

Prayer List

Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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The King's Verdicts (Matthew 25:31-46)

By Warren E. Berkley

People want to know what it will be like when Jesus comes back. There is a sensational/speculative tone to the inquiries people raise about the end of time. While that kind of interests is understood regarding the ultimate dramatic event, there is something very personal that should consume our thoughts. Instead of instinctively focusing on the dramatic, the speculative and subjective, there is a personal perspective that must never escape our notice. Something Jesus said just hours before His death should help fasten our attention on this personal aspect.

31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy 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 them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of 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 drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 'Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' 41 'Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

What prophet spoke about Jews divorcing their wives to marry pagan women?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

David - 2 Samuel 20:3

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drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.”44”Then they also will answer Him, saying, “Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?” 45 Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ 46And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Whether you are ready or not, Jesus will come “in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him,” and He will “sit on the throne of His glory.” We do not know when (24:36-51; 25:13). It will be unexpected, sudden and universal. “All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.” This is the final judgment scene, described elsewhere as “the coming of the day of God,” (2 Pet. 3:10). To get in touch with the eternal importance of this, jump ahead to the last verse and observe only two destinies: “everlasting punishment” or “eternal life.”

“The Lord’s first coming was inglorious according to the worldly standards, but His second will be in a splendor that fully reflects His might and majesty (16:27; 17:2). Accompanying Him will be the angelic host (2 Thess. 1:7-8). After He is seated upon His throne, all who have ever lived will be gathered before Him,” (Ken Chumbley, p.#445, Commentary on Matthew).

This will be a great separation. Have you noticed in many court rooms, the accused occupies a place separate from the innocent, the victim or the prosecutor. According to Boles, “it was the custom of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court, to place the guilty person on the left hand of the judges, and the innocent on the right. The right hand was considered the place of honor (Psa. 45:9).” More directly related to Jesus’ illustration, shepherds in that time would separate sheep and goats. Given the context, Jesus wants us to know that this day is ahead and it will witness a great separation between those destined for “everlasting punishment” and those with the better destiny, “eternal life.”

The King speaks to those on the right hand. They hear words positive, warm and approving. “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Next, the King explains the approval: “for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” The righteous are surprised and inquire: “When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?” The answer: “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

Regarding this benevolence as directed to the followers of Christ, note that phrase: “you did it to one of the least of these My brethren,” Burton Coffman well observes:

“No thoughtful person can conclude that Jesus equated salvation with benevolence in the usual sense. It is not mere charity, but help of Christ’s followers that is highlighted here. If this principle were more widely understood and accepted, it would revolutionize men’s attitude toward the church. In the final essence, what men do to his church, they do to him. To neglect, flout, or dishonor the church is to do the same to Christ who is the head of the church. On the other hand, those who support and provide for the church and extend their concern and constant aid upon behalf of her poor and needy, do the same for Christ whose body is the church.” (Burton Coffman, Commentary on Matthew).

Observe, the King’s judgment does not depend upon amount of knowledge amassed, fame acquired, wealth earned and reputation gained. The approval is based on service rendered to those who belong to Christ; such service is ultimately to Him! This is about simple acts of help rendered to those in need who belong to Christ; things which anyone can do. Yet, it is not simply a humanitarian form of charity or worldly philanthropy. This service is given out of hearts where God is present. This service is offered through lives lived in submission to the King. We know that because of one simple phrase, “you did it to Me.” What counts here is not just service to others, but service to others that is “unto Him.”

Every person is to be rewarded according to their works (see Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10). You will not be able to “borrow” righteousness from your neighbor (see Matt. 25:1-13). You will not be justified in the claim that you were “clothed” or “protected” by the “righteousness of Christ,” when in fact you did not live in obedience to Him (Heb. 5:9). You must be ready to account for what you have done. Have you responded to Christ to be forgiven of your sin (Acts 2:38)? Have you walked in the light, confessing your sins (1 Jno. 1:7-9)? If your answers to these questions are “yes,” your service to others will be manifest from a heart that submits to the King.

This judgment scene “tells me that I am accountable. I am free to live my life just as I please, but at the end I shall have to give account to the one who gave me my life,” (Leon Morris).

I need to be ready for this day. And I need to warn everyone I know of this day that will be, for many, “the weeping and gnashing of teeth.” From Expository Files 13.3; March 2006