

## Christ the King Sunday November 22, 2020



The Lord be with you. Let us pray...

Almighty and everlasting God, you have crowned your Son as King and, by him, will renew your whole creation. May the families of the earth now torn apart and yoked by sin find liberty in him and be subjected to his gentle rule. Grant this, we pray, through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Roman, 20th Century)

**G**od is our shepherd; he will find those lost sheep who are his own. If they have become injured, he will heal them. If they are abused, he will strengthen them with justice. He is Shepherd, the rock of our salvation, the great King above all gods, the creator of everything. So, he is able to care for his sheep who are held protectively in the palm of his mighty hand. Even death itself cannot shake us from his hand. We are kept there so that we may behold his glory on that Day. Then he will separate the goats from the sheep, ushering his flock into the kingdom that he has prepared for them in his great love.

*Behold, I,  
I myself will  
search for  
my sheep  
and will seek  
them out.*

Ezekiel 34:11

promised to return for his Church.

Let us pray... Sovereign Lord, at the end of time your eternal reign will be fully revealed, and all will stand in awe of your Son, Jesus, the King of kings. As we gather in your holy presence, nourish us with word, bread, and wine that we may go forth making that reign known; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The motif of the shepherd-king is as dominant in our first reading (Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20–24) as it is in the rest of Scripture. Knowing this makes it easier to see how the Old Testament is always pointing to Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). The shepherd of the sheep always seeks his flock, no matter how scattered. He will also judge between the sheep, being sure that the lean sheep are well-fed, since his sheep will be fed with justice. This judgment is just, as the shepherd is also God and king.

The Lord is depicted again in our Psalm (95:1-7a) as both shepherd and king. We are the sheep of his hand and the people of his pasture—his possession. We are cared for, the shepherd of the sheep being a rock of salvation. God has always cared for his flock, his kingdom. Our proper response is to come into his presence—into the sheep fold—with joy in thanksgiving and worship.

God's people used to offer firstfruits of the harvest in thanks for a full harvest to come. They gave the very first of what grew, trusting in God for tomorrow. In our second reading (1 Corinthians

*Come, you  
who are  
blessed by  
my Father,  
inherit the  
kingdom  
prepared for  
you from the  
foundation  
of the world.*

Matthew 25:34

15:20-28), Paul equates Christ to the firstfruits of an eternal harvest. He was the prior offering of thanksgiving for a fuller harvest to follow. When death, the last enemy, is destroyed, the full harvest of the kingdom will occur. At the return of “Christ the firstfruits,” all those who belong to Christ (Gal 5:24), including “the dead in Christ” (1 Thes 4:16), will be raised in the harvest to come.

The point of Christ’s kingdom, at least in part, must be that the family of God inherits what should rightfully be his alone. The King, the only begotten Son, gives his kingdom as inheritance to all those who are blessed of his Father. Jesus gave his life so that we could live in his kingdom. Then he gives us the kingdom. Our Gospel reading (Matthew 25:31-46) shows us how Christ Jesus is a King unlike any other king in history.



# Inherit the Kingdom

Find the 37 **bold** words from Matthew 25:31-36 (ESV)

P R E P A R E D U F G A V E E  
M H D N D C R N O S I R P Z T  
D G U R O E A U R E H T O N A  
O E I N H R N M W S B M N Y R  
S N R P G D H M E O A A W R A  
K T E E A R O T L N T F O O P  
D H R T H D Y A C I I O R L E  
S E I A G T S U O I R O L G S  
C O S N N E A N M P E D D V X  
N L I S L G S G E J H T I S J  
S K O P E D E E D F N S J D Y  
A E O T E L H R T H I R S T Y  
G E M K H S B F A T H E R Q Z  
P N A O M E S L E G N A N E H  
H N S I C K D D G O A T S O K

When the **Son of Man comes** in his **glory**, and all the **angels** with him, then he will **sit** on his **glorious throne**. Before him will be **gathered** all the **nations**, and he will **separate people one from another** as a **shepherd** separates the **sheep** from the **goats**. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who 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 **drink**, I was a **stranger** and you **welcomed** me, I was **naked** and you **clothed** me, I was **sick** and you **visited** me, I was in **prison** and you **came** to me.”