

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Red Bud, Illinois**

**Adult Bible Class: "What Will the End of the World Be Like?"**

II. New Testament Passages

A. Matthew 24 and 25 (*continued*)

Verses 35-36: How does the King describe Himself?

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How did the sheep help Him?

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Our current synodical president, Rev. Matthew Harrison, has a three-fold emphasis of "Witness, Mercy, Life Together" for his administration.

**How do works of mercy assist our words of witness?**

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It has been said that people won't care how much we know until they know how much we care (applies to pastoral ministry as well). Works of mercy also have been described as "pre-evangelism." That is, people, both in our country and in foreign missions, will be more open to hearing about Jesus from us after they have seen the love of Jesus at work through us as we assist them in their physical needs.

"The deepest ground of salvation thus lies in the Father's free good pleasure. Those who have been chosen and blessed, however, must make this manifest in the good works that the Son of Man mentions in these verses. Good works are therefore indeed a condition for entering the kingdom, though they do not earn that entrance" (H. N. Ridderbos, Matthew, Zondervan, 1987, pages 467-468).

**v. 37: What word describes the sheep here?** \_\_\_\_\_

**vv. 37-39: What is their response to how the King has described them?**

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These faithful people were not doing these things to receive praise, recognition or honor. They were acting in this loving way because that was their new nature in Christ given to them by the Holy Spirit at work in God's means of grace. The sheep do not keep track of the good they do. They do not boast of their good deeds. They do not expect congratulations or ask for celebrations. They just do what their new nature tells them to do and don't even realize they are doing so. Martin Luther: "A Christian does not ask, 'What good works should I do,' as Christian just does them."

v. 40: Jesus identifies Himself with the lowliest and most insignificant of His disciples ("brothers") who are present at the judgment and can attest to the truth of His words.

“Jesus is not saying here that the Son of Man will admit into the kingdom anyone who has shown love to any of his neighbors. He is speaking, at bottom, of devotion to Himself and of mercy that is shown for His sake” (Ridderbos, page 469).

“The reference is to the little favor to one of Christ’s little ones, one who will never be mentioned in the headlines, the little favor almost instantly forgotten by the doer, but by the little one’s Lord and Savior remembered throughout all the coming ages, and mentioned on the day of the final judgment!” (William Hendricksen, Matthew, Baker, 1973, page 889).

#### Verses 41-46: The Punishment of the Wicked

This section describes four stages in the punishment of the wicked: A) Separation; B) Association; C) Fire; and D) Darkness (from verse 30).

**v. 41: How does the King describe those on His left?** \_\_\_\_\_

The six items of verses 35 and 36 are now condensed into five. All these things are negative, that is, what these people did not do when they should have acted (sins of omission). Notice that typical sins against the Ten Commandments (idolatry, murder, theft, adultery, etc. are not mentioned).

**v. 44: What is their response to how the King has described them?**

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“Oh, if we had known that we would earn points with You, Lord, we gladly would have done those things for those people.” But whatever is not done for Christ’s disciples is not done for Christ.

“Those on the King’s left too are judged according to what they have done, or rather, failed to do. They had no desire to help the King when He needed them, for they left the least of His brothers in their misery. Because of that He will no longer tolerate their presence. They were not aware that they had done the King wrong, for their unrighteousness made them blind” (Ridderbos, page 469).

**v. 46 What word describes the duration of each judgment?** \_\_\_\_\_

“The adjective must be rendered by the same word in both of these balanced and co-ordinate clauses...Since here the same adjective is used in both clauses, the word to be used in the translation should make clear in which respect the two, namely, punishment for the wicked and life for the righteous, are the same. They are the same in this one respect, namely, that they last on and on and on, without ever coming to an end. Having said this, it must now immediately be emphasized that qualitatively there is, of course, a vast difference between the punishment and the life” (Hendricksen, pages 891-892).