

1. In the end, Jesus will judge all mankind.
 - a. Today is Christ the King Sunday. Christ the King Sunday gives us our final vision of Christ the King, ruler of all heaven and earth, sitting on his throne of glory before we begin Advent and our countdown to the birth of baby Jesus on Christmas day.
 - b. In the spirit of Christ the King Sunday, our gospel message has Jesus talking about his role in the last days. He says that at the end he will sit on his throne of glory with all the nations before him, and he will separate the people before him by which people are his and which aren't.
 - c. Jesus is painting the image of himself as the one given the final authority over all people. And the rest of scripture certainly supports this.
 - d. Paul, in our NT passage today, says that God has put everything in subjection under Christ for Christ to conquer all enemies including death and to bring the righteous to God.
 - e. Likewise we have the understanding that it is Christ's death that washes us of our sins; and that in his resurrection, having conquered death, Christ ascended to heaven to intercede on our behalf. Thus those of us who die before the last days have an Advocate in Christ who passes his righteousness to us to grant entrance to heaven.
2. The chosen will go to heaven.
 - a. So all authority and power has been given to Christ and he is the one capable of determining the chosen from those not chosen.
 - b. The manner in which this determination was made, from the beginning of time, was that those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, Christians, will be the chosen while those who have rejected Christ are not chosen.
 - c. So when Jesus is sitting on the throne at the end of days, he will separate the saved from the unsaved, putting the sheep, the saved, to one side, and the unsaved, the goats, to the other side.
 - d. Jesus then intimates that the sheep, those who have been chosen, will be admitted to heaven with the words, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
 - e. He goes on with this explanation: 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, 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.
 - i. It isn't a surprise that the faithful, that Christ's people would be people who would do good and serve him. But what comes next is more surprising.
 - f. "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? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked

and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

- g. The faithful, the sheep, have lived their faith by loving Christ and obeying his commands to love those in the world. What is surprising is the way they respond. Jesus told them that they had taken such care of him and they want to know when they did such things. His response was that anytime they loved one of his people, they loved him.
 - h. For the sheep, their love was an inherent part of them. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, if the Christian doesn't have love, he has nothing. And those Jesus classified as sheep seem genuinely surprised to hear how they have loved Jesus through loving others, because to love Jesus IS to love others. To be a Christian IS to be changed and to become a more loving person. To the sheep, it simply seemed surprising that they would be any way other than the way Christ had called them to be- loving.
3. The rest will go to hell.
- a. Unlike the sheep, the goats have rejected God in Christ. Therefore they are greeted with the words, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
 - b. Jesus tells that he will indeed hand over some to the destruction they have chosen, just as he will hand over the others for eternal life for their faith.
 - c. Because of the imagery of the goats being the ones condemned to eternal punishment, the goat has become a symbol for Satan. In reality, there is nothing inherently evil within goats.
 - d. Sheep and goats in first century Israel looked very similar. If you were standing on a hillside looking at a pasture full of sheep and goats, you wouldn't know which is which. However, a shepherd would be able to tell if he was up close to his flock.
 - e. The imagery speaks of the blending in of believers and unbelievers in daily life. Those that truly don't believe aren't too hard to tell. They are cows standing in a field adjacent to the sheep fields.
 - f. But the goats are those people who intermingle with the believers, act like believers, jump through all the religious hoops, but don't actually have Christ in their hearts.
 - g. They are the kind of people, Jesus says, who, despite their claims of great faith, won't help the needy and love those that need loved. They are the kind of people who fill the pews of many churches across America who either know they don't believe, or simply don't understand what the gospel is about.
 - i. The sheep were blessed for being those who loved the needy. Likewise, the goats are those who never saw Christ in the needy and never exhibited the exact love that Christ had shown them. They failed to be changed by the gospel and thus failed to love.

