

Intro:

What is inherent in the notion of nations? *Division*.

What is significant about the location of most of our Lord's earthly ministry? *Galilee had a mixed population – many Gentiles were presented with the light of the Lord in his earthly ministry.*

Now we want to look at an event that occurred roughly after the Lord's first year of ministry.

- Six months in Judea after cleansing of temple and Nicodemus
- Return to Galilee (rejected at Nazareth, but received by many Galileans)
- Second passover in Jerusalem, heals man lame for 38 years (Jn 5) – healing on Sabbath
- Returns to Galilee, disciples criticized for plucking grain on Sabbath
- Heals man with withered hand – on Sabbath
- And now our passage – Mt 12.15ff.

Read Mt 12.15-21

Our passage closes at this point with the words of our title:

In His Name shall the Gentiles Trust

What I want to look at today is who it is among the nations who will trust Him and why.

- God created the nations as a means to drive men back to himself, 'if haply they might feel after him' (Ac 17.27).
- The Lord himself appeared as a light to lighten the Gentiles.

It is self-evident that over the years since the Lord left the earth many men, mostly Gentiles, have indeed sought Him and been sought by Him. Millions of Gentiles live as members of His body.

But even so, even though so many have trusted him, the vast majority have not.

And today, in our post-Christian society, the overwhelming majority is cold toward Christ. In fact some are downright hostile.

In yesterday's paper, David Frum, a very able and intelligent man, wrote an article about why the Bible was not to be taken literally, that it was mere myth.

The tragedy of that article was that Mr. Frum repeated the lies of men who willfully dismiss the Bible and make up charges against it, entirely without basis in fact. Mr. Frum is a well-educated man, a man who knows how to investigate topics that he writes about, but he rejects the Bible and rejects our Lord Jesus Christ as a result.

Why do men do that?

Who among the nations are those who come to trust him? Why do they trust him?

Most of us here today have trusted him. If you haven't, you are at least interested enough in Christ to come hear a Christian sermon this morning.

Our text today gives us in prophetic form excellent reasons for any man to trust Christ.

Proposition: The choice is clear: choose on the side of life or fall on the side of death.

I. Consider the irrational antagonism to Christ (15)

A. Rehearse the context

1. Six months in Judea after cleansing of temple and Nicodemus
2. Return to Galilee (rejected at Nazareth, but received by many Galileans)
3. Second passover in Jerusalem, heals man lame for 38 years (Jn 5) – healing on Sabbath
4. Returns to Galilee, disciples criticized for plucking grain on Sabbath
5. Heals man with withered hand – on Sabbath

B. Consider the theological implications of the three Sabbaths

1. In healing the lame man in Jerusalem Jesus made startling theological claims
 - a. The Father works and I work
 - b. The Father raises the dead and I do
 - c. The proof: he simply told the lame man to walk and he walked

2. In allowing the disciples to eat grain on the Sabbath he declared himself to be the Lord [master] of the Sabbath (see 12.8)
 - a. He set aside their tradition in one fell swoop
 - b. He set the Sabbath back to its rightful place in Mk 2.27 [parallel account]

^{NAU} **Mark 2:27** Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

3. In healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, he plainly demonstrated who he was
 - a. Healed with a *word*
 - b. *And God said, Let there be light ...*

The actions of the Lord show his compassion for people in their brokenness and his provision for their needs – even the Sabbath is intended to meet men’s needs, not to be a burden bearing them down.

C. The reaction of the Pharisees

1. They want to *destroy* him
2. They are willing to make an alliance with their hated enemies, the Herodians (Jews who supported the Gentile government of Herod) (Mk 3.6)

Jesus knew of their antagonism ... so he withdrew, but many followed him.

II. See the reasons for choosing Christ

A. The works of the Messiah: healing them all (15b-16)

B. The words of God in Isaiah 42.1-4 (17-21)

1. Longest OT quote in Matthew
2. The point: Christ’s works prove who the Lord is – he is the one prophesied
 - a. The Servant of the Lord
 - 1) Read Isa 42.1-4 – Some differences with Matthew
 - a) ‘Whom I have chosen’ [Mt] vs. ‘Whom I uphold’ [Isa]

- b) Matthew's stress: God's election of this one to this position

Note: Matthew didn't make a mistake, Matthew is writing under inspiration and is led by God to change the wording

- 2) The Servant of the Lord is God's chosen one
- 3) The Servant of the Lord is God's beloved one
 - a) Compare the voice at the baptism and the transfiguration
 - b) Compare the record in John 3.35 'The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand'
- 4) The Servant of the Lord is anointed [empowered, appointed] by the Spirit [note presence of Trinity]
- 5) And ... The Servant of the Lord proclaims justice to the Gentiles
 - a) Righteousness without law
 - b) Righteousness not your own

By quoting Isaiah, Matthew is saying that all these things are true of Jesus. Why? because of his Sabbath works – healings, Lord of the Sabbath, and his ongoing miracles of 'healing them all'.

You should believe that Jesus is the Chosen One, the Servant of the Lord, the Messiah because he did these things.

b. The Saviour of the world

- 1) The Messiah is not coming to crush his enemies (19)
 - a) He comes with an entirely different purpose in mind
 - b) He comes not to promote himself (cry out) but to heal
- 2) The Messiah is first of all the healer of the world (20)
 - a) He will not break off a bruised reed
 - b) He will not snuff out a smoking wick [flax]

“These are striking pictures of Messiah, but puzzling to Western minds. The bruised reed refers to a ‘cattail,’ a hollow reed, which, if stepped on, has no strength to erect itself and will die. A young tree would have strength to snap back. Reeds are common near streams, and a broken one would be considered a small loss. But Messiah will not tear out the broken reed but instead will prop it up and see that it lives. Flax could be used as a wick in a lamp. If it was blown out, it could smoke for a while, but people would put water on it to stop it. But Messiah would instead fan it back into flame. These images portray the gentle and compassionate nature of the great Messiah. Messiah will not give up on broken people, poor sinners as they are.”¹

- Are you a broken reed? Are you a smoking flax, burned out and wasted? The Messiah has compassion on you.
- Lest anyone think that Christians look out at the world and see the downtrodden as below them, let me say this: *every man who comes to Christ must come broken, smoldering, wasted, about to be cast out.*

Unless you see yourself as a sinner and in need, you will have little time for Christ.

That was precisely the Jews’ problem – they saw no need of the Messiah they were given.

3) The Messiah is trusted by the Gentiles

- a) Every believer in Jesus becomes a sort of ‘Gentile’, even if he was a Jew to begin with
- b) Believers in Christ are cast out of this world and thought to be of little worth by the great ones of the earth

¹ Stewart Custer, *The Gospel of the King*, pp. 182-183.

1 Corinthians 1:26 ¶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:²⁹ That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Now just a note on the sequence of events ...

- Between v. 21 and 22, the Lord appoints the twelve
- Preaches the Sermon on the Mount
- Heals the centurion's servant
- Raises the widow of Nain's son
- Allays John's doubts
- Preaches woes upon the Pharisees
- Is anointed by a sinful woman in a Pharisee's house
- And begins another tour of Galilee ...

That brings us to v. 22 and the response of the crowd to his mighty deeds...

III. Choose! (22-24)

- A. Son of David?
- B. Or son of the devil (Beelzebub)

Conclusion:

See, sinners, in the Gospel glass,
The friend and Savior of mankind!
Not one of all the apostate race
But may in Him salvation find!
His thoughts, and words, and actions prove,
His life and death, that God is love!

Behold the Lamb of God, who bears
The sins of all the world away!
A servant's form He meekly wears,
He sojourns in a house of clay,
His glory is no longer seen,
But God with God is man with men.

See where the God incarnate stands,
And calls His wandering creatures home,
He all day long spreads out His hands,
“Come, weary souls, to Jesus come!
Ye all may hide you in My breast,
Believe, and I will give you rest.

“Ah! do not of My goodness doubt;
My saving grace for all is free;
I will in no wise cast him out
That comes a sinner unto Me;
I can to none Myself deny,
Why, sinners, will ye perish, why?”²

A stark contrast is presented between the response of the crowd and the response of the Pharisees to Christ. Consider his divine appointment, his mighty works, should not his blessed words be believed?

Also consider the fearful specter of rejecting his words.

² Charles Wesley, “See, Sinners, In the Gospel Glass”, first published 1741 with 18 stanzas.
<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/s/e/seesinrs.htm> (Accessed 12.22.2007).