

Summoned to Repent

Key Verse: *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”*
—*Luke 13:3*

Selected Scripture:
Luke 13:1-9

him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?”—*Luke 13:1,2*

Our Key Verse underscores the erroneous theory that calamities are always meted out as punishment for sin. Additionally, the Lord used the occasion to emphasize the need for repentance by all who would ever hope to be received into God’s favor and to gain eternal life.—*Acts 3:19-21*

The theme of repentance is further highlighted in another lesson cited by Christ during his earthly ministry. “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou

TODAY’S LESSON COM-

mences with a tragic incident reported to Christ concerning some Galileans who were massacred by Pilate while offering sacrifices at the Temple in Jerusalem. “There were present at that season some that told

shalt cut it down.”—Luke 13:6-9

This parable refers primarily to the Jewish people whom God had recognized as his people out of all the families of the earth. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” (Amos 3:2) Since most of them had strayed from the provisions of the Mosaic Law, John the Baptist was sent to preach repentance as a means of preparing their hearts to receive Christ as their Savior.

The Master’s words of rejection to that nation at the end of his ministry ultimately paved the way for the opening of favor to Gentiles as prospective members of the body of Christ. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”—Matt. 23:37-39

Although the theme of repentance in this lesson was directed towards the nation of Israel, the principle is the same for the Gospel Age followers of the Master as well as for the entire human family during Christ’s future Millennial kingdom.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (II Pet. 3:9) How thankful we should be that God has provided an opportunity for repentance by the entire human family and they will return to the Heavenly Father’s favor in his own due time based upon Christ’s sacrificial death. “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—I Tim. 2:4-6 ■