**Week of December 30, 2018**

**Matthew 25:31-46**

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set\* the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

**Understanding the Scriptures**

In today scripture we talk about some familiar scripture. Joseph and Mary were from Nazareth, which was a long way from Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the center of Jewish life and worship. Mary was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth. She was young and poor. Based on the class system of that time, all three characteristics would make her seem to be an unlikely candidate for the godly mission of being the mother of Jesus. During his time, a young unmarried girl was usually punished with very severe consequences. God chose Mary because of her unwavering commitment of being a servant. For generations, Mary has been praised because her submission to God was a necessary part of His divine plan of brining salvation to the world. Jesus, a Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua was a common name which meant – the Lord saves. Just as Joshua had led Israel to the Promise Land, symbolically, Jesus (Joshua) would lead His people to eternal life. It is in the name of Jesus that people receive healing, demons are banished, prayers are answered, and sins are forgiven forever. Joseph and Mary met Simeon at the Temple where Jesus was to be dedicated. Simeon told them what their child would become. Simeon’s song is often called the Nunc Dimittis, because these are the first words if its Latin translation – Simeon could die in peace because he had seen the Messiah. Simeon told Joseph and Mary that Jesus would have a contradictory effect on people. Some people would reject Him and refuse to accept him as the Messiah, while others would accept Him with joy. Because of this fact, Mary would experience the highs and lows of being the mother of Jesus.

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