

## Thoughts on the Readings of November 22, 2020

### Christ the King Sunday

**The Common Thread** God 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.

**First Reading** - [Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24](#) The motif of the shepherd-king has always been dominant in 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.

**Psalm** - [Psalm 95:1-7a](#) The Lord, again, is depicted 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.

**Second Reading** - [1 Corinthians 15:20-28](#) 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. 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.

**Gospel** - [Matthew 25:31-46](#) 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. This is a King unlike any other king in history.