

# Matthew 25:31-46

## “The King Judges the Nations”

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thesis: In order to be judged righteous in God’s eyes and be given eternal life, you must receive the righteousness of Christ. When you are righteous in Christ, it is revealed in your outward actions and your love of others as you seek to walk in the righteousness Jesus has given to you.

**subject: The King Judges the Nations**

**object: Receive & walk in the righteousness of Christ**

#### **I. The forthcoming Judgment (v.31-33)**

• couple things we want to see here;

##### **A. Jesus will occupy the seat of a glorified Judge (v.31-32)**

- remember the context: Jesus told us in Matt 24 about the events surrounding His return
- Now, He describes this scene which will occur at some point after His glorious return
- In this picture, Jesus is seated on a throne and all nations are gathered before Him
- The Greek concept of nations implies “people groups” and thus this implies that Jesus is judging individual people, not whole nations
- All these individuals divided into 2 categories- sheep rep righteous, goats- wicked
- Different interpretations- we will stick to the principles, and here’s a major principle we must understand;

##### **B. Jesus alone determines who is righteous and who is wicked (v.33)**

- Everyone who stands before Jesus will fall into one of the categories (no one between)
- Cultural issues with the idea of judging- “don’t judge me” attitude
- What makes Jesus fit to be the ultimate Judge over righteousness and wickedness
- In Hebrew tradition, the idea of a Judge was someone who would uphold righteousness and vanquish evil (there’s a whole book in Scripture devoted to that)
- The OT Judges were always meant to be a reflection of the ultimate, perfect Judge, which was a position reserved for God alone
- Jesus holding the position of Judge is a display of His divine nature
- Jesus is fit to hold the position of Judge because of all the same reasons the Hebrews believed God was fit for the position
- First of all, He is the Creator- all things made by Him and for Him
- Secondly, He has all authority- Phil 2 talks about Jesus being exalted to God’s right hand after His life, death and resurrection
- Thirdly, he is the only sinless one- we don’t qualify to judge others for their sin but he does
- avoid the temptation to judge others for their sin because you are guilty of it as well (different than calling out sin).

#### **II. The Judgment of the righteous (v.34-40)**

- Now that Jesus has set the scene, he begins describing what will happen to those judges as “righteous” on his right. A couple things to consider;

### **A. The righteous will inherit eternal life in God’s Kingdom (v.34)**

- v.34 uses this term *inheritance*
- In both Hebrew context, inheritance related to birthright and received on the basis of identity- relate this to new birth (John 3)
- after the new birth, we are given a new and righteous identity in Jesus
- **“For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” 2 Co 5:21**
- because of our new, righteous identity in Jesus, we are entitled to the new inheritance of eternal life with Jesus

### **B. Inward righteousness is displayed in outward behavior (v.35-40)**

- As we have seen from our discussion already, righteousness is not and cannot be attained through ourselves- we must understand that before we go any further
- However, when you have the righteousness of Christ in you, there will be certain external characteristics- Jesus begins to describe these here (read verses)
- Let’s look at this description- Jesus describes the actions of a righteous person as caring for the poor, needy, marginalized people of society, but Jesus describes Himself as those poor, needy and marginalized people
- So what is Jesus saying?- that the life of a believer should be marked by a love and care for others, even those who society might deem as the least desirable
- Secondly, He is saying that when we care for others with the right heart, He receives those loving actions as if they had been done to Himself (mind-blowing thought)
- So what about when your life doesn’t look like what we see here?
- Reasons someone might not outwardly display or “walk-in” the righteousness of Christ (not saved, active rebellion, distraction)
- personal example of being busy & distracted by things of this world
- how is your life characterized by a love for the “least of these”???

## **III. The Judgment of the wicked (v.41-46)**

### **B. The wicked will face eternal punishment apart from God (v.41)**

- Jesus asks the people who are judged as wicked to “depart” from him, meaning to go away from His presence
- These are the people who have chosen to reject Jesus by not putting their faith in Him
- Because of their rejection of Jesus, these individuals will never attain righteousness because righteousness is only available in Jesus & because Jesus is perfectly righteous, only the righteous can inherit His Kingdom & dwell with Him in eternity
- The unrighteous subjected to due punishment
- God does not want to send anyone to hell (hell created for Satan and his demons)
- God makes achieving righteousness and avoiding eternal consequences available to all

### **B. Outward disobedience of God reveals a lack of righteousness (v.42-46)**

- Just as having the inward righteousness of Christ shows up in the way you behave, Jesus makes it clear that a lack of righteousness also manifests in behavior
- not that wicked are punished for failing to do good works

- secular organizations and non-believers are all capable of doing “good works”- social justice movements, charities, recovery organizations
  - However, performance is not sufficient for achieving righteousness
  - **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” Matthew 7:21-23**
  - **Only those who have confessed and believed in Jesus can perform good works as an act of worship towards God**
  - Unrighteous are punished because they failed to recognize their need for Jesus & confess & believe
  - this unrighteousness is displayed in a lack of good works done in Jesus’ name
- iii. Righteousness in Christ leads to love of God & others (v.44-46)**
- Just as Jesus receives loving actions w/right heart done as unto him , a lack of loving actions in God’s name reveals a lack of love for Him
  - Even Christians struggle to show love for God the way we were called to
  - Due to misplaced or misaligned affections- Jesus should be #1
  - ***How can we realign our affections so that we love Jesus most?***

conclusion- why hasn’t God judged wicked already? No sin unpunished (Judge HIMSELF suffered for the believer). God is being patient. Time to receive and/or walk in righteousness of Jesus