

TWO MANNERS OF NATIONS

A SERMON

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“And judgment was given unto them.” Revelation 20:4

THOSE who are saved are made to know that the love of God is special and eternal; that the choice of God is special and eternal; and that the salvation of God is also special and eternal. “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end.” But from this plan and way of eternal mercy, men have, to their own destruction, wrested the Scriptures. Hence there was from the very beginning a general tendency in men to generalize that which the Lord had made special. No, the fall of man itself took place by generalizing what the Lord had made special. They were not content with that especial standing in which they were placed to abstain from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they must generalize. Satan knew if he could get our first parents to generalize that which God had made special, that he should thereby get their souls away from God and bring them to ruin. So, in all after ages there have been always a tendency to generalize that which God has made special. The Lord called Abraham and Hagar, and Ishmael would have generalized that special sworn covenant which the Lord revealed to Abraham. But no, rather than that should be done, “Cast out the bondwoman and her son.” Esau would also have generalized the special truths thus revealed, but Esau was defeated. And so, the Israelites, they were no sooner out of Egypt than they began to fight against the specialty of God's order of things and began to generalize. No sooner were they in the land of Canaan than they began to amalgamate and to generalize. And no sooner were the real truths of the everlasting gospel proclaimed in the apostolic age, but that their specialty was by men thus taken away, and men began to generalize, and to amalgamate, and to insinuate, or rather, to declare that these doctrines were not of such essential importance as to abide by them with the tenacity that some would abide by them with. Now we have just the same here. Here is Satan bound, that he should not deceive the nations anymore. How is this taken? Why, our millenarian friends, even those that in other respects hold the same doctrines that we do, they take this binding of Satan to mean that he should deceive no one. Here, again, is that generalization by which some men are deceived, and the Scriptures obscured. So that I have this morning to preach that discriminating sort of sermon that will no doubt give in certain quarters great offence, and yet I will try to preach it as inoffensively as I possibly can.

I will therefore notice four things this morning if time permit. First *the persons in whose favor judgment is given*. Secondly, *after what manner Satan is bound*. Thirdly, *the judgment itself which is given in favor of these people*, “judgment was given unto them.” Fourthly, *the honor put upon them, they themselves being by divine authority constituted the judges of men and of angels*.

First, then, *the persons in whose favor judgment is given*. They are called “nations.” You must understand in the outset of our discourse this morning, I am going to try to show that there always have been, that there are now, and there will be to the end of time, two orders of nations. And very often where you meet with the word “nation,” which seems general, you must understand it in the limited sense, limited by that under which the nations are spoken of; and you must not make the word “nations” extend any farther than the subject to which the nations, when they are mentioned belong. Satan has his nations, which he has deceived fatally, which he does deceive fatally, and which he will deceive fatally; and the Lord has his nations which Satan has deceived, but which, when the Lord begins his work in their hearts, Satan can deceive no more. Thus, there are nations that Satan has fatally deceived, that he does and will fatally deceive; and there are people called nations that Satan cannot fatally deceive. Let us, then, examine the scriptures upon this. I go first to the Lord's declaration to Abraham, “In you and in your seed”, meaning, of course, as the apostle explains, Christ Jesus, shall “all nations be blessed.” What does that mean? It means the people among all nations that constitute the seed of Abraham. They are called nations because the Lord reckons them his nations. They are his people. They are the wheat, and the others are reckoned nothing in God's house, the others are reckoned nothing in God's truth, the others are reckoned nothing in God's Christ, because they are not there. Now ask the question, is it true, is it a fact, that all the nations, literally, of Adam's race have, from time to time, been brought into the faith of Abraham? Are there not two things clear? First, is it not clear that in no age have all the nations of the earth literally been brought into the faith of Abraham, and so blessed with faithful Abraham? We know they have not been. But, on the other hand, we do know that ever since the apostolic age multitudes in different nations have been brought in and blessed with faithful Abraham. Therefore, the nations that were to be blessed in him does not mean the nations at large, but it means what the seventh of the Revelation says, “Out of all nations, and kindred's and people, and tongues.” They are called nations because they are God's everything; they are everything to him. Thus, it is that the nations to be blessed in him mean God's nations, those that he has already chosen. And then mark something else, the promise to Abraham that in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed was positive, there is no conditionality. So that when men come forward and say that it is because of something in the creature that the blessing is somewhere stopped, that has no weight with us, because it is positive. Hence the Savior, following up the same, says, “They *shall* come from the east, the west, the north, and the south. These shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.” Thus, I get nations in the world that were to be blessed with faithful Abraham; and then I get, in contrast to that, nations that are passed by peoples called nations that are passed by and left where sin has placed them. Now, again, in the 32nd of Deuteronomy, “Rejoice, O you nations, with his people:” which the apostle in the 15th of the Romans explains in this way: “Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.” Has there ever been an age in which all the nations of the earth have rejoiced with the Lord's people? On the other hand, has there been a time since the beginning of the gospel in which there have not been multitudes that have rejoiced with the Lord's people? And if we are a part of the nations blessed with Abraham, if we are a part of the nations that were to rejoice with his people, how shall we rejoice? Why, we shall rejoice as the

happy result of that spirit of grace and supplication which the Lord shall give us. Perhaps we cannot get a scripture clearer upon it than that in the 106th Psalm; "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that you bear unto your people," I am a lost sinner, and I need your salvation; "that I may see the good of your chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of the nation, that I may glory with your inheritance." Here, then, I get the nation again that is blessed with faithful Abraham; here I get the prediction of Moses fulfilled, "Rejoice, you nations, with his people." Thus, you will perceive that in the first scripture the word "nations" means those, and only those that are blessed with saving faith as Abraham was; in the second scripture the word "nations" so far from meaning men at large, means only those that are brought to rejoice with his people. See once more, in the 7th of the Revelation, how they all rejoice there in one eternal theme. See how the apostle puts them together, when contemplating the great truth that Abraham was the father of many nations; that is, of many peoples. That is the idea there intended; and the apostle, I say, when contemplating Abraham as being thus the father of many nations, says, "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." "You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Then, again, come to the 67th Psalm: "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for you shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth." What do the nations here mean? Why, the nation's here mean the peoples among the nations, the peoples that shall be glad and rejoice because of the Lord's judgment. And what is the judgment with which he judges his people? Why, he judges them by the perfection of his dear Son, and therefore takes them into all that the mediational work of Christ can bring them to. Let them rejoice. Here is a judgment not to be alarmed at; here is a judgment that does not strike any terror; here is a judgment that brings joy and gladness. And it goes on, "Let the people, these nations blessed in Abraham, these nations that rejoice with his people, these nations that are glad, "let the people praise you, O God; let all the people praise you. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God," above all Jewish and Gentile distinctions, that comes into the world in the majesty of his eternal love and mercy, having mercy on whom he will, "God, even our own God, shall bless us." Then, again, the 72nd Psalm: "All nations shall serve him." Has it ever been true, and I shall show presently it never will be true, that all nations literally have served him? They have not, and they do not, and they never will. On the other hand, ever since the gospel commenced its living course; ever since Ezekiel's living chariot set out on its majestic course, and has fled along, gathered up souls out of death into life, independent of man, ever since that there have been multitudes of peoples that have served him. And thus, all the nations included in Abraham's blessing, all the nations included in Moses' prediction, all the nations included in the 67th Psalm, shall serve him. Then the 17th verse of that same 72nd Psalm, "All nations shall call him blessed." Has it ever been so literally? No. But all the nations that are taught of God all these peoples shall be brought thus to call him blessed. Then look at another contrast in the 3rd of Malachi: "All nations shall call you blessed: for you shall be a delightful land, says the Lord of hosts." When did this commence, sir, its course? On the day of Pentecost, when you read in the New Testament (I am not accountable for the universality of the language; did not put it there) that there were people "out of every nation under heaven;" take notice of that; and their eyes were opened; they saw the blessedness that was in Christ; they saw the blessedness of belonging to Christ; they saw the blessedness of believing in Christ; they saw the blessedness of the redemption of Christ, the mission of Christ, the person of Christ, the glory of Christ and of his kingdom; the eternal wonders revealed by this wondrous Messiah; their hearts were opened, their eyes were opened, they came unto this happy land, and they called the church blessed; they themselves longed for the same blessings, and they were brought into the same.

Now in direct contrast to this you read in the 24th of Matthew, "You shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." So, God's nations are brought to call the church blessed; the devil's nations go on to hate the church. So that the all nations that are blessed in Abraham, the all nations that rejoice with Christ's people, the all nations that are glad because of him, the all nations that serve him, the all nations that thus call his people blessed these and the other all nations are two manners of people: one the seed of the serpent, and the other the seed of the woman. Now, mind, God's Israel was a nation in the midst of another nation. "Has God assayed to go and take him a nation?" Why, there is a number of slaves, sir, you cannot call them a nation. God calls them so; "Has God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?" And as he took thus a nation from the midst of another nation, so he takes nations from the midst of other nations, by the work of Jesus Christ, by the temptations that he overcame, and by the signs that he gave, and by the miracles he wrought, and by his mighty hand, and by his stretched out arm, that brought salvation, and by the terrors of the Almighty, under which he sweat great drops of blood; these sufferings of the dear Savior, who is thus set forth as doing these things before our eyes, this is the ground of our separation from the world; this is our way into that wilderness path that shall lead to the promised land; this is the way by which we shall arrive safely at the last.

There are two orders of nations, God's nations, and Satan's nations; just as there are two worlds. God has loved the world; but the world that God loves, and the world that he does not love, are as distinct as hell and heaven. But, say you, it does say that "whosoever believes." Well, come, let us get the meaning. "God so loved the world" that is, there is a world of people who are embraced in his love, and his love is everlasting, immutable, infallible; and whosoever in the old world believes in him will thereby come out of the old world into the new world. For we all belong to Satan's nation by nature; we are all children of wrath by nature; but by believing in Jesus Christ as the gift of God's everlasting love we come out of Satan's nation into the nation of the Lord; we come out of Satan's kingdom, out of the old world into the new world, by a new life, a new and living way, by new creature-ship, by the new covenant, by the new heaven, by the new earth; "behold, I make all things new." Thus, then, the world that God loves is one, and the world left to be lost under his wrath is another thing. The world for which Christ died as a propitiation is one world; the world that lies, finally, in the wicked one is another world; and the world that the Holy Spirit convinces of sin, and righteousness, and judgment, and the world that live and die unconvinced of sin, and righteousness, and judgment, these are two opposite worlds. The one taken, the other left; the one loved, the other hated, the one saved, the other lost; the one blessed, the other cursed; the one shall ascend to eternal glory, and the other shall sink to remediless, woe. There are thus two orders. Beware, then, of generalization; beware of making that general which the Lord has made special.

But is it not said of Satan that "he should not deceive the nations anymore"? Certainly, not these nations, not the Lord's nations. Ah! but, say you, "anymore", that implies he has deceived them. Truly so. Who was your deceiver when you were in a state of nature before the light shone into your minds from the throne of God? Who was it that darkened your mind? Who led you captive? Who kept you away from God? Who kept up your enmity? Who deluded you with the notion that you could turn and come to God when you liked that you could accept salvation when you liked? Who thus deceived you? Who either turned you away from any religion at all, or else settled you

down, or tried to do so, in a false religion? Who did this? Satan did it. But these nations blessed in the seed of Abraham, these nations that rejoice with the Lord's people, these nations that are glad and shout with joy, these nations that serve him, these nations that call his church blessed, these nations that are saved; Satan cannot, when their eyes are opened, deceive them anymore, not fatally. He deceives us all now in some minor respects, but in nothing vital. "If it were possible, he should deceive the very elect." So, he shall not deceive God's nations, only up to a certain point. He is limited, and the time comes when this strong man, who has kept us in delusion, the stronger than he is come to us, bound this strong man, the devil, cast him out, and the Savior himself took possession of our souls, enthroned his name in our best affections, and unfolded to us the secret of his eternal counsels, and from that day to this he has been dearer to us than language can describe. Do not forget, then, that there are two worlds; one loved, and the other not loved; one saved, and the other not. There are two orders of nations. Hence mark what is said in the latter part of the 21st of Revelation concerning these people that Satan shall not deceive any more. He has deceived them in the fall, and in their state by nature; but now they are plucked as brands from the burning. John, when contemplating the glory awaiting the people of God, seeing that the Lord God himself was the dwelling-place of his people, said, "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun." Now you can understand that the sun cannot shine spiritually. They are a spiritual people, and they need a spiritual light; they do not need the natural sun. And the moon cannot shine spiritually. The natural intellect cannot shine spiritually; the inventions and gospels of men cannot shine spiritually. Therefore, they want something better than the sun, something better than the moon. So "the glory of God did lighten it." He can shine spiritually, having blessed them with all spiritual blessings. He shines forth by him who is the quickening Spirit. "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Now notice, "And the nations", nations again, you see, "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it." Then if they walk in the light of it, they walk in the light of God's glory; "and the Lamb is the light thereof." Therefore, they walk in the light of the spotless atonement of Jesus Christ. "The nations of them which are saved." Ah, what has God done for us in bringing us thus into the blessing of Abraham, thus into the nations of them which are saved! And shall Satan deceive these nations anymore? No, no; the others he will, but not these.

But then it is said, "They shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it." Now, then, are you so far gone, any of you, as to suppose that the nations are to bring corruptible things into an incorruptible city; bring mortal things into an immortal city; to bring earthly things into a heavenly city; to bring carnal things into a heavenly city? Well, but they do bring their glory. Of course, they do; and what is their glory? Their glory is God himself, in other words, the truth of God. What is the Christians honor? Ah, he says, Jesus Christ is my honor. Therefore, when I go to heaven, I shall take Christ with me; I shall take the testimony of God's mercy with me. This is my glory, this my wealth. I should be very sorry to take any other wealth. Earthly riches are often a plague; they would not do to take with us, no. What does the apostle say? Why, he says we brought nothing into the world and certainly we carry nothing out of it; and am very glad of it. So, then, those that enter there, they enter as heirs of the kingdom, and they take their honor and their glory with them. The God they glory in here they shall glory in there; the Jesus they love here they shall adore there; the eternal Spirit that has taught them here shall be in them a well of water springing up to everlasting life there. We are not going to change our God by changing worlds; we are not going to change our robe by changing worlds, that is, changing the robe of Christ's righteousness; we are not going to change our life by changing worlds; Christ is our life now, and will be our life then.

“And there shall in no way enter into it anything that defiles.” No, you must enter by the blood of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the truth of Christ, the covenant of Christ; then you will enter in all the purity of that completeness which you have in him.

But we will now notice *after what manner Satan is bound*; though I ought, perhaps, to have said even more upon the first part; for you will find a clear understanding of this subject of great use, you, young ones, in years to come. There is in our day a real tendency almost everywhere to so generalize the Scriptures as to do away with vital godliness and set down mere outward conversions for true conversions; to set the form into the place of the power, the semblance into the place of the substance. Go wherever you may, there are wonderful doings, oh, wonderful! But if you are hungering and thirsting after God's mercy in Christ; if you are guilty, wounded, wretched, poor, blind, and miserable, you will remain so for aught the gospels of the day can do; but the gospel of our God can do all things. Now in relation to these saved nations Satan is bound. Let us look at it. One great argument with some of our millenarian friends (I don't say this disrespectfully, only I believe they are seriously wrong, and they cannot believe I am more seriously wrong than I believe they are), one great argument, which we have had over, over, and over again, that Satan is not bound is this, and they all stick to it. One said the other day, “What will Wells say to that? Will that not that be a poser to him? Will not that shake him a bit?” Well, I thought they had a great itching for me to say a word upon that; and so, I thought it might be as well to do so. Well now, when Satan is bound, say they, a universal blessedness will exist all over the world; that is, all will be converted. That is what they say. Therefore, as there is not yet that universal blessedness. Satan is not yet bound. There, take that, say they. Very well, I will take it. But, gentlemen, will you kindly demonstrate to me that there ever will be universal blessedness? If you will prove that I will give up my point. Oh, say they, in these thousand years he is to be bound, and so there are to be a thousand years of universal blessedness. Well, if there be universal blessedness during these thousand years, then what means the 8th verse of the 20th chapter? “He,” Satan, “shall go out,” at the end of the thousand years, “to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth”, that is, east, west, north, and south, that is, the whole world, “the four quarters of the earth” meaning the whole world, “Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.” Here I pause for a moment. During these thousand years there is a number of enemies in this earth, all over the earth, whose number is as the sand of the sea. Where is your universal blessedness, then? I never could find it yet, nor you either nor anyone else. And he shall go out to deceive these nations: now mind, do not misunderstand me; he had deceived them already; but he is going now, at the end of these thousand years, to add another deception to his preceding delusions. Pharaoh was deceived by Satan. By and by Israel is gone. And at this time, when Satan's chain shall be lengthened, and he shall have a little more liberty, the Israel of God will be about to leave this world altogether then, for the end comes just then; so, Satan says to Gog and Magog what he said to Pharaoh, Now, Pharaoh, you have failed up to now; the plagues have been too much for you, the paschal lamb has been too much for you. But now Pharaoh, now, is your time. The wilderness will shut them in, and now is the time. Fill your chariots, order your men, pursue after these Israelites. So, I will. Now, says the devil, you will overtake them, you will destroy them. But Pharaoh did not know that God would meet him. God himself came down and met him; placed himself between Pharaoh and his own frightened children, “so that the one came not near the other all the night;” and presently Pharaoh is got into such a fix that he can neither go back nor go forward. Where is that old devil that deceived me like this? That was the last delusion of Pharaoh. So, with Gog and Magog, here is the last delusion. They

encompassed the camp of the saints about, the people of God who shall be alive at that day; you may be alive, I may be alive, I do not know when the end of the world will be, it may be before I have done preaching this morning, I cannot say; it may be in our time, and it may not be; that is the Lord's concern, not ours, for the times and seasons he has put in his own power. But the adversaries shall not injure the church; they shall only injure themselves; for we read that "fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." Thus, then, there are two orders of nations, two worlds, and there is no universal blessedness anywhere in the Scripture promised. We know well, and I defy any man, or all the divines under heaven, to prove me wrong, now it is not very often I speak almost dogmatically, but I know what I say, that the new earth, the Promised Land, shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. But that this earth ever will be so filled with the knowledge of the Lord we have no proof. The blessing will be universal to all the church, but that the blessing will be universal to all the world is what I nowhere find proved in the Holy Scriptures.

Satan, we read, is bound by an angel. This angel is the Lord Jesus Christ, the messenger of the everlasting covenant. The angel came, laid hold of this enemy, "and cast him into the bottomless pit, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled."¹ What shall we understand by this, "cast him into the bottomless pit"? It is a most unhappy thing that the Greek word abyss ever should have been translated by the word "bottomless pit." There is nothing in the original about a bottomless pit. I believe most people take the expression "bottomless pit" to mean hell. That I must deny in total.² Not in one of the seven different places in the Revelation where the words "bottomless pit" are mentioned, not in one case does it mean hell, as I hope clearly to show. Hell is something very different. I will show you presently what hell is. The original word translated "bottomless pit" means simply the world, and the deeps of iniquity that are in that world. The same word is applied to the sea. When the fallen angels entreated the Savior not to command them to go into the deep, there it means the sea literally. And this world is compared to a sea. It means, then, the deeps of iniquity in this world. Satan is cast down into the abyss of his own nations. What a deep of iniquity in Popery! What a deep of iniquity in Mahomet-ism, and many other isms that I might name! Therefore, it does not mean hell at all. Cast down into his own world. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you;" not gone down to hell yet, no. "He walks about," as far as his chain will let him, "seeking whom he may devour." It simply means that he is thus cast out of the true church, that he cannot deceive them anymore. Now here is a great chain; that chain has a certain length. He has the range of the whole prison. This world is his prison. He would get out of that prison into the church if he could and destroy that church; but he cannot not get there; so, he goes about the prison of this world seeking whom he may devour, as far as his chain will admit. Ah, he says, where is that man? where is that woman? They used to be with me: where are they now? They are slipped off. Regeneration has taken them into Christ; and John says. "They abide in Christ, and that wicked one touches them not." Now, then, Satan is bound in relation to all God's people. If he were not, they never could have been unbound. You that love the Lord, some of you that are perhaps Millenarians, if you say Satan is not bound, why, my good brother, if Satan had not been bound in relation to you, you could not have been unbound. Your eyes are unbound. The

¹ Revelation 20:3

² Here is what the Greek word means: ἄβυσσος abyssos netherworld; abyss noun, accusative, singular, feminine | prepositional object

Louw-Nida abyss, abode of evil spirits, very deep place. Clearly Wells has a good point here. RCS

bandage is taken away, and you see Jesus Christ. Your heart is unbound. Once it was not large enough to pray. It was contracted, bound up in the fetters of sin and Satan. But now it is unbound. Your heart is free. "Happy is the people whose heart is set free." Perhaps you have got a little further than this: perhaps you are brought into the glorious liberty of the gospel. You to say Satan is not bound! How come you unbound? So, then, if Satan had not been bound in relation to the people of God, then they themselves never could have been unbound. "And he shut him up." What a mercy for us that Satan is shut up, that is, within certain limits! He is bound by a chain and shut up. "And set a seal upon him," in order that the people of God might know him. We are to know the people of God by the seal that they bear, "Holiness unto the Lord;" and we are to know the devil by the seal he wears. His seal has one inscription on it, I will take only one, and wherever you see that, there you see the devil. And what is the seal? The seal has on it this inscription, "Liar", liar. When I see Popery, I see the devil; when I see Puseyism, I see the devil, whenever I see false doctrines, I see the devil. Oh, say some, there is no harm in false doctrine. It is only murderous, that is all. The devil is a liar, and by his lies he murders the souls of men. Now understand, then, that he is bound in relation to God's people, and that he is shut up with in certain limits, and that he is known by the people of God by the seal he bears. Satan once forgot this, he did, quite forgot the seal. He was obliged to wear it, but quite forgot it. He took off his old idolatrous dress, took off his heathen dress, and put on a Christian dress; so holy, and so righteous, and so humble. Oh, what a beautiful creature I am! I don't think that Paul will know me now; I do not think he will; he will certainly take me for a saint now. I can go into the nations now; I don't think Paul can possibly know me now. I will go to Corinth now. The apostle was too keen for him. The apostle saw the seal. Oh, Paul, we have such good men come to us, beautiful men, unblemished men. Oh, if you were to see how gentle they are, how good looking and what industrious men they are. Ah, he says, I am not at all surprised at that, for "Satan himself", the devil forgot his seal in his forehead, you see, of liar, "is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness;" that is, of human righteousness, a wonderful to do about human righteousness. So, the apostle was too keen even for the devil himself. "I am jealous over you," lest you receive another Jesus, another gospel, or another spirit. Thus, God himself is not jealous of the church, but he is jealous of the devil, keeps his eye upon him, and keeps him within the limits that he has destined he shall be kept within. There is the seal, then. Men will come and tell all the doctrinal lies imaginable. Ah, people say, he is a nice man. If you do not care whether you receive truth or lies, you are no friend to God, you are no friend to Christ.