

The Judgment of the Gentiles when Jesus Returns to Earth

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how Jesus will reward those servants who are faithful and judge those who reject Christ and His offer of forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In this topic, we will see what Jesus says about the judgment of the Gentiles at the time He returns to the earth after The Tribulation.

Jesus will come back to this earth in all of His glory when He comes at the end of The Tribulation. Matthew 25:31-36 says, “‘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. 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. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 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: 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 and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’”” Here, we see that Jesus will gather all of the nations for judgment at the time of His coming to rule on the earth.

All nations will be gathered but it will be the individuals who are separated at that time. Jesus compares this judgment to the time when a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. In several places in the Bible, those who believe are compared to sheep. In Ezekiel 34, God talked about the unfaithful shepherds of Israel. Then, in Ezekiel 34:11-12, God said, “‘For thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day.’”” Then, in John 10:16, Jesus talks about those who would become His followers who were not a part of Israel. That verse says, “‘And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.’” As a result, the sheep represent those who believe in Jesus while the goats represent those who do not believe.

In these verses, we see that Jesus calls Himself both the Son of Man and the King. First, we see that Jesus promises blessing for those who are the sheep (the righteous). This blessing includes inheriting the kingdom. We also see that this kingdom was planned before the world was ever created. We also see some of the things for which believers will be rewarded. In each of the things that Jesus mentions, He says that the righteous have done these things to Him. Jesus will tell the righteous gathered there that day that they gave Him food. They gave Him something to drink when He was thirsty. They took Him in when He was a stranger. They clothed Him when He was naked. They visited Him when He was sick. They came to Him when He was in prison. We will see in the next few verses that the righteous will not understand what Jesus means at first.

Matthew 25:37-40 says, “‘Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see

You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? 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?” 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.”” Here, we see that the righteous will not understand when they did these things to Jesus. This shows there is a great difference between the righteous and the unrighteous. Proverbs 12:10 says, “A righteous *man* regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel.” Here, we see that the righteous even show kindness to the animals. In contrast, even when the wicked try to show tender mercy, they are still cruel. Here, we see that what is in the heart of a person will be shown by the actions of that person.

The righteous have a new nature that causes them to show kindness to others without even thinking about the fact that they are showing kindness. Even when the wicked try to show kindness, they cannot show real kindness because their actions are controlled by their sin nature. The righteous are motivated by the love of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” In contrast, the unrighteous are driven by the fear of man. This is illustrated so well by the parents of the blind man to whom Jesus gave sight. John 9:22 says, “His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that* He *was* Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.” Here, we see that the parents had a greater fear of being put out of the synagogue than their desire to tell who healed their son.

Since the righteous show kindness without even giving thought to it, when Christ returns to the earth the righteous will question and ask, when did we see you hungry or thirsty? When did we take you in or clothe you? When did we visit you when you were sick or in prison? This is a reminder that those who serve the Lord do not keep a record of all the acts of kindness that they show to others. Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Galatians 6:9-10 says, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” These verses make it clear that good works are a very important part of the lives of those who serve the Lord.

We also see how Jesus will answer that question when He returns as the King. He will say, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.” Jesus makes it clear that the good works that His followers do to others are actually being done to Christ and for Christ. The word translated “the least” means *those who are unimportant and are not even noticed by the world*. Luke 16:10 says, “He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much.” Those who are true followers of Jesus have a desire to be faithful to the Lord, even in the things that are not noticed by others. The opposite is true for those who do not follow Christ.

Matthew 25:41-46 says, “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: for I was hungry and you

gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 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.” 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?” 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.” And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” These verses make it clear that the goats picture those who reject Jesus.

These verses explain the consequences for all those who fail to repent of their sin of unbelief and personally place their faith in Christ. First, they will be told to depart from Christ eternally. Second, they are cursed. Third, they will be cast into the everlasting fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels. Here, we see a key lesson. Jesus said that this eternal judgment has been prepared for the devil and his angels. All those who refuse to repent of their unbelief, and wait until it is too late to repent, will share the judgment that God has prepared for the devil and his angels. John 16:8-11 says, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” In these verses, we see that the one sin that keeps people from receiving eternal life is the sin of unbelief. In addition, we also see that Satan has already been judged and that those who continue to follow him will share in his judgment.

Those who are promised this judgment will ask Christ when they saw Him hungry or thirsty, a stranger, without clothing, sick or in prison. Jesus will respond that the very fact that they failed to do these things to the people who they did not even notice, meant that they failed to do these things to Christ. As we saw above, Proverbs 12:10 says, “A righteous *man* regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel.” The wicked have no concern for those who have no power or influence. In fact, the opposite is usually true. They take advantage of the poor and the powerless for self-gain. That is why Proverbs says that even their tender mercies are cruel.

We also see that there will be two totally different futures for the righteous and the unrighteous. The unrighteous will go into everlasting punishment. The judgment of Satan is described, in Revelation 20:10, where we read, “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Then, Revelation 20:15 adds, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Here, we see that all who continue in unbelief will share that eternal judgment with Satan. In contrast, all the righteous will enter into eternal life. Revelation 21:4 promises, “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain clearly the judgment that will come to the unrighteous and the blessing prepared for the righteous. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.