

## Matthew 25:31-40

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.  
32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,  
33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.  
34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;  
35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,  
36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’  
37 Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?  
38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?  
39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’  
40 And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

31 *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.*

- When we interpret this parable, we rightly focus on the imperatives to be generous and to have hearts as servants, but we shouldn’t overlook this announcement of the final Advent. See also the vision of Daniel 7:13.

- Notice that Jesus calls himself, here, the “Son of Man.” How comforting to know that the final judgment will see us kneeling before the throne of one who has walked where we have walked!

32 *All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,*  
33 *and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.*

- Some commentators suggest this gathering would be of Gentiles only (the nations,) but most accept the tenor of this translation which suggests all people from all nations and all times, both living and dead.
- This separation will be between the righteous and the unrighteous—as symbolized by sheep/goat and right/left.
- Chrysostom points out that sheep could bring much profit (wool, milk, lambs,) but goats and kids offered little.
- Lange suggests that the stubbornness of goats could be a symbol for human pride, and the Pulpit Commentary points out the meekness, gentleness, and innocence of lambs.
- The left hand symbolized evil, and the left hand was considered shameful. The Latin word for “on the left side” is our word “sinister.”

34 *Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;*

- A better translation of verse 34, in my opinion, would read, “Come, you who belong to my father...”
- In Roman Catholic dogma, verse 34 “proves” predestination—at least, their version of it.
- John Calvin writes of verse 34: “(H)e reminds them, that their salvation proceeded from the undeserved favor of God.

- Barnes defends this version of predestination.
  1. All people are by nature equally undeserving.
  2. Bestowing favors on one does not do injustice to another, where neither deserves favor. Pardoning one criminal is not injuring another. Bestowing great talents on Locke, Newton, or Paul did not injure me.
  3. If it is right for God to give eternal life to his people, or to admit them to heaven, it was right to "determine" to do it, which is but another way of saying that God resolved from all eternity to "do right."
  4. Those who perish choose the paths which lead to death, and will not be saved by the merits of Jesus. No blame can be charged on God if he does not save them against their will, John 5:40; Mark 16:15-16.

35 *for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,*

36 *I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'*

- The Lord lists six of the seven most prominent imperatives of Christian ethics. (The seventh being the care of widows and orphans.)
- The first three are considered duties and the last three voluntary outpourings of the heart.
- "Naked" actually meant "poorly clothed."

37 *Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?*

38 *And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?*

39 *And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'*

- Those who have learned the teachings of Jesus might not be surprised in the sense that we are taught to see the face of Christ even in those who are adversaries or those with whom we are uncomfortable. I like to think, however, that a Christian walking in the paths of the Lord might be surprised in that their service is genuine and automatic, and they have no prideful sense that they are doing more than an ordinary person.
- The humble spirit of the righteous sows beautiful gifts both on earth and in heaven.

40 *And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'*

- Ellicott writes these comforting words: "*We find that He too 'counts nothing human alien from Himself.'*"
- The Cambridge Commentary sees a parallel in Acts 9:4: "*Christ identifies Himself with His Church, as in His words to Saul, 'Why persecutest thou me?'*"
- How wonderful to know that our feeble and imperfect attempts to serve God's people are not only noticed by God but experienced by God.
- What a blessing to remember that the very LEAST of society are still considered by God to be members of the family!