

## Last Sunday of the Church Year November 22, 2020

Christ the King or Reign of Christ Proper 29 (34)  
Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

# Living the Lutheran Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.*

*An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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The Truth  
About Sheep  
and Goats

Matthew 25:31-46

[http://www.pixleyub.org/sermons/Sheep\\_and\\_goats.htm](http://www.pixleyub.org/sermons/Sheep_and_goats.htm)

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 532 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 219**

**“The head that once was crowned with thorns”**

“If you are one who thinks this world already has enough lawyers, then you should smile whenever the Lord turns one of them into a preacher. We all know about Martin Luther, who initially studied law only to leave it in pursuit of the priesthood, but there was also Thomas Kelly (1769-1855), an Irishman who did the same thing. Educated at Trinity College in Dublin, he left his fancy law degree behind when, troubled by his sins, he found peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. His new joy in the Gospel led him to join the clergy of the Church of Ireland at age twenty-three.

Kelly’s Gospel-centered preaching, however, did not sit well with his superiors, especially the Archbishop of Dublin. So he left the established church and continued his preaching in small independent chapels around Ireland. Over the next fifty years he wrote an astonishing 765 Christian hymns. His powerful Ascension hymn “The Head that Once was Crowned with Thorns” has been published in over 450 hymnals.

Jesus’ ascension was His coronation as King over all for all time...”

- <https://lutheranspokesman.org/2020/05/01/tlh-219-lsb-532-the-head-that-once-was-crowned-with-thorns/> Written by [Lutheran Spokesman](#) | May, 2020
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHQKQ9GYd-M> A brief biography of Thomas Kelly, the author of the hymn, followed by choral singing. David Duerr
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=giH481GsBeo> Voice with organ and lyrics Eamon Younis
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpzoSWoaSso> Congregational singing with organ and string instruments
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHGFNUIEZ8M> Resurrecting | Official Lyric Video | Elevation Worship

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001  
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**O. T.** - “Behold, **I, I myself will search** for my sheep...”

**Psalm** – “**Oh come**, let us sing to the LORD”

**Epistle** – “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead...”

**Gospel** – “*he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations,*”

**Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (Next week: Year B, Isaiah 64:1-9; (RCL), the same reading )**

*These days at the end of November are a season of changing times.*

*The elections are over and newly elected officials prepare to take their positions. The Pentecost season comes to an end and Advent begins next Sunday. The festival called “Christ the*

King” is eclipsed for both church and world by the Thanksgiving holiday which marks the beginning of the Christmas shopping season.

In this atmosphere of changing times and seasons, the words of Ezekiel 34 have an important message for all who identify themselves as the “sheep of his pasture” or the people of God (Psalm 95:7).

Ezekiel 34 is addressed to those people of God who have been living in exile in Babylon. I am expanding the lectionary (commentary) to include verses 1-10 which is essential for understanding what follows...” (continued after the reading)

## Prophecy Against the Shepherds of Israel Verses 1-10

### The Lord GOD Will Seek Them Out Verses 11-24

<sup>11</sup> “For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, **I, I myself will search** for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup> As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will **I seek out** my sheep, and **I will rescue** them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup> And **I will bring** them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And **I will feed** them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup> **I will feed** them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> **I myself will** be the shepherd of my sheep, and **I myself will make** them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup> **I will seek** the lost, and **I will bring back** the strayed, and **I will bind up** the injured, and **I will strengthen** the weak, and the fat and the strong I **will destroy**.<sup>[a]</sup> **I will feed** them in justice.

<sup>17</sup> “As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, **I judge** between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. <sup>18</sup> Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? <sup>19</sup> And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

<sup>20</sup> “Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, **I, I myself will judge** between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup> Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup> **I will rescue**<sup>[b]</sup> my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And **I will judge** between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup> And **I will set up** over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup> **And I, the LORD, will be their God**, and my servant David shall be prince among them. **I am the LORD; I have spoken.**

## The LORD's Covenant of Peace Verses 25-31

- a. [Ezekiel 34:16](#) Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate *I will watch over*
- b. [Ezekiel 34:22](#) Or *save*

### “The Failure of the Politicians (Ezekiel 34:1-10)

The first saying in this chapter begins with “Thus says the Lord God” and then continues with a harsh word directed at the “shepherds” which is a common metaphor for kings, or political leaders. The saying begins with “hoy” usually translated as “woe” in prophetic writings; the sense of the word is to announce doom, even the funeral of the ones being addressed (cf. the NIV “woe”).

These “shepherds” have totally failed in their responsibilities. Instead of feeding their sheep they have been fattening themselves. They have neglected the sick, the injured, the lost. Their rule has not been kind but harsh. The “scattered” sheep is a clear reference to the exile. The saying consists of a sharp criticism of the failure of the shepherds, but with a glimmer of hope of rescue for the sheep, i.e. the people Israel...

### A Search and Rescue Operation (Ezekiel 34:11-16)

And now for the good news. The people’s leaders have failed but there is a search and rescue operation going on. Everyone knows the story Jesus told about the good shepherd who went in search of the one sheep that was lost (Luke 15:3-7). Now, says Ezekiel, just such an operation is going on.

The Lord, the Good Shepherd, has not forsaken those who are scattered in the gloom and darkness of exile, but is searching them out. That God will rescue them and bring them home (13-14). That God will make them to lie down in green pastures and will be their caring Shepherd (15-16). And they will be fed with *justice* (Hebrew, *mishpat*) which is the final, climatic word in this saying in both the Hebrew and English.

- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revise-common-lectionary/christ-the-king/commentary-on-ezekiel-3411-16-20-24-2> James Limburg

### **Psalm 95:1-7a; RCL, Psalm 100 or Psalm 95:1-7a (Psalm 80:1-7; RCL, Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19)**

Psalm 95: 1-9 is also used on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent, Year A

*“...Unlike the so-called “royal psalms,” which focus on the work of the ancient Israelite kings, enthronement psalms celebrate the Lord’s cosmic reign. The feature that the enthronement psalms share is the exclamatory phrase, “The Lord is king!” (Hebrew, YHWH malak; see Psalms 93:1, 96:10, 97:1, 99:1 and 47:8). Psalm 95 does not include that precise phrase, but does celebrate that “the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods” (95:3).*

*The term was coined by Sigmund Mowinckel in 1922.<sup>2</sup> Mowinckel argued that Psalm 95 and the other enthronement psalms were composed for Israel’s major religious festival of the year: the autumn “harvest and new year festival.” Mowinckel argued that during this festival the “enthronement” of Yahweh was liturgically celebrated with the call, “Yahweh has become king” (his translation of YHWH malak), which he understood as being very similar to the Christian liturgical announcement at Easter, “Christ is risen!” “The situation envisaged in the poet’s imagination, is Yahweh’s ascent to the throne and the acclamation of Yahweh as king; the psalm is*

*meant as the psalm of praise which is to meet Yahweh on his 'epiphany', his appearance as the new, victorious king. Hence the name: enthronement psalms."*...

### **A Time for Reproof?**

*Following the opening call to worship and praise (verses 1-7c), the psalm switches to reproving, castigating language at verse 7d..."*

- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revise-common-lectionary/third-sunday-in-lent/commentary-on-psalm-95-3> Rolf Jacobson, Professor of Old Testament and Alvin N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

## **Let Us Sing Songs of Praise**

**95 Oh come, let us sing** to the LORD;

**let us make** a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**2 Let us come** into his presence with thanksgiving;

**let us make** a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

**3** For the LORD is a great God,

and a great King above all gods.

**4** In his hand are the depths of the earth;

the heights of the mountains are his also.

**5** The sea is his, for he made it,

and his hands formed the dry land.

**6 Oh come**, let us worship and bow down;

let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

**7** For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture,

and the sheep of his hand.

*Today, if you hear his voice,*

**8** *do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,*

*as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,*

**9** *when your fathers put me to the test*

*and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work...*

"Psalm 95 appears in a grouping of psalms that focus on the reign of God (Psalms 93, 95-99).

These psalms are sometimes categorized as "enthronement psalms" because of their focus on God's eternal kingship. One popular theory about their origins is that they were recited in the Jerusalem temple during a New Year festival that revolved around the celebration of God's enthronement. If the theory is right, Psalm 95 was part of a grand celebration of God's universal sovereignty with the implicit claim that God was superior to all other deities. This theory, however compelling it may be, is not as certain as the role of Psalm 95 in the book of Psalms.

This psalm and the larger group of enthronement psalms appear in a section of the book of Psalms (Book IV, Psalms 90-106) that seems to be organized to deal with the theological crisis of the Babylonian exile in 587 B.C.E. The theological crisis is expressed in many of the psalms that precede this section (Book III, Psalms 73-89). Such psalms painfully related doubts about Israel's core beliefs (the central role of Jerusalem and the Davidic king in God's plan, for example). But Psalm 95 along with the other enthronement psalms reminded those who doubted that God was still in control, that God was still "a great King above all gods" (verse 3).

Psalm 95 contains two calls to praise and worship God that provide structure to the work (verses 1, 6). Verses 1 and 6 both begin with imperatives that connote movement, perhaps movement of the human spirit to a posture of praise. These imperatives are followed by verbs that invite praise and singing. Verse 1 begins specifically with the imperative “Come!” Then a string of jussives (third-person verbs with invitational character) in the rest of verse 1 and in verse 2 invite praise and worship: “let us sing;” “let us make a joyful noise;” “let us come into his presence;” “let us make a joyful noise.”...

The second major portion of the psalm begins also with an imperative “O come” (though with a different word than in verse 1\*). The invitation that follows, however, concerns not the elements of worship but the right posture for praise: “let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!” Just as verse 3 gives reasons to sing praise, verse 7 states why one should bow and kneel: “we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand” (verse 7a-b). The idea that God is a shepherd complements the earlier declaration that God is king. Ancient Near Eastern people often described their monarchs as their shepherds. Pharaoh was sometimes depicted with a shepherd staff in his hand...

The central theological message of Psalm 95 is that “the Lord is a great King” (verse 3). To recognize God’s kingship is to recognize that God created us and sustains us. For that reason God is worthy of our praise. The psalm also suggests that our praise is more than words lifted heavenward. It is an expression of faith and it should be lived out in faithfulness and trust. This is precisely what the Israelites in the wilderness did not do. To learn from their mistakes and to connect praise and obedience is our calling.”

- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revise-common-lectionary/third-sunday-in-lent/commentary-on-psalm-95> Jerome Creach Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Penn.

\*Verse 1,” halak: to go, come, walk,” Verse 6, “ bo: to come in, come, go in, go”

- <https://biblehub.com/lexicon/psalms>

**1 Corinthians 15:2-28; RCL, Ephesians 1:15-23 (1 Corinthians 1:3-9; RCL, the same reading)**

Verses 1-11 are assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Epiphany, Year C and verses 19-26 are also assigned to Easter Sunday, Year C

## The Resurrection of Christ Verses 1-11

**15** *Now I would remind you, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand,* <sup>2</sup> and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I

persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. <sup>11</sup> Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

### **The Resurrection of the Dead Verses 12-34**

<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. <sup>15</sup> We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If in Christ we have hope<sup>[a]</sup> in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

<sup>20</sup> But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. <sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For “God<sup>[b]</sup> has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. <sup>28</sup> When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all...

### **The Resurrection Body Verses 35-49**

#### **Mystery and Victory Verses 50-58**

*... <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:*

**“Death is swallowed up in victory.”**  
<sup>55</sup> **“O death, where is your victory?  
 O death, where is your sting?”...\***

- a. [1 Corinthians 15:19](#) Or we have hoped
- b. [1 Corinthians 15:27](#) Greek *he*

\*Listen - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQYv8EsGSQ> Dashon Burton, bass John Theissen, trumpet Dan Foster, harpsichord

“1 Corinthians 15:1-11 is, at its core, the proclamation of the gospel. In all of Paul’s writing this is, for my money, the most complete, concise expression of the Good News. And this is it:

- o I. Christ died for our sins (3)
- o II. was buried (4)
- o III. was raised on the third day (4)
- o IV. and that he appeared to his disciples (5)

With the exception of the appearance to his disciples, this gospel shorthand hits the same basic highpoints of the life, death, and life of Jesus that is professed in the great creeds of the Christian tradition. From time to time, readers of Paul’s credo make note (and sometimes even a big deal) of differences in his account when compared to the Gospel versions. Chief among these differences is the fact that Paul makes no mention of the empty tomb. It is, of course, entirely possible that there is something important going on in this. But to me it’s a little bit like Groucho Marx’s famous trick question, “Who is buried in Grant’s tomb?” Perhaps for Paul, mention of the empty tomb is unnecessary, considering his risen-ness...”

- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/reviced-common-lectionary/fifth-sunday-after-epiphany-3/commentary-on-1-corinthians-151-11-2> Karl Jacobson Senior Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis, Minn.

What if there is no resurrection?

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

- A. If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is in vain: **If there is no resurrection, then Jesus is not risen, and Paul and the other apostles have preached in vain.** There is no real, resurrected Jesus whom they serve.
- B. **Worse**, if Christ is not risen, **then** we are found false witnesses of God. If there is no principle of resurrection, and if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then the apostles are *liars*.
- C. **Worse yet**, if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! We can follow Paul’s logic point-by-point:
  - If there is no principle of resurrection, **then Jesus did not rise from the dead.**
  - **If Jesus did not rise from the dead**, then **death has power over Him** and defeated Him.
  - **If death has power over Jesus**, **He is not God.**

- If Jesus is not God, He cannot offer a complete sacrifice for sins.
- If Jesus cannot offer a complete sacrifice for sins, our sins are not completely paid for before God.
- If my sins are not completely paid for before God, then I am still in my sins.
- Therefore, if Jesus is not risen, He is unable to save.
- D. Worse still, if Christ is not risen, then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If there is no principle of resurrection, then the dead in Christ are gone forever.
- E. Worst of all, if Christ is not risen, then in this life only we have hope in Christ, and we are of all men the most pitiable. If there is no principle of resurrection, then *the whole Christian life is a pitiful joke!* If we don't have something beyond this life to look forward to, why hassle with the problems in being a Christian?

➤ <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-corinthians-15/> ©2018 David Guzik

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- <http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/scaerlutherresurrection.pdf> This edition of the Concordia Theological Quarterly, July, 1983 written by David P. Scaer contains an extensive article called "Luther's Concept of the Resurrection in His Commentary on I Corinthians 15".

**Matthew 25:31-46; RCL, the same reading (Mark 11:1-10 or Mark 13:24-37; RCL, Mark 13:24-37)**

*"We come this Sunday, in Matthew's Gospel, to the final discourse of Jesus before his passion.*

*It is also the last "parable" (it is really more a description of judgment than a parable) in the eschatological discourse.*

*The theme of judgment in Matthew's Gospel plays a central role. We encounter it already at the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3. Throughout the Gospel, we are continually made aware of a tension between obedience and disobedience. Like the person who came to Jesus and asked "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16-24), so we too wonder on what side we will find ourselves — the right or the left?..."*

- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/reviced-common-lectionary/christ-the-king/commentary-on-matthew-2531-46-4> Dirk G. Lange Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, The Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, Switzerland

**"The Holy Gospel beginning in the 25th Chapter of St. Matthew"**

**The Parable of the Ten Virgins Verses 1-13**

**The Parable of the Talents Verses 14-30 (Proper 28)**

**The Final Judgment Verses 30-46 (Proper 29)**

***<sup>31</sup> "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> 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, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,<sup>[1]</sup> you did it to me.’**

**<sup>41</sup> “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. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, <sup>43</sup> 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.’ <sup>44</sup> 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?’ <sup>45</sup> 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.’ <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”**

a. [Matthew 25:40](#) Or brothers and sisters

**“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”**

“The parable of the sheep and the goats may present one of the most outworn passages in the Bible.

The last of four consecutive judgment parables, if one counts Jesus’ saying concerning faithful and unfaithful slaves (24:45-51), the parable wraps up Jesus’ extended eschatological discourse that runs through Matthew 24-25...

...the parable sets the scene with “all the nations” gathered before the Son of Man (25:32 NRSV). Many hearers will take “all the nations” (Greek: *panta ta ethne*) in a universalistic sense, as if it means “all peoples.” I endorse this view, but it is controversial. When Matthew’s meaning is most clear, the Greek *ethne* specifically connotes Gentiles (4:15; 6:32; 10:5; 20:19, 25; 24:14; 28:19). Matthew’s meaning is not always clear, but in every occurrence it is possible to translate *ethne* as Gentiles. The NRSV and other translations render *ethne* as “Gentiles” in some contexts but “nations” in others...

Matthew’s emphasis on obedience can be forbidding. I must confess that I sometimes allow that dimension of the Gospel to occlude my awareness of grace. But Matthew’s Jesus does not instruct disciples that they should become the salt of the earth or the light of the world; he tells them they are such. Likewise, Jesus does not command his followers to hunger and thirst for justice, pursue peace, and so forth; he blesses those who do (5:1-16). Judgment simply brings out a reality that has been present all along.”

- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/christ-the-king/commentary-on-matthew-2531-46-7> Greg Carey Professor of New Testament, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.

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“Much attention has been given in the history of interpretation to the identity of the lowliest “brothers.” Are they part of the community of believers or are they outsiders? Do they belong or not? Yet, the parable itself doesn’t seem to be concerned about their identity other than to identify their suffering (hungry, naked, imprisoned, etc.). The parable of judgment is far more focused on the life of mercy that has or has not been lived by those who call out “Lord, Lord!” The criterion of judgment is not one’s confession (not even one’s ecclesial appurtenance) but the mercy we have lived. The parable is far more concerned about how believers have lived out their baptismal vocation and let their light shine before others so that all may see their good works and give glory to God (5:16). The only identity that seems to worry Matthew in this description of judgment is the identification of the other with the King, the Son of Man, with Jesus....”

- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/christ-the-king/commentary-on-matthew-2531-46-4> Dirk G. Lange Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, The Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, Switzerland

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“The Lord’s teaching on the final judgment challenges every disciple of Jesus to be a harbinger of God’s kingdom in a broken world.

The teaching opens with apocalyptic images that convey Christ’s kingship. The image of the Son of Man coming in glory reflects imagery from Daniel 7:13-14 and recalls other places in Matthew’s Gospel where Jesus foretells the coming judgment (24:30-31; 26:64).

In chapter 24, after Jesus privately warns his disciples of dark days ahead when false prophets will arise and many will lose faith, Jesus tells his followers that the suffering will be interrupted by “the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (24:30). He will send out his angels to gather all the elect (24:31). In the passage under study, which marks the end of Jesus’ eschatological discourse (24:1-25:46), the Son of Man has arrived with his angels and is now seated on the throne, where he is called the king (25:34).

The portrait of Christ as King is a fearsome one in this text. All the nations of the world have gathered before him and behold his majesty. This imagery recalls Zechariah 14:1-21 where every nation will recognize the kingship of the Lord as the Lord stands upon the Mount of Olives — Jesus’ own location as he teaches his disciples (Matthew 24:3).

From the throne, the king uses his authority to separate the people. To illustrate the separation of one individual from another, Jesus likens himself to a shepherd who separates his flock of sheep from the goats who are grazing in the same pasture. The sheep receive the place of honor and inherit God’s kingdom (25:34).

Jesus calls the sheep those who are “blessed by my Father” (25:34). Who are the blessed ones? The blessings of the beatitudes foreshadow Jesus’ eschatological teaching. Although the Greek word for “blessed” in 25:34 is not the same as the one employed in the beatitudes, both convey a blessing from God...”

- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/christ-the-king/commentary-on-matthew-2531-46-3> Carla Works Associate Professor in New Testament, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., USA



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## The Matthew Challenge What is the last chapter of Matthew?

### Weekly review thoughts

“In Christian churches that follow the revised common lectionary (*and Lutheran*), we read this text on Christ the King Sunday (Last Sunday of the Church Year). While Ezekiel surely had in mind the immediate restitution of the Davidic house in Jerusalem, it was an easy interpretive move in the early church to take this Davidic reference as an anticipation of Jesus. He is to be the new ruler and he will be the good shepherd, and care for the flock of Israel. He will seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Luke 10:3-7), and he will provide an “abundant life” for the flock (John 10:10). That of course is exactly what the early church saw in Jesus the new king who forgave, cleansed, healed, and fed, that is, who engaged in restorative leadership. Thus the “messianic” hope of Israel for a new king was seen to be fulfilled in Jesus. He gave himself for the common good and had not a shred of self-indulgence...”

- <https://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/onscripture/2011/11/241.html> [Walter Brueggemann](#) “an American Protestant Old Testament scholar and theologian – Wikipedia”

“We are at the end of the church year. The final judgment concludes both the year and this section of Gospel readings from Matthew. We stand continually within that final judgment — in the Gospel, the passion story of Jesus Christ; in our liturgical year, the advent of this passion in the incarnation.”

- <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/christ-the-king/commentary-on-matthew-2531-46-4> Dirk G. Lange Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, The Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, Switzerland

## Thanksgiving Day - USA November 26, 2020

Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Deuteronomy 8:1-10, Psalm 67, Philemon 4:6-20 or 1 Timothy 2:1-4, Luke 17:11-19

Revised Common Lectionary: Deuteronomy 8:7-18, Psalm 65, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, Luke 17:11-19

Are you ready for  
The Mark Challenge ?