

May 5, 2019

He Will Come to Judge

Matthew 25:31-46

25:31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

25:32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

25:33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

25:36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’

25:37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

25:38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

25:39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

25:40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

25:41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

25:42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,

25:43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’

25:44 Then they also will answer, 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?’

25:45 Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

25:46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

1. Eternal Christ

The Apostles’ Creed says, “He who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come to judge the living and the dead.” The past, present, and future tenses are used in this part. From “was conceived by the Holy Spirit” to “ascended into heaven,” we see past tense. In “is seated at the right hand of the Father,” we see present tense. And, in “will come to judge the living and the dead,” we see future tense. The Apostles’ Creed says that Jesus did, is doing the works of the salvation for us, and will finish it completely.

This expresses that Jesus is not just a past person, but an eternal person who is still alive and will come. There is no one who has any thought or religion to deny that Jesus is the great person who changed the history of the world. In fact, the history of the world is divided into “B.C.; Before Christ” and “A.D.; Anno Domini” based on this person. Some people with a particular ideology or religion dislike Jesus and persecute those who believe in Jesus, but it is because Jesus and his teachings have more power than their own thoughts and religions. It is probably because they know think that it becomes their threat.

In the Revelation of John, God is called “who is and who was and who is to come,” and God himself says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega.” (Revelation 1:4, 8) At the same time Jesus is also called “The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.” (Revelation 2: 8), and he also says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”(Revelation 1:17; 21: 6; 22:13) In the Revelation Jesus is worshiped as an eternal God with his Father. The Ancient Church’s “Gloria” praises Jesus Christ, “With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of the Father.” Our service is to remember the salvation that Jesus had accomplished two thousand years ago, but it is not a memorial service that nostalgically past Jesus. We honor the One who lives forever, and receive the life, power and glory of him.

2. The Tense of the Salvation

The fact that Jesus’ salvation works are told over the past, present, and future teaches that our salvation has three aspects: past, present, and future. Salvation in the “past” is salvation due to the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, became a person, died on behalf of sin on that Cross, and resurrected having overcome death. We were forgiven for our sins with Jesus’ Cross and received eternal life with the Resurrection of Jesus. The punishment for sin has passed away from us. It was released from the bondage of sin and death.

The abuses we received as a child, even when we grow up, remain affected and hold back us. Many people are locked in their past experiences and can not be free from them. However, Jesus frees us from such bondage. Those who believe in Jesus can be freed from everything in the past and have a new life.

And Jesus continues to save those who have been saved. He does not say, "I saved you. Then you should keep the salvation by your power." If so, we may lose the salvation we received. There is no one who ever sins again, never fails. Even though we are saved, we are still weak and sinful. Jesus is constantly reaching out to us. He sits to the right of his Father and continues to intervene for the saved. It is in Rome 8:34. "Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us." So, when we sin, we can repent immediately, and seek for the forgiveness and healing, for recovery and for holiness. We can keep going every day by these gifts of grace.

Furthermore, Jesus will save those who are being saved and saved. As long as we are in this world, we can not avoid temptation and trials. Just because you are a believer, there is no guarantee that you will not come across any bad things, do not get sick, and that everything is going well. The power of evil works strongly in this world, and it is attacked by those who try to live justly. So, as long as we live in the world, we have to continue to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil." When we are faced with great trials, we are thirsty for the kingdom of heaven where is no temptation or evil. We become to long for that Jesus comes to the world again, and shows the righteous judgment and gives us the ultimate salvation.

We, those who believe in Jesus have already been saved from the punishment of their sins. We are saved from the power of sin now. And on the day after we will be saved from the very existence of sin. We appreciate the salvation that Jesus has accomplished, trust in the salvation that we have now, and look forward to the future salvation

and walk in hope. Gratitude, trust and hope. We have received them from the past, present, and future salvation of Jesus.

3. The Judgment and the Salvation

The Bible teaches that our future salvation will occur when Jesus comes to the world again to judge all men. The completion of salvation comes with the judgment. In today's passage, the Lord says that he will come again, come to the seat of glory, and judge people. Then the Lord divides people into right and left. Proclaiming salvation to those who are on the right: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And those who are on the left are sentenced to the punishment: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

The Lord never forgives evil and unlawfulness forever. Even though evil can prosper at one time, it will always be judged. It will come when the Lord comes down from the seat of grace and arrives at the seat of judgment. Many people dislike the word "judgment." They have been trying to remove it from the Bible. But without the judgment, there is no salvation. The salvation of the righteous will not be fulfilled without the evil being judged. Unless evil is destroyed, the Kingdom of God will not be completed. It is because the place where sin and evil remain can not be the Kingdom of God.

Salvation and judgment are two things like the front and back of a coin. There is a judgment in salvation and there is salvation in judgment. How is the reality that the right person suffers and the bad sees the good in this world resolved without judgment? Where are the

pains of those who are plagued by injustice healed? God prohibits the individual from revenge, and he says, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19). Believers trust this word and leave everything to God. If God did not give any judgment, God would become untrue.

We obey God not only because we scare the judgment, but because we try to respond to God’s love that saved us. However, if we do not keep in mind that it will be time for all to be drawn before Christ’s seat of judgment, our religious life will become superficial and self-centered. If students don’t have a final exam, they don’t study hard and review what they haven’t understood so far. It may be true in our Christian life.

Paul was aware that his apostolic work would be tested at the judgment seat of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 3:13 says, “The Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.” Also, in 2 Corinthians 5:10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” Paul was aware of the Day of Judgment, feared the Lord, and served him.

So, on what basis does Jesus reward and judge us? Jesus said to the people on his right: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” But those who were told that they were ashamed that they could not do anything good, “Lord, when did we do for you?” True believers can not boast themselves saying, “I

did all this for Jesus.” They will definitely appreciate what they received from others, but they will not remember to be proud of what they gave others.

The Lord says to these people. “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” The Lord remembers small things for small ones. Even if you do something great in human eyes, it is not acceptable to God if it is done only for your benefit. If you do something because of the love for the Lord, in pure love, and for others, the Lord delights it and rewards you, even if it is a small thing that does not stop in the eyes of man.

The people on the left are quite the opposite of those on the right. The Lord accused them of “You did not do anything for me.” However, instead of listening to the Lord’s rebuke honestly, those on the left are refusing, “Oh, Lord, when did we not do this?” Perhaps the people on the left may have done more and bigger things than those on the right. But that was for themselves, not for others. It is worthless in the eyes of God, no matter how great it is, unless it is done from the heart of love for God and man. Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” (Matthew 7:21-23)

The Lord will come from heaven and judge everything justly. It is a comfort and a hope for believers. But then, can I receive the reward from the Lord? Thinking of that, we have to be humbled before the

Lord. And we will seriously seek the grace of the Lord who will make us the his people according his will. We boldly approach the seat of grace open now by remembering the Day of Judgment of Christ, and the seat of judgment, and we live in the grace of the Lord without wasting it. By such faith, let us live in the hope as we confess, “He will come ...”

(Prayer)

Lord God, you sent Jesus Christ to this world and saved the world by him. The Lord will come to the world again and complete his salvation. At that time, you judge the world through Jesus Christ. Help us to accept this solemn fact with holy fear. Also, help us to wait for the glory to appear that day, and make us to live in the comfort. We pray this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.