

Matthew 25:31-46

**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.  
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,  
and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.**

**Then the king will say to those at his right hand:  
“Come, you that are blessed by my Father,  
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;  
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.’**

**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 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.”  
Then he will say to those at his left hand:  
“You that are accursed,  
depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;**

for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 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.”

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?”

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.”

And these will go away into eternal punishment,  
but the righteous into eternal life.”

### **Meditation:**

You know...I almost left out the last line...

“And these will go away into eternal punishment,  
but the righteous into eternal life.”

I almost left it out because it so not like Jesus...

what happened to all his talk about God’s unconditional love and mercy?

So, I decided to leave it in and began to do the research that I always do,  
but this time I included this little book (show the book)

“Understanding Difficult Scriptures in a Healing Way”  
by Matthew, Dennis and Sheila Linn.

and I’d like to offer a couple of insights from the Linn’s biblical research...

#1: This is the only time...in all of the New Testament that the phrase ‘eternal punishment’  
occurs...and, on top of that: it is a faulty translation.

It would be better to translate it as: ‘healing in God’s time’...ahh...now that is a biiiiigg  
difference!

**#2. The gospel of Matthew has more threats of vengeful punishment than any of the other gospels. Why? Scholars believe it is because Matthew was writing for a Jewish community after the destruction of the Great Temple.**

**The Pharisees thought that God allowed the Temple's destruction because the Jews who were Jesus' followers were allowed to worship in the Temple.**

**So the Pharisees started to ask God to punish the followers of Jesus and banished them from the temple...thinking they would get back on God's good side..**

**Therefore, in return... the followers of Jesus inserted threats towards the Pharisees into Matthew's Gospel. It was—it is--the famous 'tit for tat'.**

**Some things about humanity seem to be forever the same.**

**So...perhaps, from now on...when we hear passages talking about God sending people to wail and gnash their teeth, to the flames of Gehana for punishment and other such verses...**

**we can chalk them up to human issues...**

**and not lay upon the will of the Holy One....**

**What we can take seriously from this Gospel though is Jesus' instruction to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the imprisoned.**

**Jesus was so concerned about offering love, mercy, compassion and forgiveness to all people, even the supposed sinners that he equates caring for them with caring for him.**

**That is the crux of the matter of Jesus and it ought to be for us as well.**

**Contrary to how many...perhaps even most..**

**Christians think, Jesus did not come to establish a new religion.  
He did not come to judge those who were going to heaven from those going to hell...  
Jesus was not Christian..**

**Jesus was a Jew who died as a Jew...**

**What Jesus did come for,  
is to show us how to love differently  
how to live differently!  
He came teaching a change in consciousness...**

**He came to totally change the playing field all together!  
It wasn't about following the letter of the law...  
but it was totally about the spirit of the Law:  
a spirit of compassion and forgiveness...  
a spirit of Mercy  
a spirit of unimaginable, unconditional love.  
in this life and the next...**

**Jesus had a totally different relationship with the Divine...  
he called God Abba: Daddy...  
and he paid for it with his life.  
The Ancient Jews believed God was Lord and King of the Universe,  
to be pleased and worshiped...  
Jesus believed that God was the most extraordinarily Loving Father...  
source of all Life,  
Giver of all life...  
Lover of all life.**

**Jesus never accepted equality with God**

**or superiority over any one..**

**He invited his followers to do the good he could do and more!**

**He passed on to them the Power of the Spirit**

**that he knew gave him the power to do heal as he could heal.**

**Jesus passionately, exuberantly, fearlessly lived the Truth as he knew  
it and he invites us to do the same.**

**He knew that every human person had their own limitations, faults and failures...  
and he knew that didn't mean thing...**

**One does not need to be completely good in order to do good...**

**One just has to be willing to allow the Divine God to flow one's life  
and this flow is what brings Heaven and Earth together...**

**THIS is the Good News**

**We all have a mixture of good and not so good...**

**sometimes we are loving and kind...**

**and some days we just aren't...**

**some days forgiveness is quick and easy...**

**and some days we hang to resentments for way too long.**

**We are all good goats!**

**and we are loved anyways...and for that we have every reason to say, 'Thank you!'  
amen.**