

YOU DID IT FOR ME!
Matthew 25:31-46 (Rev. 20)

Preachers sometimes misapply parables to strike fear into people's hearts:

1st half of Matt 25, Parable of 10 Virgins: "If you're not ready, you may be left out at rapture!"

Similar approach taken to Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats in 2nd half. We're told that unless we "give a drink of cold water to the thirsty," we may be "condemned to eternal fire."

Unless we understand context, and N.T. theology in general, we'll not understand what Jesus was telling His followers here either!

Is our salvation based on trusting Christ—plus NOTHING—or do we have to "give water to the thirsty" to be saved? How *do* these two "contradictory" thoughts come together?

Jewish expectation of the kingdom

What happened to God's plan for Israel? Had He forgotten?

Matthew demonstrates that Messiah came as promised

He demonstrated who He was:

Evidence is sufficient for anyone who wants to know the truth.

In spite of evidence, Israel rejected their Messiah => He rejected them

He proclaims judgment against that evil generation which rejected Him.

They were to be destroyed => prophecy fulfilled in A.D. 70

BUT-- God was not through with Israel --

Christ would return at end of age and fulfill promise to another generation genuinely seeking Him.

Announcement of judgment begins in Matt. 23.

Matt. 24-25 is continuation of Matt. 23.

Predicts events related to Jesus' 2nd coming.

"When will His coming occur?" Matt. 24

Matt 25:1 indicates that these events occur "*at that time*" --when Christ returns unexpectedly to judge the world and establish His kingdom.

What will happen when He comes? Matt. 25

He will judge Israel. 25:1-30

25:1-13 Wedding Banquet --Parable of 10 Virgins

Christ will judge Israel based on their readiness for His coming.

25:14-30 Parable of the Talents

Christ judges Israel based on their use of resources God placed in their hands.

Are they working for His benefit or serving selves--protecting their interests

[He will judge living pagan people 25:31-46]

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT JUDGMENT OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS 31-32

Jesus is going to judge "*all the nations.*"

When does this judgment occur? 31

Judgment occurs when Christ comes in all His glory

Judgment occurs when Christ establishes His throne--preparation for kingdom.

Who takes part in this judgment? 32 "All the nations"

Participants are pagans who are still alive at His coming. 32

Term used to describe them is *ethnos* (ethna = pl.) < "ethnic"

Could refer to "nations" --traditional interpretation--"the judgment of the nations"

Used in Jewish context to refer to non-Jewish peoples = Gentiles.

He has just been talking about how God will deal with His people.
How will He deal with those who are *NOT* His people? With Gentiles, non-Jews,
“PAGANS!”?

[He will judge living pagan people 25:31-46]

OBSERVATIONS BASED ON COMPARISON WITH REVELATION 19-20.

Soldiers from pagan armies that resist Him—die in conflict (19:19-21).

When nations are gathered before Him, He’s already seated on throne—fight’s over.

Soldiers are dead; leaders of rebellion are in lake of fire, or chained in Abyss for 1000 yr.

Those gathered here are still alive.

Resurrection of condemned peoples hasn’t yet occurred.

No resurrection mentioned here.

Resurrection of pagans doesn’t occur until *after* Millennium (20:5, 11-12).

This occurs at beginning when He establishes His throne.

RESULT of judgment: those approved ENTER kingdom.

These must be non-combatants, who didn’t die yet.

Just as Israel is judged at Christ’s coming to determine who enters the kingdom, Gentiles will also be judged.

Gentiles are judged to determine who from among living Gentiles will enter His kingdom, and who will be rejected.

CHRIST SEPARATES THEM INTO TWO GROUPS 32-33

Compared to shepherd’s role of separating sheep from goats.

They may live together peacefully.

At end of day—when penned up—their nature is different; shepherd separates them

Jesus will separate living “pagan peoples”.

Those who are blessed inherit the kingdom God has prepared for them 34-40

Pronouncement of blessing 34

Cause of blessing 35-40

35-36 They’re blessed because they served Him in time of need

They question when they did it 37-39

They don’t remember seeing Jesus and ministering to needs!

**40 They did it by responding to needs of His people
(brothers/sisters)**

Who are these “brothers” of His?

Context implies it’s those introduced previously—1st half of chapter—Israel

His brothers after the flesh = Israel.

Such people are under a death sentence by the beast.

They won’t bear the mark of the beast

They won’t be able to buy or sell.

They will have to rely on other people to supply their needs.

As these “pagan people” show concern for believing Jews, **they did it for Him.**

Those who are cursed will be sent off to the eternal fire 41-45

Pronouncement of cursing 41

Difference in direction

Cursed are separated from Christ—they’re *sent away from* Him.

Blessed are invited to “come” He calls them *to* Himself

Difference in relationship to God’s purpose

Place of blessing was *prepared for* the blessed ones;

Place of cursing *wasn’t prepared for them*; it’s prepared for devil.

Those sent there identified with one for whom it's prepared.

Cause of cursing 42-45

42-43 They're cursed because they refuse to serve Him in time of need

They question when they didn't do it 44

When did they see Him in need and refuse to serve Him?

45 They did it by refusing to respond to needs of His people

They had no interest in helping His people.

Each receives an appropriate reward from the Judge 46

The cursed receive eternal punishment.

The blessed receive eternal life.

IMPLICATIONS FOR US?

Is this teaching salvation by works? What's basis of their salvation?

O.T. saints saved by faith (Rom. 4; Heb. 11)

N.T. saints saved by faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8-9).

Gospel of "just do good" isn't a biblical message!

Key question:

WHO would be willing to take a risk and help His people at that time?

Under conditions existing during tribulation, *no one* would assist God's people unless they belonged to Him.

Only those who receive message risk lives by extending hospitality to the condemned.

They aren't accepted because of works. No one is ever saved by works.

Their works demonstrate the reality of their faith in Christ.

Cursed demonstrate lack of faith by refusal to assist His people.

Believers still alive at beginning of millennium enter into kingdom—and ultimately enjoy eternal life.

Unsaved excluded from kingdom and destined for eternal punishment.

Appears they're sent directly to judgment.

Text doesn't *require* immediate execution—it *might* just be reference to sentence.

No reference to a holding place.

It will be eternal in any case.

What reason might there be for delay?

So how should we apply the lessons of this passage to our life today?

In the end, *the faithful triumph*.

We know who wins.

God's people may pay a price for taking risks for His sake, but the rewards are worth it!

"You can't beat the retirement plan!"

Those who truly belong to Christ will want to be identified with Him and with His people, even though they may suffer for their faith.

THE FAITHFUL ULTIMATELY TRIUMPH!

We can trust Him—however dark the temporary circumstances of life may seem.

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?