

Discourse Notes: Given by Br. Ed Grabner to Salem 2023 Convention

Title: Perfection, Restitution & Everlasting Life

Open: 270 (verses 1-3) / Close 270 (verses 4-6)

Outline

- Define Terms
- Consider from the standpoint of Adam
- Consider from the standpoint of Mankind – the descendants of Adam

Short definition for Perfection

- Websters 1828: The state of being perfect or complete, so that nothing requisite is wanting (physical, mental, moral)
- Numerous words translated Perfection or Perfect – Many have the meaning of Complete or Completeness (physically, mentally, morally)

Short definition for Restitution

- Websters 1828:
 - 1. The act of returning or restoring to a person some thing or right of which he has been unjustly deprived; as the restitution of ancient rights to the crown.
 - 2. The act of making good, or of giving an equivalent for any loss, damage or injury; indemnification.
 - 3. The act of recovering a former state or posture. [Unusual.]
 - Acts 3. Restitution of all things, the putting the world in a holy and happy state.
- G605 - *ap-ok-at-as'-tas-is* - From G600; *reconstitution*: - restitution. – 1 occurrence
- G600 - *ap-ok-ath-is'-tay-mee* - From G575 and G2525; to *reconstitute* (in health, home or organization): - restore (again). Total KJV occurrences: 8
- **Matt 12:10-13** - Man with the withered hand – Pharisees question – Is it Lawful to heal on the sabbath day – Our Lord gave the example of recovering a sheep from a pit on the sabbath and then asked “how much then is a man better than a sheep” - Mat 12:13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was **restored whole**, like as the other.

Short Definition for Everlasting / Eternal

- Websters 1828 – Everlasting - Lasting or enduring forever; eternal; Eternal - Without beginning or end of existence.
- H5769 - From H5956; properly *concealed*, that is, the *vanishing* point; generally, time *out of mind* (past or future), that is, (practically) *eternity*;
- G166 - *ahee-o'-nee-os* - From G165; *perpetual* (also used of past time, or past and future as well): - eternal, forever, everlasting

Consider from the standpoint of Adam

Was Adam created perfect, complete, so that nothing requisite was wanting?

Gen 1:26-27 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (27) So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Gen 1:31 And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good*.

Was Adam's character perfect, complete, so that nothing requisite was wanting? Yes and No

R4611 ANCIENT WORTHIES--HOW PERFECTED? - A PERFECT body implies a perfect mind, because the mind is a part of the body, and a man who has no brains or who has only half his brains would not be a perfect man. Probably there will be no difference of thought thus far in respect to this question, but the real point at issue would be: What constitutes a perfect character? Father Adam had, in one sense of the word, a perfect character when he was created in God's image and likeness, being perfect both in mind and in body. His mind being in the image of God his character was good; no blemish was there; no preference for sin, but the reverse of this--an appreciation of righteousness and a tendency toward it. He had not a hard heart, but a fleshly heart--a tender heart. He would not be cruel, but just, loving and kind--all that would constitute a good man, because God made him thus. But there is another sense in which we use the word character, a sense in which Adam never had character in full, viz., in the sense of character developed, tested and proven. God tried him, and because of his inexperience he failed, even though his character was good and his whole organism perfect. If he had known as much about God as we know, he would undoubtedly have stood the test; but had he been successful in this test respecting the eating of forbidden fruit, we have no thought that it would have been the end of his testing. Undoubtedly other tests would have come, and gradually he would have been growing in the knowledge of God, in obedience, etc.; but lacking experience he failed in the very first feature of his trial.

R2839 ORIGINAL SIN AND ITS PENALTY. - We are to think of Adam (consisting at the time of two parts, male and female) as perfect, in the sense of being mentally and morally fashioned after the likeness of the Creator--well poised, well balanced--not "prone to sin as the sparks fly upward," as he subsequently became, and as his children now are. We are not, however, to think of him as perfect in knowledge or in character; knowledge must be acquired, but he was fully equipped with all the mental and moral apparatus for a rapid acquirement of knowledge. As for character, in an intelligent being it is a fixity of the will; and such a fixity can only come with knowledge. In other words, the perfect Adam was ready to acquire perfect knowledge, and had a perfect Creator, able and willing to give him the requisite instruction; and as this right instruction would be received, and this perfect knowledge be attained, character (good or bad) would be established; -

-either in favor of the principles of righteousness already established by God, or in opposition to the will of God, in unrighteousness.

R1807 subheading - Though he were a son - It should ever be borne in mind that perfection of being and perfection of character are two different things. Perfection of being is the work of God, while perfection of character is the work of the intelligent creature, wrought out in obedience to divine law and under the divine direction and supervision. Adam was a perfect being, innocent, free and glorious in his pristine beauty; but in the work of character-building he soon failed, and hence lost his perfection. Character cannot be developed wholly without trial. It is like a plant: at first it is very tender; it needs an abundance of the sunshine of God's love; frequent watering with the showers of his grace; much cultivating through the applied knowledge of his character as a good foundation for faith and inspiration to obedience; and then, when thus developed under these favorable conditions, it is ready for the pruning hand of discipline, and is also able to endure some hardness. And, little by little, as strength of character is developed, the tests applied to it serve only to develop more strength, beauty and grace until it is finally fixed, developed, established, perfected--through suffering.

R3634 PERFECT, WITH LIMITED KNOWLEDGE.

When Adam was created did he have everlasting life?

Gen 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: (17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Adam had a right to the life he was given as long as he remained obedient. E391

E469 – "...it should not be forgotten that Father Adam did not lose eternal life, for although he had a perfect life, and was free from all elements of death, he was, nevertheless, placed in Eden on probation, to see whether, by obedience to God, he would develop a character in harmony with God, and so be accounted worthy of everlasting life."

Relative to Restitution and Everlasting life: Adam will be restored to his former state with one exception, he will have the additional benefit of 930 years of knowledge of both good and evil.

Consider from the standpoint of Mankind – the descendants of Adam

To date have any of the descendants of Adam been perfect, complete, so that nothing requisite was wanting? (Physically, mentally, morally)

Rom 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Psa 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

1Co 15:22 All in Adam die... (revised version)

Clearly their character has not been perfect either but what have they gained of knowledge?

Along with all of man's knowledge of things that are good he also has over 6000 years of documentation respecting the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

Restitution and Everlasting life

What will mankind be restored to and when will they be proven worthy of everlasting/eternal life?

The object of restitution – Restore mankind to the condition of Adam when he was created and before he fell.

Luk 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

A process in the case of everyone who are the descendants of Adam.

1Co 15:21-23 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. (22) For as all in Adam die, even so shall all in Christ be made alive. (23) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming (Parousia)

Isa 35:8-10 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*. (9) No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*: (10) And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

R5925 subheading UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION DEFINED

In order to see what Adam and his race may expect as a result of this Universal Redemption, we must notice what Father Adam was before he sinned; for redemption implies the bringing of him and his race back into the condition in which he was before he sinned. Note, therefore:

(1) Adam had fellowship with his Creator.

(2) He lived under Divine blessing, which provided for his every need and maintained him in life as long as he was obedient.

(3) His claims had not been decided as respects eternity. He was in the School of Experience, gaining knowledge, and was assured of a continuance of his life as long as he remained obedient and used his knowledge in harmony with his Creator's will.

(4) He was, therefore, a probationer for eternal life. It is our understanding that had Adam continued obedient under certain tests he would have been recognized as a graduate in the school of experience and as no longer properly subjected to tests and trials. But he never reached this position. He failed in his trial time, and never attained his graduation therefrom.

Universal Redemption, therefore, means a bringing of Adam and his race back again to the probationary state in which Adam was when he sinned. That which was lost is that which was redeemed, and which is to be restored. God's provision, the Scriptures tell us, is for "Times of Restitution"; and those times, or years, of Restitution are for the bringing of Adam and his race back to all that they at first had. The Scriptures intimate very clearly that the experiences of mankind--first, under the reign of Sin and Death; and secondly, under the Restitution blessings of Messiah's Kingdom--will give such ample knowledge of God and of His Plan that at the conclusion of Messiah's Reign every member of the race will have had his probation in full--full knowledge, full opportunity.

R1258 ANASTASIS—RESURRECTION & R1260 THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

R1261 - God's gracious provision in Christ is, however, abundant. His arrangement is that the whole race, having been purchased by our Lord Jesus, shall be fully in his hands: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (`John 5:22`); and he hath appointed the Millennial day for that work of trial or judgment. (`Acts 17:31`.) He who redeemed or purchased back Adam and his race from the sentence of death will offer to each one full restitution to all that Adam possessed and lost, upon conditions which even in their fallen condition they will be fully able to accept. Obedience of will or intent shall be the first requirement; and as this is obeyed restitution will commence. As gradually, during the Millennium, imperfection and weakness shall give place to strength and perfection, correspondingly less allowance will be made for transgressions by the Mediator-Judge; his chastisements and corrections proportioned to the ability and wilfulness of the transgressors being meanwhile most valuable experience to those upon trial.

Isa 65:20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed.

A144 – Any who sin wilfully, against full light and ability, will perish in the second death. And should anyone, during that age of trial, under its full blaze of light, spurn the offered favors, and make no progress toward perfection for a hundred years, he will be reckoned unworthy of life and will be "cut off," though at a hundred years he would be in the period of comparative childhood. Thus it is written of that day: "As a lad shall one die a hundred years old; and as a sinner shall be accursed he who dieth at a hundred years old." (Isa. 65:20--Leeser) Thus all must have at least one hundred years of trial; and, if not so obstinate as to refuse to make progress, their trial will continue throughout the entire day of Christ, reaching a culmination only at its close.

“spurn the offered favors” - These are the incorrigible that never get on the highway to make any progress toward perfection.

All others get on the highway and gradually progress to that perfection that Adam enjoyed at his creation, Physically, mentally and morally an image of God. If at any point they should turn back to “spurn the offered favors” they would again fall into the class that gets cutoff and does not progress to the full end of the 1000 years.

The question to be determined though at the conclusion of the process is whether or not their characters will be perfect in the fullest sense and therefore worthy of everlasting life? Will they have profited from the documentation of and the personal experience with Sin and come to love the standard that will be enforced throughout the Mediatorial phase of the kingdom?

I believe this is what the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats was given to show. At the conclusion of the 1000 years there will be no distinguishable difference between the Sheep and the Goats outwardly. Well before its close they will all be obedient subjects of the Kingdom. Meaning they will all be physically perfect, mentally perfect and morally perfect in the sense of having a perfect understanding of God’s law and capable of living in harmony with every feature of it.

The Sheep will have profited from their full knowledge of good and evil to have also developed characters that love righteousness and are entirely devoid of selfishness. Characters that would never sin therefore under any circumstance and thus prove they are worthy of everlasting life.

The goats will not have profited from their full knowledge of good and evil and will not develop characters that love righteousness and are entirely devoid of selfishness and able therefore to resist sin under any circumstance and thus they prove they are not worthy of everlasting life.

At the close of the mediatorial Kingdom, only the Christ head and body will be aware of who are Sheep and who are Goats. The little season is designed to manifest who is who in harmony with the prior judgement of the rewards of everlasting life or everlasting destruction declared in the parable.

R5949 subheading - HEART LOYALTY AND OUTWARD LOYALTY IN NEXT AGE

In the next Age, when the world shall have been brought to a knowledge of the Truth, the opportunity will be granted them to show forth what is the real attitude of their hearts toward God. Some after coming to see the goodness and loving-kindness of the Lord, will still prefer sin; and God's sentence upon them will again be the sentence of death-- Second Death. A certain period will be granted them to learn of the great goodness of the Lord and of their opportunity of gaining eternal life. If they do not then manifest an interest in their own salvation and an appreciation of God's goodness in Christ, and a desire to be helped up out of sin and degradation, they will receive the final wages of sin, utter and eternal destruction in the Second Death.

There will apparently be some in that time who will seem to desire assistance up to a better life, a righteous life, who will yield obedience in perhaps only an outward way to the laws of the Kingdom. These, we understand, will be permitted to live on and be gradually brought up to a condition of physical and mental perfection; they may live through to the full end of the thousand years of Christ's Reign. At the end of that time they, with all others then living, will be turned over by Christ to the Father for a final crucial testing. If these then prove that their wills have not been wholly given up to God, that they do not yet appreciate the costly provision made for their salvation, and the value of righteousness, they will be destroyed as unworthy of Divine approval and unworthy of everlasting life. If the demonstration which will then have been given them of the Wisdom, the Justice and the Love of God will not have changed their hearts to entire devotion to Him and to His glorious and righteous will, any further opportunity would be utterly useless. They will be cut off from earth as cumberers of the ground, that only the righteous, the holy, may live throughout the ages of eternity.

R5925 – Subheading UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION DEFINED

Universal Redemption, therefore, means a bringing of Adam and his race back again to the probationary state in which Adam was when he sinned. That which was lost is that which was redeemed, and which is to be restored. God's provision, the Scriptures tell us, is for "Times of Restitution"; and those times, or years, of Restitution are for the

bringing of Adam and his race back to all that they at first had. The Scriptures intimate very clearly that the experiences of mankind--first, under the reign of Sin and Death; and secondly, under the Restitution blessings of Messiah's Kingdom--will give such ample knowledge of God and of His Plan that at the conclusion of Messiah's Reign every member of the race will have had his probation in full--full knowledge, full opportunity.

The Scriptures show us that some, when granted all these blessings, will resist them and, sinning wilfully, will be accounted as unworthy of any further favor of the Almighty, and will be destroyed in the Second Death. They show us clearly that in the end of the Millennial Age, some, even of those who will attain full human perfection, will not be accounted worthy of eternal life, but on the contrary will be destroyed in the Second Death, because, having enjoyed their share in the Universal Redemption, they have not improved the opportunities for such character development as would meet the Divine requirements. Their destruction is shown in `Rev. 20:7-10`. It is also pictured in the destruction of the goat class in the parable of the Sheep and Goats.--`Matt. 25:31-46`.

Not intended to be a discourse on the Sheep and the Goats

The confusion I see that most have on this subject is whether or not the Goats are outwardly performing perfectly and that it is only their inward heart condition the parable is designed to describe.

Granted most of the references on the Sheep and the Goats speak of the obstinate and willful nature of Goats in comparison to Sheep.

I do not agree with the thought that this will be outwardly observable by the members of mankind all the way up to end of the 1000 years. At some point all outward willful sinning will have been cutoff by either the sinner being destroyed or the outward sinning restrained by individuals feigning obedience to the laws of the kingdom to avoid punishment.

Should someone object that Goats cannot possibly picture human perfection I would remind such that for the Passover the Jews could take a lamb from the Goats and also remind such of the Goats presented for sacrifice in the Levitical types.

Another area of confusion seems to be the relationship between the close of the Mediatorial kingdom and the little season. I do not agree with the thought that Br. Russell was ever confused about this relationship. On this point I would simply refer to the Chart of the Ages and ask how is the relationship shown there. I would also remind such of the pattern in God's plan that each age is followed by a harvest that overlaps into the next age. The little season is a harvest to manifest who are Sheep and who are Goats. See D644

My greatest concern respecting the view that only the sheep go into the little season and some of these fail and are cut off from life centers in harmonizing this thought with John 5:22.

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth (krino) no man, but hath committed all judgment (krisis) unto the Son:

R2430 – Krino – the thought of trial, testing or criticism; but does not imply finality of decision

R2430 – Krisis – includes the thought of trial culminating in a decision that is final, irrevocable.

The Sheep and Goats parable includes the trial and final decision by the Son. Whatever occurs as a result of the little season it cannot revoke the decision that the Son makes respecting the Sheep class and their worthiness of eternal, everlasting life. If it does, then Father did not commit all judgment (Krisis) to the Son or the Son's judgment (Krisis) represented in the parable would prove to be inaccurate.

For a complete understanding one must study to understand the relationship between the parable of Matt 25, the turning over of the Kingdom in 1 Cor. 15 and the little season of Rev 20 in harmony with the authority granted the Son in John 5:22.

Supplemental references:

A117 Permission of Evil

A222-224 - Lapping of the ages, harvest etc.

C136 - Jewish Harvest - Goats and Sheep

D17 - Goats/Tares; lambs/tribulation saints

D644 - little season – harvest

E456-457 - "that which was lost" - Luke 19:10

E407-408

E27-28

F350

F711-718

R271 - Lapping of the ages, harvest etc.

R5080 THE MARK OF CRYSTALLIZATION OF CHARACTER

R4611 ANCIENT WORTHIES--HOW PERFECTED?

R5073 THE LIFE-RIGHTS OF THE ANCIENT WORTHIES

R1807 subheading - Though he were a son

R3634 PERFECT, WITH LIMITED KNOWLEDGE.

R2839 ORIGINAL SIN AND ITS PENALTY.

R5925 WHAT IS UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION?

R1258 ANASTASIS—RESURRECTION

R5693 "PROPHECY AGAINST THE SHEPHERDS"

- Wheat/Sheep - Tares/Goats

R654, R1498, R2606, R2759 & R4553 PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND GOATS.

- notes it is a harvest

R4694 THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

R5530 JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

R4747 OUR PART IN THE SIN-OFFERING A FAVOR

R4575 "Under the new regime of the New Covenant and its..."

R1771 THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

R1039 EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.