

## SCRIPTURE READING FOR NOVEMBER 13, 2022 @ CAPC OAKLAND

### LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Matthew is one of the four gospels. Gospel means good news, it's the title given to the four books in the Bible that tell the life, actions, and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. It was composed in Greek, probably sometime after 70 CE, with evident dependence on the earlier Gospel According to Mark. Our reading today comes at the end of a section of parables (Matthew 24-25:34) that emphasize the faithfulness and obedience of those who follow Jesus.

**WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES**:: this indicates that we're in apocalyptic language, projecting to the end of time, of the Day of the Lord, or what is called the 8<sup>th</sup> Day. Our text has been preceded by 3 parable stories that present the need to be ready as we wait for this **WHEN** things are no longer uncertain: the return of Jesus, the perfecting of what the kingdom planted in his being and teaching.

**SON OF MAN**: This is a title used by Jesus in the gospels for himself. It goes back to an apocalyptic vision in the book of Daniel in which the **SON OF MAN** is seated at the right hand of God and comes to bring about God's Empire/Reign in the world. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." - Daniel 7:9-14

**THE NATIONS**: ἔθνος. (Ethos) a race, a nation, the nations (as distinct from Israel). Here it seems to imply the whole inhabitable world.

**SEPARATE** :: ἀφορίζω pronounced /aphorizó/ to mark off by boundaries from, set apart. Palestinian shepherds (unlike Greek-Roman ones) kept sheep and goats in the same flock. It's related to judgment in this scene and harkens back to several earlier parables about separation/judgment: the wheat and chaff (Mt 3:12); weeds and wheat (Mt 13:24-30); types of fish (Mt 13:47-50); 2 men and 2 women walking together (Mt 24:36-25:30).

Matthew 25:35-46  
NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

<sup>31</sup> **“WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES** in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup> All **THE NATIONS** will be gathered before him, and he will **SEPARATE** people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘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 something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of **the least of these** brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’ <sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You who are *accursed*, depart from me 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 nothing to

drink,<sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’<sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?’<sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just 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.”

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- We’ve been talking about the word HOLY קדוש /kodesh/, it meaning “to be set apart for a specific purpose.” God called the people to be holy - set apart for a particular reason). What is Jesus saying about what it means to be set apart for God?
- How does this story shape or orient your life? Our life as a church? How is it visible?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be or change through this word of scripture?

#### LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

*sheep*:: a common biblical metaphor for the people of God. Used through Matthew’s gospel for the disciples (Mt. 10:16; 18:12; 26:31).

*his right hand*:: throughout the Bible the “right” is considered a place of honor and blessing (Genesis 48:13-20; Psalm 110:1)

*the left hand*:: Biblically associated with the negative, or cursed. In Latin the word *sinister* means left.

*the righteous*:: a word used to designate a life consistent with God’s purposes. Mt 1:19; 6:33. Such a life begins with the following of Jesus, and continues in the demonstration of God’s love and mercy for all people, especially the poor and marginalized.

THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU :: this word in Greek is /basilea/ (like Basilica) it can mean kingdom, empire, reign – both geographic and spiritual. It is announced in the ministry of both John and Jesus Mt 3:2; 4:117; 10:7-18. It completes Gods purposes for the world Mt 6:10; 7:21. The End is a return to the beginning Mt 13:35; 19:

**the least of these**:: in Greek the word **LEAST** is an intensive form of what we translate as “**little ones**” – a term of endearment that Jesus often uses. See Mat 10:40; 12:46-50; 18:10 & 14.

*Feeding the hungry* :: see 12:1-8; 14:13-21; 15:32-39 where it is an act that counters the mismanagement of the greed of the elite.

*Giving drink to the thirsty* :: is a response of welcome to disciples as they conduct their mission (10:42).

*To welcome strangers* :: is to do Jesus’ teaching of indiscriminate love (5:34-38) especially for the marginalized, sick (4:23-24; 8:14-17; 9:36) and foreigners (8:1-4, 4-15 & 5:21-28)

*To take care of the sick*:: is to continue Jesus’ healing work in imitation of his compassion (4:23-24; 8:14-17)

*To visit those in prison*:: is to provide food, drink, and clothing. See 5:42, 6:1-14 for such actions which are to be contrary to dominant cultural practices in that they are nonreciprocal and are concerned for the needs of the others, not the honor an social credit of the giver.

*Notes from Matthew and the Margins. A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading.* Warren Carter. Orbis Books.