

continues to bless through Jesus; however, **people** who reject Jesus AND continue to reject Jesus begin to curse themselves AND continue to curse themselves; therefore, cursed ones must blame themselves! The evidence:

- a. 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.' // Those who reject Jesus tend to focus on their needs, *not the needs of others!*
- b. ⁴⁴ Then they themselves 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 take care of You?' // Hey, it's not our fault; if we would have seen You in need, we would have helped! Christians are different; *they pay attention to others!*
- c. ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these ,brothers of Mine, you did not do it to Me.' ⁴⁶ "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." // When we take action *for Christians*, we reveal ourselves to *be Christians!*

Conclusion: We are saved **by God's grace through faith in Jesus!** All such people ♦*love God* – so they want to do His Word, and ♦*love others* – so they want to help them according to their needs! May our confidence for heaven be in Jesus alone, but may our daily lives be lived in loving God and loving others! And all God's people said: *Amen!*

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Christians Help Christians!

Based on Matthew 25:31-46 NAS

Last Sunday in the Church Year – 2011

November 20 → 9:30

November 23, Thanksgiving Eve at 7:00

Back to 8:00 & 10:45 on 11/27

The Revelation Series will resume on January 22 with chapter 21

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, today is the last Sunday in the church year; *now we have gone full circle:*

- During Advent we prepared for Jesus' coming.
- At Christmas we celebrated Jesus' coming!
- During Epiphany we grew in knowing that Jesus is God.
- During Lent we remembered Jesus' ultimate sacrifice!
- On Easter we rejoiced because of our Risen Savior!
- During the long season of Pentecost / Trinity we have been growing in the Word and living for Jesus.

Now, *as the church year comes to an end*, we again turn our attention to Jesus' promised return. As stated in last week's sermon, *we may be living in that short period of time before Jesus returns!* Whether we are or not, it is still very important to be ready for the end – *of our lives OR of the world OR both!* Last week's sermon included the great white throne judgment, *with the people being judged according to the contents of certain books.* Today's sermon is the same event, but it focuses on the details of what is written in the books – *the reasons why some will be welcomed and some sent away.*

1. **The Setting:** 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 And 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~~ but, the goats on the left." // When Jesus comes, so much will happen so quickly (1 Cor. 15:52): ♦ Jesus will come with the holy angels (Mark 8:38), ♦ believing souls will come with Him from heaven (1 Thess. 4:14), ♦ unbelieving souls will come from Hades (Rev. 20:13), ♦ all bodies will be raised and reunited with their souls (John 5:28-29), and ♦ all will be gathered before Jesus into two groups – *the sheep on His right, but the goats on His left.*

2. **The Sheep / Blessed / Children of God:** ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed [*having been blessed*, perfect passive participle: . →] of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared [perfect passive participle] for you from the foundation of the world.'" // Jesus is addressing people who *began* to be blessed (.) and *continue* (→) to be blessed by God the Father. The Father has blessed us by *uniting us to Christ* and *keeping us in Christ*; therefore, God is our Father and we are His forgiven children. Then, *based on that blessed relationship*, we will inherit the kingdom which was prepared for us 6,000 years ago – *when God laid the foundation of the world. Realize this: The kingdom is ours because of God's blessing*, not our goodness! Now Jesus points out *the evidence of God's blessing*:

- a. ³⁵ "For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me 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.'" // Take note: When Christians feed, clothe, and visit Christians, they are – *in a sense* – doing so to Jesus!

- b. ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? ³⁸ And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? ³⁹ And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' // Christians never take action to earn points with God; instead, they do so because *God has made them His very children!*
- c. ⁴⁰ And 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.'" // So Christians do help others – *that is the evidence of their faith*, but WHO do they help? Jesus said they help His "brothers." So who are His brothers? Let's go to an account in Matthew 12:
⁴⁶ While He [Jesus] was still speaking..., His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. ⁴⁷ And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." ⁴⁸ But He answered..., "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" ⁴⁹ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers!" ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." (NAS) Thus the title: *Christians Help Christians!* In anti-Christian cultures, to help Christians is a confession of faith!

3. **The Goats / Cursed / Children of the Devil:** ⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones [*having been cursed ones*, perfect passive participle], into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;' // **God begins to bless AND**