

Briefing Document: Judgment Will Come to the Nations Lesson 6

February 8, 2026

Executive Summary

The following briefing synthesizes a theological examination of Matthew 25, focusing on the final judgment and the separation of "the sheep from the goats." The core thesis is that salvation is an inheritance prepared by God from the foundation of the world, rooted in sovereign grace and election rather than human merit. However, the document emphasizes that genuine redemption is necessarily manifested through outward evidence—specifically, selfless love and service toward "the least" of Christ's brethren. In contrast, eternal damnation is presented as a consequence of omission: a failure to believe and a resulting absence of the righteousness that produces Godly love. The document concludes with a vision of the final judgment, where the righteous enter eternal life while the cursed face everlasting punishment.

The Theology of Judgment: Sheep and Goats

The judgment of the nations is characterized by a definitive separation of individuals into two distinct groups, symbolized by their position relative to the King.

- **The Right Hand (The Sheep):** This position signifies a place of blessing and inheritance. Those on the right are addressed as "blessed of my Father."
- **The Left Hand (The Goats):** This position indicates those who are cursed and destined for separation from God.
- **The Identity of the King:** In this scriptural context, Christ is explicitly referred to as the King, exercising sovereign authority to grant or deny entrance into His kingdom.

The Relationship Between Grace and Works

A central theme of the analysis is the distinction between the *basis* of salvation and the *evidence* of salvation.

Salvation as Inheritance

Salvation is described as an inheritance prepared for the believer since the foundation of the world. This indicates a selective, sovereign act of God.

- *NKJV Reference:* "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you..." (1 Peter 1:3-4).

Works as Outward Evidence

While works do not qualify a person for the kingdom, they serve as the "outward evidence of an inward sovereign grace." Redemption enables the believer to perform the deeds Christ identifies in the judgment.

- The acts described in Matthew 25:35-36—feeding the hungry, clothing the ill-clad, and visiting the sick—are manifestations of the redeeming act of God.
- The "mark of salvation" is manifest righteousness, specifically revealed through selfless love.

The Necessity of Abiding

The believer has a responsibility to "abide in the word." While salvation is an act of God, the New Testament repeatedly outlines the responsibility of the believer to maintain their walk and demonstrate their election through their lifestyle.

Identifying Christ in the "Least of These"

The King identifies Himself intimately with His followers. Consequently, actions taken toward fellow believers are regarded as actions taken toward Christ Himself.

- **Defining the Brethren:** The "brethren" referred to in Matthew 25 are those joined to the Lord in one spirit.
- **The Principle of Identification:**
 - *NKJV Reference:* "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..." (Galatians 2:20).
 - *NKJV Reference:* "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (1 Corinthians 6:17).
- **Receiving the Least:** Christ identifies with the most insignificant and inconsequential members of the faith. To receive a spiritually immature believer is to receive Christ and, by extension, the Father who sent Him.
 - *NKJV Reference:* "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me." (Matthew 18:5).

The Nature of Damnation

The judgment of the "goats" highlights that eternal damnation is often a result of what an individual *fails* to do.

- **Sin of Omission:** The goats are not condemned for specific vile acts, but for their failure to demonstrate the love of God. This absence of deeds stems from an absence of faith and righteousness.

- **The Unpardonable Failure:** The primary cause of damnation is the failure to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is illustrated by:
 - **The Ten Virgins:** Five were shut out not for immorality, but for negligence in not having oil.
 - **The Unprofitable Servant:** He was cast into outer darkness because he did nothing with his talent, burying it instead.
- **Destined for the Devil:** Hell was not originally prepared for humanity, but for "the devil and his angels." Those who choose to align with Satan's rebellion share in his eternal destination.

The Finality of the Day of the Lord

The document describes the physical and eternal realities of the final judgment as seen in prophetic literature.

- **The Plague of Judgment:** Based on Zechariah 14, those who fought against Jerusalem will face a supernatural consumption: "*Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.*" (Zechariah 14:12).
- **Eternal Duration:** The judgment results in "everlasting punishment" for the cursed and "eternal life" for the righteous. Notably, the Greek source uses the exact same word for both "everlasting" and "eternal," indicating identical duration for both states.

Phonetic Pronunciation Guide and Definitions

Greek Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Brief Definition
Gymnos [^1]	goom-NOS	Translated as "naked"; refers to being ill-clad or improperly clothed rather than completely without clothing.
Aionios [^2]	ahee-OH-nee-os	Translated as "everlasting" or "eternal"; describes a duration that is perpetual or without end.

[^1]: Referenced in the context of Matthew 25:36 regarding those who are "naked" or ill-clad. [^2]: Referenced in the context of Matthew 25:46 regarding the duration of both punishment and life.