



PROPER 29 ARTICLE NO. 2005.956
Gospel

Taking care of the Brethren
Mt 25:31-46



When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered **all nations**: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye **blessed of my Father**, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: **I was a stranger, and ye took me in**: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into **everlasting fire**, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Refs

(Isa 14:18) All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.

(Col 3:4) When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

(Lu 3:11) He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

Much of this tract is commentary - don't take it as Gospel. It is here to encourage meditation and study. Use your gift of discernment, to find the truth.

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Taking care of the Brethren

In his glory, means with the righteous of the ages, the saints and Jewish prophets of old and with the righteous of his Church, who souls have previously departed this earth, all sharing a small part of the Glory of God, and as such being considered sons of God, and therefore with a close Father-like relationship to God.

Then those alive on the Earth (all nations - all religions, all atheists) will be separated into the good and the bad - sheep from goats, wheat from chaff, tares from wheat etc. as Jesus promised in his parables.

Being placed on the right hand is to be chosen by God for *everlasting life*; which means sharing in God's divine life which is eternal. On the left to be selected for *everlasting fire* and *everlasting punishment*. These people will be punished by being cut off from the divine life of God.

Those on the right have already been blessed by the Father (that is made happy and lucky and blest - among them; the poor, those that mourn, and the meek), and they are the disciples who have also fed the hungry **brethren**^A housed the strangers (converts from gentiles, heathens, and idol worshippers - who became **brethren**), clothed the naked - this may be also be a metaphor for teaching the **brethren**; visited the **brethren** in prison, and ministered to them (healed them, taught them). Christ says that He recognizes as His own those who has done these good works to just one of the *least of these my brethren* - least meaning perhaps a reference to a young disciple.

Those who did not behave like this, are condemned unto *everlasting punishment*.

^A "**Brethren**" was used by Jesus to refer to His Apostles (Mt 28:10), and to all who hear Him and do his commands (Lu 8:21) - His disciples.

Sermon on the mount Mt 5

(Mt 12:49) And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my **brethren!**

(Mt 28:10) Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my **brethren** that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

(Lu 8:21) And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my **brethren** are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

least
Strong's 1646
ελαχιστος
elachistos
el-akh'-is-tos;
superlative of elacuv elachus (short); used as equivalent to 3398; least (in size, amount, dignity, etc.):-- least, very little (small), smallest.

More Insight

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There has been a lot of conversation about whether Christ was addressing here all the people in the world, or just his disciples. In the commission of this commandment, he calls the recipients of the good work, his brethren, which as we have read means disciples, and Apostles. But when He refers to the omission of this commandment He calls the sufferers the *least of these*, but as his audience here consists of only his disciples, and Apostles, I think that his reference to the *least of these* also meant a disciple. He referred to aiding ONE (any) of *the least of My brethren*, as being expected of all believers - acceptance is for those righteous, not the unbelievers; so, this commandment is for the disciples only. An unbeliever who does the command will not be acceptable to Christ.

So was He warning his disciples, here, that each of them must take responsibility for the welfare of one other disciple, after He was gone from them? He gave Peter (Simon) specific instructions to *feed my sheep*, - meaning take care of the needs of the disciples after He was gone. So perhaps Jesus knows that after He has gone, there will many discouraged disciples, and perhaps some who have no source of income and no shelter, some of whom may be "strangers" with no Jewish ties, and some may have been abandoned by family because of their beliefs. To prevent them being neglected, He warns the disciples not to turn their back on them. (since this Gospel was written c. AD 70 - during the rebellion and destruction of the Temple, this was a serious consideration. The Jews were killed or scattered, and the Christians had been in fear for their lives since Nero came to power AD 58-64. The persecutions under Vespasian AD 69-79, and the famines caused the deaths of 1.1 million people).

The condemnation of the others may refer to the believers and unbelievers who would not help the brethren during the bad times.

Refs

(Mt 24:3) And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the **disciples** came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

(Joh 21:16) He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Eusebius the Church History

Doing Theology

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Refs

The emphasis seems to be on the physical and spiritual welfare of the disciples, not that of unbelievers. Those who refused to take care of the brethren are to be treated as though they are unbelievers, even though they might call themselves disciples, and the judgment will be against them.

Nowadays, governments provide physical support of the poor. With food stamps, and medicare, even the poorest are able to survive. But there may be some brother who has eschewed government support, or who is unwilling to accept it, and who is really starving, and without shoes. And there are bound to be people who are sick that need more than medicine to make them well, and of course, there are brothers who are in prison who need spiritual support. As for strangers "*ye took me not in*" - surely this does not mean having a stranger live in the house with your family. Jesus is referring here, I think, to brethren from outside the Jewish faith. He expects the other Jews in a community to accept the stranger into this community. So perhaps today this means we must accommodate a stranger (but still a believer) into our churches.

This phrase is peculiar to Matthew

Everyone in the Church must fulfill this commandment before they die; and the recipient must be a **brother** who is truly hungry (which includes most everyone); truly thirsty; truly without any clothes; sick or in prison. Each disciple today must welcome a stranger into the church.

The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.