

Matthew 25:31-46

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The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats: “The Context of the Parable.”
Jesus ends His Olivet Discourse with a teaching about a series of Divine judgments. This teaching is known as “The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.” It is the final parable of four that discuss His return.

This parable has no apparent parallel in the other gospel accounts.

Jesus concluded His Olivet Discourse with an unusual parable and teaching. It is often referred to as “The Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats*”.

This parable and its subsequent elaboration make up one of Jesus’s most important teachings about what will occur *when the Son of Man comes in His glory*.

TheBibleSays commentary of this parable will be subdivided and discussed into smaller passages. But even as the commentary for each section focuses on a different portion of this scripture, we are including the entire passage (Matthew 25:31—46) in the Biblical text at the bottom of each section as a reference. The commentary will also italicize words that this entire passage

The commentary for this section of scripture will focus on the Context of the Parable.

The commentary will subdivide the parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* and its subsequent elaboration according to the following outline.

Matthew 25:31—46 **The Context of the Sheep and the Goats**

Matthew 25:31 **The Opening Remark**

Matthew 25:32—33 **The First Judgment: Sorting the Sheep from the Goats**

Matthew 25:34 **The Second Judgment: The Reward of the Righteous**

Matthew 25:35—40 **The Life Choices of the Righteous**

Matthew 25:41 **The Third Judgment: The Banishment of the Accursed**

Matthew 25:42—45 **The Life Choices of the Accursed**

Matthew 25:46 **The Closing Remark**

CONTEXT OF THE SHEEP AND GOATS PARABLE

The Olivet Discourse began when Jesus answered *His* disciples' three questions about the end of the age, the sign of *His* coming, and when "these things" (referring to the destruction mentioned in Matthew 24:2) would take place (Matthew 24:2-3). Jesus answered their questions in great detail (Matthew 24:4-44).

After answering their questions, *He* told four parables. The first three parables are followed by this one—"The Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats*," which concludes Jesus's Olivet Discourse.

The first three parables form a trio. They illustrate and emphasize how Jesus wanted *His* disciples to respond to what *He* told them.

The parables of this trio are:

- "The Parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Servants" (Matthew 24:45-51).
- "The Parable of the Bridesmaids" (Matthew 25:1-13).
- "The Parable of the Talents" (Matthew 25:14-30).

All three of those parables followed Jesus's answers regarding the end of the age. All three underscore Jesus's point: to be ready at all times for Christ's return by being a faithful steward because *He* will judge all *His* people upon *His* return.

The stories in each parable of this trio describe a sudden return of an important figure (The owner of a household; Bridegroom; the Master). Upon the return of these figures, it became apparent that some people were ready for him, but others were unprepared for him to come back. And each parable of the trio concluded with an evaluation of the people, ready or unready, by the key figure. The returning figure was the sole evaluator of their deeds.

The main points of the first three parables were to be faithful to Jesus (Matthew 24:45); be alert for *His* return (Matthew 25:13); and invest your talents for *His* kingdom in order to receive the greatest possible reward in *life*.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PRECEDING TRIO OF PARABLES AND *THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS*

Jesus explicitly likened the last two of these first three parables to *the kingdom* of heaven (Matthew 25:1; 25:14). *He* likened the first parable of this trio to the return of *the Son of Man* (Matthew 24:44).

The fourth and final Olivet Discourse Parable of "*The Sheep and the Goats*" is also about *the Son of Man* and it involves *the kingdom*. It includes the return of Jesus: *when the Son of Man comes in His glory*. And it includes a series of judgments beginning with: *He will separate all the nations, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats*.

And as was the case within the prior trio of parables, there will be those who are found faithful, and thus rewarded; and those who are found unfaithful, and thus punished. One of the rewards in

this parable is to *inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. This inheritance is what the rewards of the previous three parables likely represent.

All four parables represent Jesus as the Returning Figure:

- The Master comes back at an unexpected time (Matthew 24:50).
- The Bridegroom arrives after a delay (Matthew 25:5-6).
- The Master reappears after a long time (Matthew 25:19).
- *The Son of Man comes in His glory* (Matthew 25:31).

In all four parables Jesus is the Authoritative Judge.

- The Master rewards/punishes the faithful/unfaithful slaves (Matthew 24:46-47, 50-51)
- The Bridegroom has the final say about who attends his wedding feast (Matthew 25:12).
- The Master promotes and demotes the faithful/lazy slaves (Matthew 25:19-30).
- *The Son of Man separates the Sheep from the Goats* before rewarding or sentencing each (Matthew 25:32, 34, 40-41, 45).

In all four parables Believers/Members of God's Eternal Family are Evaluated.

- The faithful and unfaithful slaves of the Master's household are evaluated on their treatment of their fellow slaves (Matthew 24:45-51).
- The wise and foolish bridesmaids prove themselves worthy or unworthy to attend the wedding (Matthew 25:1-13).
- The good and faithful and wicked and lazy slaves are promoted or demoted according to how they managed their investment responsibilities (Matthew 25:14-30).
- *The Sheep on His right inherit the kingdom to the extent that they loved and served the King's brothers* (Matthew 25:33-40).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRECEDING TRIO OF PARABLES AND *THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS*

However, there are notable stylistic and substantive differences between the preceding parabolic trio and the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats*.

Stylistically, the trio of parables were extended metaphors with multiple events and figures serving as apparent symbols. And a short point was made about the parable's meaning and application. But with this parable of the *sheep and goats*, it is less apparent when the symbolic story ends and the explanation begins.

Given how Jesus and *His* gospel writer, Matthew, presented the ideas of this parable, it makes the most sense to read verses 32 and 33 as an opening metaphor that describes the initial judgment that will occur when *the Son of Man* returns. The remainder of the passage is a way of explaining what happens after that—namely, two more judgments: the judgment of *the righteous*, followed by the judgment of *the accursed*.

Substantively there are four major differences that distinguish The Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* from the preceding trio of parables. These four differences are:

- The Different Number of Judgements described in the trio of parables and *the Sheep and the Goats*.
- The Different Natures of what/who is being evaluated in these Judgments
- The Different Focus of their depictions of Christ's Judgement of Believers
- The Different Severity of the judgments described in the trio and *the Sheep and the Goats*

Substantive Difference #1: The Number of Judgements

The first substantive difference between this “Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats*” and the preceding trio of parables is the number of judgments they describe.

The preceding trio of parables seem to describe only one judgment. The Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* appears to describe not one single judgment, but three distinct judgments.

- The Judgment that Separates Believers (*sheep*) and Unbelievers (*goats*)
- The Judgement of Believers' Works
- The Judgment of Unbelievers' Works

Substantive Difference #2: The Natures of Judgements

As mentioned in the first substantive difference, the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* describes not one single judgment, but three distinct judgments.

The trio of parables singularly focuses on Christ's judgment of believers. The judgment in each of the first trio of parables describe the Bema of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). This judgment will test the quality of each believer's work with the outcomes of some receiving a reward and some suffering a loss (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). But in the end, even those who lose in this judgment will still “be saved, yet so as through fire” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

As this judgment of believers is described in the parables, some servants received a promotion, others were demoted; some bridesmaids entered the wedding feast, and some had the door shut on them. The judgment seat of Christ is a judgment of deeds for those who are members of God's family. It is a judgment of rewards.

It is important to note that in the trio of parables, the believers being evaluated in the judgment are depicted as *sheep* in this parable of the *sheep and goats*. That is, they are all believers in Jesus as *the Son of God*, and have been born again as children of God (John 3:14-16). This includes the wicked servants in the first parable; the foolish bridesmaids in the second parable; and the lazy slave in the third parable. These are all *sheep* who made poor choices, and were not good stewards. But they were still *sheep*, and the *Shepherd* does not lose any of *His sheep* (John 10:27-29).

As observed above the Parable of the *Sheep and the Goats* depicts three distinct judgments.

- The first judgment of the Sheep and the Goats describes Christ's judgment that divides between believers and unbelievers.

This first judgment is not mentioned or described in the preceding trio of parables. It is depicted when *the King* separates *the sheep from the goats* (Matthew 25:32-32). This judgment is explicitly a judgment of *All the nations* and not just believers. The term *All the nations* strongly implies that this will be a judgment of the entire world—believers and unbelievers.

Contrast the universality of *All the Nations* in the first judgment described in *the Sheep and the Goats* with the particular groups being judged in the preceding parables.

In the first and third parables of the preceding trio, the Master (*the Son of Man*) is only judging *His* servants (believers—members of God's household). In those parables, the Master never addresses those outside *His* household. And in the second parable of the trio, the Bridegroom (*the Son of Man*) is only concerned with *His* wedding party (believers—those who were supposed to be in *His* wedding party). The Bridegroom never speaks about or seems to give thought to those who were not invited to the wedding.

So, the depictions of judgment described in the preceding trio of parables all seem to be an evaluation of Christ's followers only. The first judgment in the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* concerns everyone; *all the nations*; believers and unbelievers, and therefore is much broader in scope.

The second judgment of *the Sheep and the Goats* describes Christ's judgment of believers (*sheep*) and their works.

This is the Bema of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). It is Christ's judgment of believers and their faithfulness to love and serve others and follow *His* commands (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

This judgment of the *sheep* is the same judgment that the preceding trio of parables all describe. In the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats*, the judgment seat of Christ is depicted when *the King* evaluates *the extent* of the works of the *righteous sheep* and their reward (Matthew 25:34-40). So the middle judgment in the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* describes the judgment that the preceding trio of parables depict. Therefore, roughly one third of *the Sheep and the Goats* parable directly overlaps with the trio of parables before it. This means that two thirds of *the Sheep and the Goats* describes things that are not discussed in the trio of parables before it.

- The third judgment of *the Sheep and the Goats* describes Christ's judgment of the deeds of unbelievers.

The book of Jude also tells us that God will judge the works of unbelievers,

“It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, **the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment**

upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” (Jude 1:14-15)

This third judgment is not mentioned or described in the preceding parables. It is depicted in the parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* when *the King* evaluates *the extent* of the works of *the accursed goats* and *His* banishment of *them into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels*.

Substantive Difference #3: The Different Focuses on Christ’s Judgement of Believers

The third substantive difference between the trio of parables and the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* is that the preceding parables stress the pain and loss that unfaithful believers will receive when they stand before Christ to be judged for their works, while the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* focuses on the positive rewards that faithful believers will receive at this judgment.

The previous trio of parables emphasize the warning to believers against choices of behavior that lead to negative judgment, but *the Sheep and the Goats* highlights the reward of inheritance believers will receive for following Christ’s commands to love and serve one another.

The trio of parables depict two possible outcomes for believers: one good and one bad.

The Sheep and the Goats depicts only the good outcome for believers.

In the parabolic trio the good outcomes were rewards for faithfulness.

- The faithful slave is put in charge of his Master’s possessions (Matthew 24:45-47)
- The wise bridesmaids have oil and celebrate the wedding feast (Matthew 25:10)
- The faithful slaves were promoted and made partners for the wise investments (Matthew 25:21, 23).

In the parabolic trio the bad outcomes for believers who made poor stewardship choices were demotion, shame, and lost opportunity due to unfaithfulness.

- The evil slave is flogged and sent away from the Master where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:51)
- The foolish bridesmaids are rebuked by the Bridegroom and get shut out of the wedding (Matthew 25:10-12)
- The lazy slave is stripped of his responsibilities and is sent into the outer darkness away from the celebrations with the Master (Matthew 25:26-30).

The depictions of the Bema judgment of Christ from all of the preceding trio of parables include both good and bad outcomes for faithful and unfaithful believers, depending upon their stewardship choices. The trio of parables mention both the negative aspect as well as the positive. However, more description is given to what happens to the unfaithful figures in the trio of parables than what happens to the faithful.

Each of the preceding trio of parables ends with the negative judgment. Believers can suffer a negative judgment when they stand before Christ if their deeds, their stewardship, is found wanting. There is loss of reward for not being faithful to follow His commands to love and serve by faith. The emphasis of the preceding trio of parables makes this possibility clear, and the emphasis on the potential for a loss of reward, or a negative reward, serves as a warning to all of Christ's *sheep* to live in such a way as to avoid a negative experience like this at their judgment.

When Christ's Bema judgment of believers is depicted in *the Sheep and the Goats*, the emphasis omits the negative. The depiction is entirely positive. It exclusively focuses on the positive rewards to be gained. It does not mention the negative possibility of loss for unfaithfulness.

Jesus's teaching on this parable of *the Sheep and Goats* ends with a blessed reminder that every *sheep* (even those as wicked as the evil servant, foolish as the neglectful bridesmaids, and lazy as the unfaithful slave) are ultimately considered *righteous* (on account of believing in Jesus) and consequently will enter *into eternal life*. Accordingly, this last parable of the Olivet Discourse serves as assurance to believers that in spite of the potential loss of rewards, they are still incredibly blessed to be counted among the members of God's family, which is itself a great benefit.

This concept is found throughout scripture. One example is in Romans 8:

"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*."
(Romans 8:16-17)

These verses from Romans make clear that believers who are God's children are heirs of God without condition. God is the Father of all believers, and all believers are made righteous in God's sight by the shed blood of Jesus (Colossians 2:14). This is like the depiction of the blessing received by *the sheep* in the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats*.

However, in the second part of Romans 8:17, the reward of being "fellow heirs with Christ" is only given "if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." This second aspect, where a highly desirable reward can be lost, is only depicted in the first trio of parables. The last parable of the *sheep and goats* only depicts the unconditional blessing gained by every believer that comes along with being a child of God who is redeemed by the blood of Jesus.

Substantive Difference #4: The Severity of the Negative Judgements

The fourth substantive difference between the first trio of parables and the Parable of the *Sheep and Goats* is the degrees of severity. The negative consequences of the first three judgments sound harsh, but the consequences of the negative judgment that *the goats* receive is irredeemable.

The reason for this difference in severity is because the preceding trio of parables are likely describing the worst outcomes that can happen to a believer. The fourth parable about *the sheep and goats* describes the outcome that unbelievers will suffer.

The worst outcomes that a believer can suffer include:

- *the Son of Man* being ashamed of them at His coming (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26)
- loss of heavenly responsibility (Matthew 25:28; 2 Timothy 2:12)
- being excluded from the inaugural banquets of the New Heaven and the New Earth (Matthew 8:11-12; 22:11-13; 25:10-12)
- loss of eternal inheritance and reward (1 Corinthians 3:15; Colossians 2:18)
- being chastised by Christ (Matthew 25:26)

Jesus often describes these outcomes as not entering *His kingdom* (Matthew 7:21).

Jesus's disciple John describes this outcome as shrinking "away from *Him* in shame at *His* coming" (1 John 2:28).

In the preceding parables, the wicked and lazy servants are chastised, demoted, banished to the outer darkness (away from the banquet of honor) where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (from being left out), and/or beaten (for mismanagement) (Matthew 24:51; 25:26-30). These consequences are severe. But these punishments are not as severe as what *the King* tells *the goats*, who represent unbelievers,

The King will say to them: "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels."

At the end of the *Sheep and Goats* parable, Jesus explained that *these accursed ones will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.*

The term, *accursed ones* (Matthew 25:41) is a translation of the Greek word "katarahomahee." As a noun it means "enemies," "those who are viciously against you," or someone who is *accursed*. As a verb it means to "curse" or to violently reject in words or actions.

When Jesus (and Paul) taught *His* disciples to love, bless, and pray for your enemies, they used the verb form of this word to describe how the enemies would treat believers, which is to "curse" them (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28; Romans 12:14). Mark used the same Greek word to describe what Jesus did to the fig tree, when He cursed it (Mark 11:21). And James used it when he described how it is unfitting to use the tongues God gave us to curse people made in *His* image (James 3:9).

Within the context of this parable "katarahomahee" (curse) depicts those who have vehemently despised *the King* and *His* people; they abuse, despise, and curse them. Two common judgments God applies throughout scripture are:

- 1.) Give people what they desired (as in Romans 1:24, 26, 28)

2.) Give people what they wished upon others (as in Esther 7:10; Matthew 6:15).

This second application seems to be God's application of the principle "do unto others" that He applies at the final judgment, as these enemies of God and *His* people are called *these accursed ones*. These enemies have done the opposite of the two great commandments. *They* have hated God and hated others (Matthew 22:37-40) *They* are not a part of *His* household and do not belong in *His* family. Therefore, they gain from God what they wished upon His created beings, and are *accursed* by God.

Moreover, the description of the *accursed ones'* *punishment* appears materially different than Jesus's portrayals of the "outer darkness" where "there is weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28). Often, the "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is associated with a picture of exclusion from a banquet of honor, where the most honored guests are at the center of the tent, with the most light, while those who were not even invited are in the "outer darkness."

However, "weeping and gnashing of teeth" are also descriptions associated with being cut in pieces and assigned with hypocrites (Matthew 24:51) as well as a response of being thrown into "the furnace of *fire*" (Matthew 13:50). In each case, there is sadness (weeping) and anger (gnashing) associated with enduring an activity that would be fatal in ordinary life on earth. Therefore these parabolic expressions all have in common the basic concept of picturing a highly undesirable and to-be-avoided consequence in the next life, when we shed mortality.

The words *eternal punishment* in the phrase "*these accursed ones will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life,*" comes from the Greek phrase "aiownion kolasin." This is the only time it appears in the Bible. The first word, translated as *eternal*, is the Greek word "Aionios." The English word "eon" comes from it. It means "unto the ages," "ageless," "*eternal*," or "everlasting." "Aionios" is used over seventy times in the New Testament. Its meaning depends on the context, (as in Romans 16:25, when "aionios" is translated "long ages past"). In this context it describes the "foreverness" of eternity.

The second word of this term is *punishment*. It comes from the Greek word "Kolasin." It means "penalty" or "*punishment*." This Greek word is used only twice in the New Testament: in this parable and again in 1 John 4:18. But here in Matthew 25:46, it is the only time these Greek words ("aiownion kolasin"—*eternal punishment*) are paired together. This pairing describes the worst possible punishment a human can experience.

The *eternal punishment* of a permanent relational separation from God that unbelievers will forever endure in the Lake of *Fire* is far, far worse than the painful shame and bitter loss that unfaithful believers will suffer at *the Son of Man's* return. After a time, Jesus will wipe away the tears of the unfaithful believers (Revelation 21:4). But there will be no consolation for unbelievers in the Lake of Fire.

WHAT THE INCLUSION OF *THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS* PARABLE OFFERS

Throughout the Olivet Discourse, Jesus has been answering *His* disciples' questions about the end times. And He gave them careful instructions about how they were to understand what would take place so that they could act appropriately.

After telling them these instructions, Jesus then told a trio of three parables that metaphorically described to *His* followers what acting appropriately looked like. He narrowly focused in those parables on how *the Son of Man* would deal in judging those believers upon His return, before using a wide-angle lens in the fourth and final parable of *the sheep and goats* to describe the three major final judgments that apply to the entire human race.

In essence, Jesus zoomed out at the end of *His* Olivet Discourse to discuss a more sweeping cosmic vision of how every human will be dealt with at the end times.

Ending with this teaching of the Parable of *the Sheep and Goats* accomplished at least four things:

1. It reminded the disciples that Jesus was the Lord of all Nations and described what that role will look like at the end of this age.
2. It assured the disciples that all *sheep* (faithful and unfaithful) will ultimately enter *into eternal life*.
3. It focused on the faithful believers' rewards of inheritance at the Bema Judgement rather than focusing on the chastisement and pain of losing that inheritance as the preceding parables tended to do. (More on this below).
4. It clearly told the disciples what will happen to unbelievers—*these will go away into eternal punishment—the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels*.

Perhaps one of the reasons Jesus had for telling this parable to *His* disciples was to affirm that it is in people's best interest to believe in Jesus.

Someone who only read or heard the first three parables might hesitate before accepting Christ's offers when they consider the painful consequences for unfaithfulness. They might reflect, "Why assume the risk that I might prove to be unfaithful servant and endure such a painful judgment? Why bother becoming a believer in the first place? Why not avoid this risk altogether?" They might be tempted against following Jesus on account of possibly suffering those consequences if they were to fail.

In this final parable of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus makes clear that everyone will be judged as a *Sheep* (believer) or a *Goat* (unbeliever). This judgment is the first of the three judgments the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* describes.

This Parable of *the Sheep and Goats* also stresses the benefits and rewards that believers stand to gain if they are faithful, rather than the loss they encounter if they are unfaithful. These positive rewards are described in the second judgment of the Parable of *the Sheep and Goats* (Matthew 25:34-40). This parable also reveals that everyone who is a *sheep*—those who have believed in

Jesus and been declared *righteous* by God—will ultimately enter *into eternal life* (Matthew 25:46). And this will be true of all *the sheep*, even if they were wicked servants, unwise bridesmaids, or lazy slaves.

Moreover, this parable also reveals what will happen to unbelievers at their judgment. The third judgment of this parable (Matthew 25:41-43) reveals that all the unbelievers (*goats*) *will go away into eternal punishment—into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels*. And the language Jesus uses when explaining this parable clearly indicates that *the eternal punishment* unbelievers will receive is infinitely more severe and damning than everything (stern rebuke, pain, loss of reward, etc.) that even the most wicked, foolish, and lazy servant among *the sheep* will receive.

The inclusion of *The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats* shows why it is a bad idea to reject believing in Christ. It is also bad to be an unfaithful believer, but it is infinitely and eternally worse to be an unbeliever.

Biblical Text

³¹ **“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³ and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. ³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are 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 something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; ³⁶ 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, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? ³⁸ And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? ³⁹ When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’ ⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ ⁴⁶ These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”**