chosen believers will experience torment in the next age.

The judgment for the non-chosen believers will be a much different time than it was for the Elect. After the non-chosen believers are resurrected from the grave, they will realize that they are not saved. And because of their false understanding of Christ’s truth, they will also believe that their opportunity for salvation has passed.

When they appear before the judgment seat of Christ, He will say to them that He never knew them:

Luke 13:27 But He will say, I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of lawlessness. 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.

And since they also believe that Christ is a “hard man” who harms His enemies, they will believe that Christ is going to cast them into a literal lake of fire for all eternity without a redeeming or loving purpose (the false Doctrine of Hell).

Mat 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed...

From that false belief, they will have “weeping and gnashing of teeth”.

But the true Christ is not a hard man. He is loving and merciful. He loves the Unforgiving Servants every bit as much as He loves their Fellow Servants (the Elect). And because of His love for them, He will eventually come to them and give them the Latter Rain of the Spirit. Christ will then appear to them as He truly is. It is at this time they will be born again. As a child of God, they will have the same nature as their Master. It is the same nature that their Fellow Servants were given earlier. Now that they have the nature of the Master, they will learn the meaning of true forgiveness and will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.