

Behold all of your golden opportunities in this coming year.

As we prepare to celebrate the Ethiopian new year of 2002, briefly consider two Gospel passages that our Fathers have appointed for this brief period of before the feast. They chose passages for this last Sunday of the year, and the third day of Pegwomen, reminding us about important points to consider, if we anticipate God's blessing in the coming year.

First, let us examine Luke 17: 11-end. That lesson recounts how, once, as Jesus traveled to Jerusalem, He stopped between Samaria and Galilee, in a village where most of the inhabitants, probably, did not talk much about the Covenant observed at the temple in Jerusalem. Yet, ten lepers, there, realized that Jesus had the power to cure them of their disease. So they asked Him, saying, "Jesus, master, have mercy upon us!" He replied, "Go show yourselves to the priests." The law given to Moses required that those cured of leprosy to receive confirmation by showing themselves to the priests, who would have been at Jerusalem.

As they went toward Jerusalem, they discovered that they had been healed. Only one out of the ten, returned, praising God, prostrating himself before Jesus, showing his gratitude for the miracle. This man was not an Israelite, but a foreigner, a Samaritan.

On the other hand, this first passage relates how some Jews, in Jesus' day, pretended to be pious by asking Him idle questions. Anxious to defend their notions of self-justification, they asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was coming. He explained, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed." Rather, He said that it is already in your midst. Later, as Jesus told his disciples, at the end of time, He will appear as suddenly as lightening, surprising any who supposed that security might be found in this world, just like those who had previously erred, had been destroyed in the days of Noah and Lot.

Next, consider Matthew 25 : 31-end. Is any of us really ready for the Lord to come and judge us. Jesus Christ was quite explicit about how He will decide who shall be welcomed into the joy He is preparing for those who love Him, as opposed to eternal punishment reserved for those who fail to recognize Him.

Knowing that none of us is yet perfect, let us ask our Lord to mercifully grant us the grace of another year. Like the Samaritan cured of leprosy, let us resolve to return often, thanking our Lord for opportunities to fix whatever we lack. He created us to grow in appreciating His presence in our midst. If we fail to recognize His image and likeness in each human that we meet, we will never discover Him, Who sends them to us as so many golden opportunities. That is why we must learn to share what we have with others as opportunities to welcome Christ when He returns in the glory of His coming Kingdom.

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