

Depart From Me You Cursed

At the Second Coming of Christ there is going to be a worldwide judgment. Christ will separate the sheep (saved Gentiles) on His right from the goats (unsaved Gentiles) on His left. And this is what He will say to those on the left.

Matthew 25:41 (NKJV)

41 “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

To be “cursed” in this context is to be placed under the eternal judgment of God whereby one is removed from the presence of God and destined to a place of eternal misery and torment in everlasting fire.

The eternal domain of the lost is consistently described as a place of “outer darkness” in combination with “everlasting fire” (cf. Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 2 Pet. 2:17; Jude 13).

“Those who are offended by the idea of eternal hell-fire as the abode of the lost must at least reckon with the fact that it was Jesus Christ Himself who set forth this doctrine most emphatically (Matthew 5:29-30; 10:28; 13:41, 42, 50; 18:8-9; 23:33).” – **Henry M. Morris**

The everlasting fire is not stated to have been prepared for lost humanity, but rather for the devil and his angels. The devil’s angels are fallen angels who followed him in his rebellion and are called demons. God specifically prepared hellfire for them, but all those who follow Satan in his rebellion will join him in his hell-bound fate. If you don’t want God, you will have Satan and the demons forever.

Revelation 20:10 (NKJV)

10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

– “[Hell] was prepared for the devil and his angels (Rev. 20:10). God never prepared hell for people. There is no evidence from Scripture that God predestinates people to go to hell.” – **Warren Wiersbe**

Matthew 25:42–45 (NKJV)

42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;

43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

44 "Then they also will answer Him, 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?'

45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

Note it's all about Jesus! He mentions either "I" or "Me" 19 times in this section. How one treats Jesus tells the story on them. And how one treats the "brethren" of Christ is really how they are treating Him.

This is sobering on a number of levels. But here we find it is telling on who is really saved and who is not – who will go into the kingdom and who will not.

Recall what Jesus said to Saul as he was on the road to Damascus breathing out "threats and murder" against the disciples of the Lord.

Acts 9:3–5 (NKJV)

3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, **why are you persecuting Me?**"

5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, **"I am Jesus,** whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

How one treats the disciples of Christ is how they are treating Jesus. This is a most serious matter! Jesus takes it very personally! And it is telling!

"As people respond to His disciples, or 'brothers' and align themselves with their distress and afflictions, they align themselves with the Messiah who identifies Himself with them." – **D.A. Carson**

There are sins of omission and sins of commission (Ja. 4:17). Not doing good is the moral equivalent before God of doing evil. To not care about His people is morally evil.

“Those who are not true followers of Jesus will not show kindness to believers (whether they are Jewish or Gentile believers), and will also thereby indicate that they have no connection with Him (cf. 1 Jn. 3:14-15; 4:7-14).” – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

Matthew 25:46 (NKJV)

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

The goats who showed no kindness to God’s people (saved Jews in this context) demonstrated that they didn’t really care about Jesus – they didn’t really know Jesus. And consequently, they will go away into everlasting punishment.

In contrast, the righteous “sheep” who did care for God’s people, in reality showed that they did really know Jesus and consequently they will enter into eternal life.

“While **eternal** may imply a qualitative as well as a quantitative concept, the aspect of unending duration cannot be dissociated from the word.”
– ***Wycliffe Bible Commentary***

The word used here for everlasting/eternal is the very same word used to describe the eternity of God in Rom. 16:26 and 1 Tim. 1:17.

Some have tried to say that while eternal life in heaven is forever the suffering in hell is only temporary and eventually annihilation will consume them. However, the Greek word translated “**eternal**” in “eternal life” is the VERY SAME Greek word used to translate “**everlasting**” in “everlasting punishment”.

Matthew 25:46 (ESV)

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

The very same adjective (Gk. *aionios*) is used in reference to both the punishment and the blessing of life. Both are equal in duration.

Sometimes people want to say that everyone has eternal life – it's just that some will experience it in hell and some in heaven. Really, that is not biblically accurate.

The lost have eternal existence, but it is not eternal life. They will experience "eternal death" or "eternal punishment. Rev. 20:14 describes being cast into the lake of fire as "second death". There is nothing about LIFE there. It's all DEATH – eternal death – eternal punishment. Only saved people will go into the kingdom. Jesus told Nicodemus "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:3). When Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?" Jesus went on to say...

John 3:16 (NKJV)

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

And who are true believers? Well, true faith manifests itself in a love for God's people. That is a major identifying mark of those born again.

The following is the testimony of a man who lived in Germany under the tyranny of Adolph Hitler.

"I lived in Germany during the Nazi Holocaust. I considered myself a Christian. We heard stories of what was happening to the Jews, but we tried to distance ourselves from it, because what could anyone do to stop it?

A railroad track ran behind our small church and each Sunday morning we could hear the whistle in the distance and then the wheels coming over the tracks. We became disturbed when we heard the cries coming from the train as it passed by. We realized that it was carrying Jews like cattle in the cars!

Week after week the whistle would blow. We dreaded to hear the sound of those wheels because we knew that we would hear the cries of the Jews en route to a death camp. Their screams tormented us.

We knew the time the train was coming and when we heard the whistle blow we began singing hymns. By the time the train came past our church

we were singing at the top of our voices. If we heard the screams, we sang more loudly and soon we heard them no more.

Years have passed and no one talks about it anymore. But I still hear that train whistle in my sleep. God forgive me; forgive all of us who called ourselves Christians yet did nothing to intervene.” – ***Story shared in the book “Hitlers Cross” by Erwin Lutzer, p. 99-100***

“Most discussions of the Holocaust speak of two groups of people - the Nazi perpetrators and the Jewish victims. There were also many bystanders who numbered in the millions, most of whom would have described themselves as Christians. The majority 'sought refuge in neutrality.' Yet whether we like to admit it or not, this neutrality was, in effect, complicity.” - ***Erwin Lutzer*** in HITLER'S CROSS, p. 164

Proverbs 24:11–12 (NKJV)

11 Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter.

12 If you say, “Surely we did not know this,” Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?

God help us to have the mind of Christ towards His “brethren” - all fellow believers. For in ministering to them, we are indeed ministering to Christ Himself!

It's all about Jesus!