

the man who stopped and helped was a despised Samaritan. This parable would then be dealing with the sin of prejudice, specifically the prejudice of the Jews against the Samaritans. Jesus would then be rebuking the Jews for excluding the Samaritans from the category of the neighbor whom they were commanded to love.

Now it must be admitted that the prejudice between Jews and Samaritans was very strong. Lenski, in discussing the hostility that existed between the Jews and the Samaritans, says:

The Samaritans were of pagan stock and not of Jewish blood; were cursed publicly in the synagogue with the prayer that they might not have part in the resurrection of life; were never accepted as proselytes; to eat their food was equal to eating swine's flesh; it was better to suffer than to accept their help.

— R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel, (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1946), pp. 605-606.

And in John 8:48 we read, "Then answered the Jews, and said to Him, 'Do we not say rightly that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?'"

The Samaritans felt just as strongly about the Jews. In Luke 9:51-53 we read: "And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him. And they went, and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make arrangements for Him. And they did not receive Him, because He was journeying with His face toward Jerusalem."

If Jesus (under this first interpretation) was saying, "Go, and love those who first love you, no matter what their ethnic and racial background and nature," then He was not saying very much! If the Second Great Commandment in the Law merely taught that Jews were to love both Jews and Gentiles who loved them, then the Commandment was really not very great! Moreover, if Jesus was here teaching that men should do unto others as others do unto them, then this passage is out of accord with His other teachings.

In Matthew 5:43-46 He said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what