

MORNING SERMON OUTLINE
SERVE CHRIST'S SUFFERING BRETHREN
The Parable of the Sheep & the Goats
Matthew 25:31-46

This 3rd parables in Matthew 24 warn us that His coming again will be the coming of the great Judgment. He will appear in His glory as the "Son of Man" (the Messianic King of heaven & all earth, Dan.7:13,14) & all mankind will be gathered before Him for a great separation between those welcomed into His etenal kingdom (vs.34), and those cast down to eternal hell (vv.41,46). He tells us **a basis** on which He will judge. Where will you & I spend eternity? Is any question more important? Therefore, how important it is to understand what our Lord teaches here. **Yet, sadly**, this has been one of the most misinterpreted passages of Scripture.

1. A much-abused & misused Parable

Protestant liberals, Catholic social activists, many Evangelicals, have asserted that according to Jesus,

- (1) every "Christian" & the church are called by God to minister to ALL the hungry, thirsty, homeless, & imprisoned in the world, and
- (2) those who do not pursue this as a priority do not really believe the Gospel and stand condemned by Jesus.

But this is a gross misunderstanding of our Lord's teaching here.

2. Who are "the nations" that are to be separated in judgment?

Not political or ethnic division of mankind (as we would use "nation" today), BUT "the Gentiles" – that is, ALL humanity (YOU & ME), as in the Great Commission, 28:19.

This warning differs from the previous 2 parables of chapter 25:

They (Ten Virgins & Talents) were aimed at professing Christians, warning against hypocritical presumption, BUT this parable warns "the Gentiles" of the coming Judgment.

3. Who, then, are Christ's "brethren" (even the least)?

Elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord tells us who are *His* "brethren" – 12:46-50 & 28:10. They are *His disciples*.

4. Why are they suffering hunger, thirst, imprisonment?

Our Lord sends His disciples into the world as "sheep among wolves" (10:16-39). They will be opposed & persecuted by rulers, family, countrymen, religious leaders.

5. The double application of this parable.

a. To the world – a warning

Receive & help & support MY emissaries.

10:40ff: Receiving Jesus' messengers = receiving Him.

This is NOT judgment based on works, but works showing faith.

b. To Christ's church – great encouragement

Jesus, risen Lord, identifies with His suffering brethren.

Woe to those who afflict them & to those who just stand by.

Particular application today to churches not being actively persecuted:

DO WHAT WE CAN TO HELP PERSECUTED CHURCHES.