

Matthew 25:35-40

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The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats: “The Life Choices of the Righteous.”

The King will explain how the inheritance for the sheep was based on the way they treated Him through various acts of kindness and mercy during their lives on earth. The righteous will ask when they ever served Him. The King will reply that to the extent they served others, it was counted as if they served Him.

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

TheBibleSays commentary has subdivided the parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* and its subsequent elaboration (Matthew 25:31-46) according to the outline below. To better facilitate continuity and cohesion, the entire passage of this teaching is included in the Biblical text at the bottom and its words are italicized throughout these portions of commentary even if they do not appear in this specific portion of scripture.

This portion of the parable focuses on Matthew 25:35-40—“The Life Choices of *the Righteous*”.

Matthew 25:31-46 **The Context of the Parable**

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**

THE LIFE CHOICES OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The King will say to the sheep on His right: “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; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.”

After rewarding *the righteous sheep who are highly praised of His Father* with their *kingdom inheritance prepared for them from the foundation of the world*, *the King will explain why* they are being rewarded in this way.

They *will* be rewarded for their treatment of *the King* when *He* was in great need.

The King will recount six ways the righteous took care of Him. His list includes some surprising, if not unsettling, ways that His people served their King. It is not a list of what people typically consider to be great feats or mighty deeds. But as we have often seen throughout Matthew's gospel, greatness in the Son of Man's kingdom is achieved and measured very differently than it is among the kingdoms of men (Matthew 5:19; 6:5-6; 11:8, 11; 13:44-46; 18:4; 19:29-30; 20:25-28; 23:11-12). The King's list of great deeds that receive great rewards are humble tasks of love and service. They are acts that typically go unheralded by the world—if they are even acknowledged by the world at all. But they are all of great value to the one who receives them.

The first way the King describes how the righteous took care of Him was that they fed Him when He was hungry.

Hunger was a constant problem throughout the ancient world, and it still is today. Outside of the political and religious leaders and the very rich, most other people in Judea and elsewhere did not know where tomorrow's meals were going to come from—or as was often the case—if there would be any meals tomorrow at all (Matthew 6:25-26, 31). There were no modern grocery stores or industrialized supply chains. Having *something to eat* was tenuous for the working classes and the poor even in good times. And if a famine hit a region, or war halted the supply chain, the people would often starve—the poor most of all.

A King, on the other hand, would have been the least likely to starve. He had storehouses to keep extra food along with money and means to buy more to prevent Him from becoming *hungry* and needing *something to eat*. But here was the King, the Lord God, Son of Man Himself, no less, telling the righteous on His right that when He was hungry you gave me something to eat. And for their acts of compassion that served Him in His moments of distress, He was now granting them kingdoms prepared for them.

In verse 40, Jesus will disclose that the way He as a King was fed when hungry, was when the righteous sheep did it to “one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them.”

The second way the King describes how the righteous took care of Him was that they gave Him something to drink when He was thirsty.

In the arid climates of Judea, thirst was also a conscious consideration. Any traveler (rich and poor alike) had to take into account where the available water supplies would be along the way. Springs, rivers, and wells were the main sources of fresh water—but there was no indoor plumbing. Every *drink* required daily effort from someone. It was often the women's daily job to go collect water from the wells and return with their pitchers each morning (John 4:7). Giving someone a cold *drink* of water was refreshing. It was life-giving. It was an act of mercy which valued the other person.

Jesus promised His disciples that they would not lose their reward if they gave “a cup of cold water” to one of these little ones in His name (Matthew 10:42).

King Jesus will tell the righteous how they were merciful to Him when they took the effort to collect fresh water and gave Him something to drink when He was thirsty. This too is strange, for it was the Shepherd's job to find water for His sheep (Psalm 23:2). But here is God saying how the sheep provided for their Shepherd in this way.

In verse 40, Jesus will disclose that the way He as a King was tended to when thirsty, was when the righteous sheep did it to “one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them.”

The third way *the King* describes how *the righteous* took care of *Him* was that they *invited Him* into their homes *when He was a stranger*.

A stranger was anyone who was unknown to the people in a town or village. Strangers had no place of their own to stay. They were dependent upon the hospitality of those who lived there to meet their needs for food and shelter until they moved along. The law of Moses commanded Israel to look out for the stranger (Leviticus 19:33-34). One of the ways *righteous* Job defended his integrity against his foolish friends was to explain how he opened his doors to travelers and never made foreigners sleep outside whenever they passed through his lands (Job 31:32).

King Jesus will tell *the righteous* how they were compassionate to *Him* when they *invited Him* into their homes *when He was a stranger* among *them*. This too is a puzzling picture. How can a *King* be a *stranger* among *His* own people? And how could God, *the King* of the universe, ever be in need of a place to stay when *He* rules the world? *He* owns everything (1 Corinthians 10:26). And *He* has total authority and does not need to be bothered being *invited* (Psalm 135:6).

In verse 40, Jesus will disclose that the way *He* as a *King* was housed when exposed, was when *the righteous sheep did it to* “*one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them.*”

The fourth way *the King* describes how *the righteous* took care of *Him* was that they *clothed Him* when *He was naked*.

Clothing has been a human need since the fall (Genesis 3:7). Clothing physically covers both our nakedness and shame; and it protects us from the scorching sun, the blasting winds, the damp rain, and the chill of winter.

Naked in this context certainly can mean being completely naked. The sight of seeing someone so desperate that they were completely unclothed in public should evoke deep pity. It should move us to take action and offer them clothing. But *naked* could also mean without a shirt or coat to protect them from the elements. These too can be opportunities to serve them and radically advance *the kingdom*—even when the other person is demanding or has a wrong sense of entitlement (Matthew 5:40).

This is yet another disturbing image that *King* Jesus *will say to the righteous*. How can a *King*, who typically wears soft, expensive clothing in palaces (Matthew 11:8) be *naked*? Moreover, how unthinkable to imagine the *King* and *Maker* of the Heavens to be so desperate that *He was naked* and in need of clothing?

In verse 40, Jesus will disclose that the way *He* as a *King* was *clothed* when *naked*, was when *the righteous sheep did it to* “*one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them.*”

The fifth way *the King* describes how *the righteous* took care of *Him* was that they *visited Him* when *He was sick*.

There was no medical industry in ancient Judea. The *sick* were either taken care of by their families and friends, or they were abandoned (Matthew 8:14-16; John 5:7; John 11:1-2). To *visit a sick* person took time and effort. It pulled the visitor away from their daily tasks. And it also incurred great risk. It was entirely possible that the visitor who tended to the *sick* friend or relative could also get *sick*. In an undernourished society without the benefit of modern hygiene and medicine, getting *sick* could quickly result in death. And it often did.

Tending the *sick* is often unpleasant. There can be clean up. The *sick* person may need assistance doing things, such as eating, or going to the bathroom, bathing, getting dressed, all of which are awkward to perform. They may be extra grumpy and thankless while they are sick because of their pain or discomfort. Visiting the *sick* can be physically and emotionally exhausting. There are few acts of greater service or compassion than physically helping someone whose body is too weak to meet their most basic needs.

Visiting a *sick* person, who is in isolation, also ministers to their emotional need to relate. It encourages them and helps keep them from sinking into loneliness and despair.

The King will tell *the righteous* that *when He was sick*, they *visited* and took care of *Him*. Picturing a powerful *King* as weak and helpless by disease is a pathetic sight. But how could the All-Powerful King who is “Yahweh-Rapha”—“The LORD Who Heals” (Exodus 15:26) become *sick* or need visitors to tend to *His* diseases?

In verse 40, Jesus will disclose that the way He as a *King* was comforted when *sick*, was when *the righteous sheep did it to “one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them.”*

The sixth and last way *the King* describes how *the righteous* took care of *Him* was that they came to *Him* when He was in prison.

Prisons were dangerous and unpleasant places in the ancient world. Prisoners were often left to rot with little food, water, bedding, clothing, or sanitation. They were notorious for their diseases. Prisoners in ancient prisons were often dependent upon their family and friends to pay for and provide for their needs. Practically all the previous afflictions, including loneliness, were suffered by prisoners. And of course, there was the additional stigma of being a social or political enemy associated with prisons. Even before he was imprisoned, the prophet Jeremiah bitterly complained to the Lord about the pain of being a laughingstock on *His* behalf (Jeremiah 20:7-18). And the Apostle Paul, who was in and out of prison for sharing the gospel, was ever grateful when his friends would *come* and *visit* him and tend to his needs (Philippians 4:10-19; Colossians 4:10, 14, 18; 2 Timothy 4:9-13; Philemon 1:13).

Prisoners *in* ancient *prisons* were often dependent upon their family and friends to pay for and provide for their needs. Bringing them *something to eat and drink*, clothes, bedding, etc. was sometimes the only way the prisoner’s basic needs were met. But the act of coming to them in prison and or visiting with them entailed social and political risk for sympathizing with the prisoner. Identifying with the prisoner in this way could easily arouse suspicion and one’s own stigmatization, or even led to the visitor’s imprisonment.

The author of Hebrews (which may have been Paul) implored his readers to “remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves are in the body” (Hebrews 13:3).

The King will tell *the righteous* that *when He was in prison*, they *came to Him* and identified with *Him* and took care of *His* needs. It is strange for a *King*, the personification of the law to be bound and imprisoned as a criminal of the law and to be reliant upon visitors to provide for *Him*. But it is stranger still for God who is the supreme *Righteous Judge of the world* (Psalm 9:8; Joel 3:12) and whose very Word is truth and law (Isaiah 33:22; John 1:1; James 4:12) to be imprisoned. How strange is it that the Liberator who sets captives free would Himself be *in prison* (Isaiah 61:1) and be helplessly dependent upon others to come bring *Him* food, *drink*, and clothing?

In verse 40, Jesus will disclose that the way He as a *King* was cared for when persecuted, was *when the righteous sheep did it to “one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them.”*

The Number Six as Representative of Humanity

An interesting point to consider is that there are six ways *the King will* recount how *His* people took care of *Him*. The number six in the Bible often represents humanity. (The human race was created on the sixth day—Genesis 1:26-31). All six of these ways meet basic human needs. The first five of these humane acts specifically minister to a person’s material needs for food, water, shelter, clothing, and disease. And the sixth act—visiting *in prison*—likely entails meeting several of the aforementioned needs at once, even as it ministers to a person’s emotional need for companionship. The symbolism of six actions, combined with their humane essence emphasize how important it is to God that we readily serve and meet people’s material needs.

God’s indispensable commandment to “love your neighbor as you love yourself” (Matthew 22:39-40) should not be relegated to warm wishes and abstract applications only. It should manifest itself in these very material, very personal, very human ways.

The Bewilderment of the Righteous and the King’s Reply

As *the King* recounted these six paradoxical ways how *the righteous* took care of *Him*, *the righteous* were confused. They will ask *when* any of these things ever happened?

Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

Apparently, *the righteous* will have no recollection of ever seeing *the King* in any of these needy circumstances—much less any remembrance of serving *Him* in these times of need.

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.’

There are two key terms and phrases to unpack in *the King’s* reply.

The first term we should identify is *these brothers of Mine*. This term refers to Jesus’s *brothers* and sisters as members of God’s family.

It is true that every believer in Jesus is a member of God’s family (John 1:11-12; Ephesians 2:19; 1 John 3:1); that God in Heaven is our Father (Matthew 6:9; Ephesians 2:18; Romans 8:15); and that Jesus is our elder Brother (John 20:17; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11-12).

But Jesus may also be referring to something extra-intimate that was similar to what *He* taught *His* disciples when He said:

“And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, ‘Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.’”
(Matthew 12:49—50)

If Jesus's statement from Matthew 12 applies to what *King* Jesus is saying in this parable then *these brothers of Mine* refers not just to someone who believes in *Him*, but believers who actively follow and identify with *Him* and who were possibly put *in prison* for their allegiance.

The second term to consider is the phrase: *even the least of them*.

Jesus extends *these brothers of Mine* to include *even the least of them*. This likely means those disregarded as unimportant according to worldly values. People such as the poor and afflicted (Matthew 9:35-36), tax collectors and prostitutes (Matthew 21:32, Luke 19:2, 9-10), Samaritans (John 4:9), Gentiles (Acts 11:18), children (Matthew 18:5-6; 19:14), widows and orphans (James 1:27), etc.

There are at least two things that the *least of them* have in common. They are not only disregarded and invisible outcasts, but they also lack the capability to pay anyone back for the ministry rendered to them. Their circumstances prevent them from paying you back in kind. If people are *hungry* they do not have food to offer *you*. If they are *thirsty*, they do not have *drink* to offer *you*. If they are *a stranger*, they have no shelter to *invite* you into. If they are *naked*, they have no clothes to provide you with. If they are *sick*, they are unable to *visit* you in your sickness. And if they are *in prison*, they cannot *come to you* in your imprisonment.

They may not be able to pay you back. But God is able. And *He* will give you a *kingdom* for serving *His* children in their distress. Elsewhere, Jesus assured *His* disciples that whoever takes the trouble to give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple to a child will not lose his reward (Matthew 10:42).

Three principles and applications emerge from *the King's* reply.

The first principle is that these *righteous* gave of themselves sacrificially without expectation of return. They truly fulfilled the second commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). Perhaps, it was their lack of expectation of returned favors in this life that was one of the hallmarks of their love and roots of their righteousness.

We too, should not be apprising the earthly cost/benefit analysis of mercy or grace. If we only received our reward from men, this would make some sense (Matthew 6:2). But we operate in the economy of God's *kingdom*, and *King* Jesus and *His Father* will offer a full reward (Matthew 6:3-4). Instead, we should trust God that it is ALWAYS in our favor to love, serve, and forgive other people (Matthew 5:7; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Peter 4:19). It appears here that the more we trust God's reward, the greater it will be.

The second point of *the King's* reply is the main point of the full statement. When *He* said *to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me*, *He* means: *when we serve members of God's family, we are actually serving Him*. Every act of kindness or mercy that we do in Jesus's name unto others, is accounted to us by God as having done it unto *Him*. (The same is also true of every mean and pitiless action). How well we love and serve our neighbor is how well we love and serve God (Matthew 22:37-40; John 14:15; John 15:12).

We would do well to keep this in mind the next time we encounter one of Jesus's *brothers* or sisters in need.

The third principle is that true greatness is often the opposite of what the world deems important. We, who live in the world, tend to see things as the world sees them. We measure greatness by its standards of accumulation of wealth, earthly honors or fame, and political power. This is all "hebel" (Ecclesiastes 1:2):

vanity and vapor that evaporate like the morning dew (James 1:10—11). We must not become deceived by these illusions. True greatness is in serving, and whoever wishes to be first in *the Son of Man's kingdom* shall be like a slave on earth (Matthew 20:26—27).

Another aspect of this third principle is that many of the so-called “little things” that we do, while not considered great or important, now may be revealed to have been of enormous value at the judgment. This may have been part of the reason that *the righteous* could not recall their acts of service to *the King*. And if this is true, the opposite is also: some of the things we think are a big deal on earth are of little value in *the kingdom*.

In the meantime, we should keep serving, and pay closer attention to the things *King Jesus* says matter, and spend less time worrying about the fuss of the world.

And “let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those [*these brothers of Mine*] who are of the household of the faith” (Galatians 6:9-10).

The King's reply also contains a major clue regarding the nature of the Sheep's judgment:

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

The major clue is the clause: *to the extent that you did it*.

The King explicitly said this in relationship *to the extent that the sheep* served the *brothers of the King* it will be counted as though they *did it to Him*. Because *the sheep's* reward of inheriting *the kingdom* was *for* this treatment, this implies that some *sheep will receive* a greater *kingdom* dominion or creative influence, and some *sheep will* receive less.

This is what happened in the Parable in the Talents. Each received their *inheritance to the extent that* they generated something in respect to what they were entrusted. They will receive *it to the extent that* they were faithful. The first two servants/*sheep* in that parable doubled their investments. The unfaithful servant/*sheep* received the least of all—and had even what he started with taken from him (Matthew 25:28-29).

Once again, this (second) judgment in the Parable of *the Sheep and the Goats* concerns *the extent of* works of faith that a believer *did* and depicts the judgments described in the previous three parables.

The first judgment of this parable where *sheep* were separated *from goats* only concerned simple faith in Jesus. The first judgment was concerned with whether or not a person was a *sheep/believer* in Jesus as *the Son of Man* or a *goat/unbeliever* in Jesus. The first judgment determined where each person would spend eternity: forever with God in the New Heaven and Earth (Revelation 21:1-3); or eternally damned and separated from Him in the lake of *fire* (Revelation 20:10, 14-15).

The accursed on the King's left will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous on His right will go into eternal life.

The first judgment that separated *the sheep from the goats* seems to be about whether one is a member of God's family or not. A person becomes a member of God's *eternal* family by believing in Jesus (John

3:16; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8-9). *Eternal life* is a gift (Romans 3:24). That person's works have no impact whatsoever on if they ever believed in Jesus and were born into *eternal life* (Romans 3:28; 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-9).

But the second judgment that evaluates *the extent* of the good things *the sheep did* is about how faithful that child of the *Father* and *brother* of Jesus was. And *the righteous* were allowed to *inherit* their *kingdom* reward to the extent that *the righteous* served *the least of these* when they were *hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison*.

We know that works of faith matter a great deal to Jesus. They bring out *His* praise (Matthew 8: 10; Luke 19:1-10; 21:1-2) or wrath (Matthew 21:12-13; Matthew 23). God smack-talks *the devil* over *the righteous* and their faithfulness (Job 1:8; Job 2:3). Jesus brags about the works of *the righteous* and confesses them to His Father (Matthew 10:32), who Himself will call *the righteous* "blessed."

Indeed, all of heaven marvels at the manner in which we live out our lives on earth (1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 3:10). The epic drama of the cosmos is being played out every day in the lives of believers. And every moral choice we make is a part of the main action and plot. Perhaps that is why Peter told his readers "to prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, and fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13) immediately after informing them of how "angels long to look" into how heaven's gospel plays out on earth (1 Peter 1:12).

With fear and trembling we know that as believers our works will be judged by Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-13; 2 Corinthians 2:9-10; Philippians 2:12-13). This judgment is called the Bema of Christ, after the Greek word for the "Bema" platform from which authorities rendered judgments.

We know that as believers we will be rewarded for our faith and love, i.e. our "good" works (1 Corinthians 3:14).

We know these rewards will be far better than we can presently comprehend (Mark 10:29-30; John 14:2-3; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 3-5)

We also know that as believers it is possible to lose our reward and miss out on inheriting the maximum benefits of *the kingdom* if we do not have faith and love (Matthew 7:13-14; 7:21-23; 1 Corinthians 3:15; Colossians 2:18; 2 Timothy 2:12; Hebrews 10:39).

And we know that even if this dreadful loss occurs it is impossible to lose our gift of possessing *eternal life* (Matthew 18:14; John 10:28-29; Romans 8:28-29; 2 Timothy 2:13; Revelation 21:3-4) even as we miss out on the reward of gaining the maximum experience of *eternal life*.

Many of Jesus's parables and teachings regarding *the kingdom* portray the Bema of Christ evaluating *His* followers and *the extent* of their faithfulness:

- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)
- Jesus's Praise of the Roman Centurion (Matthew 8:5-12)
- The Missionary Discourse (Matthew 10:5-42)
- The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23)

- The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)
- The Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33)
- The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)
- The Parable of the Costly Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46)
- Jesus's edict to "Take up your cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24-27)
- The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:23-35)
- Jesus's conversation with and about the Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-30)
- The Parable of the Laborers of the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16)
- The Parable of the Marriage Feast (Matthew 22:1-14)
- The Parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Slaves (Matthew 24:45-51)
- The Parable of the Bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13)
- The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

All of these things pertain to the judgment of *the sheep* and their works described within Jesus's teaching about *the sheep and the goats*.

We know from most of the teachings and parables cited above that there are unimaginably wonderful outcomes for faithful believers at the Bema of Christ, but that there are also lamentably devastating consequences for unfaithful believers. It seems that most of the lamentable devastation comes from the loss of what could have been gained. The fact that Jesus uses hyperbole to emphasize the loss tells us how immensely precious is each opportunity to live as a faithful witness for Jesus in this world where we walk by faith.

Thankfully being banished to be consumed by *the eternal fire* is not among the adverse consequences that might be experienced by *the sheep*, those who have believed and been spiritually born anew (1 Corinthians 3:15).

The Sheep and the Goats' description of this second judgment only speaks to one categorical outcome and it is a good one, because it zeroes in on the positive. It does not mention the categorical outcomes of loss. We know that loss of reward is a possibility because many of the above teachings warn us about it. But Jesus's deliberate omission of this fact seems to indicate His desire to provide assurance to every believer that belonging to God's family, being accepted fully as a child of God, is without condition, and guarantees dwelling eternally in the presence of God.

When we take into account the fullness of what the Bible says about this judgment we see that there is a wide range of outcomes. For each believer, *the extent to* which the outcome of this judgment is positive or negative will be determined by *the extent that* believer served and loved people on earth.

The first judgment, which sorted people as *sheep from goats*, had only two outcomes—*sheep* who will enter *into eternal life* or *goats* who enter *into the eternal fire*. The second judgment will have a range of extended outcomes—some good, some better, some best, and some bad.

We have discussed the first two judgments. We now proceed to the third judgment when *the King* will speak *to the goats on His left*.

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.”