

Matthew 13:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

Analysis

So shall it be at the end of the world (ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος)—συντέλεια means 'consummation, completion' not mere termination, pointing to the goal toward which history moves. This phrase appears seven times in Matthew (13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20), making eschatology central to Jesus's teaching. **The angels shall come forth** (ἐξελεύσονται οἱ ἄγγελοι) assigns judgment execution to angels, as in 13:39-42, preserving Christ's role as merciful Savior while affirming His sovereignty over judgment.

Sever the wicked from among the just (ἀφοριοῦσιν τοὺς πονηροὺς ἐκ μέσου τῶν δικαίων)—the verb ἀφορίζω ('to separate, mark off') appears in Matthew 25:32 of separating sheep from goats. Note the direction: the πονηροί (actively evil ones) are removed from among the δίκαιοι (righteous, justified), not vice versa. The righteous remain in their inheritance while the wicked are extracted and expelled.

Historical Context

This interpretation follows immediately after the parable (v. 48), showing Jesus's consistent method of explaining kingdom parables. In first-century Judaism, various eschatological expectations existed, but Jesus uniquely emphasized both the certainty of judgment and the role of angels as divine agents, correcting notions that the Messiah would immediately establish an earthly kingdom without prior judgment.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the fact that wicked are removed 'from among' the righteous challenge the world's assumption that Christians should be removed from society?
2. What comfort does angelic agency in judgment provide for believers who face injustice now?

Interlinear Text

οὕτως	ἔσται	ἐν	τῇ	συντελείᾳ	τοῦ	αἰῶνος·
So	shall it be	at	the end	of the world		
G3779	G2071	G1722	G3588	G4930	G3588	G165
ἐξελεύσονται	οἱ	ἄγγελοι	καὶ	ἀφοριοῦσιν	τοὺς	πονηροὺς
shall come forth	the angels	and	sever	the wicked		
G1831	G3588	G32	G2532	G873	G3588	G4190
ἐκ	μέσου	τῶν	δικαίων			
from	among	the just				
G1537	G3319	G3588	G1342			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 13:39 (Evil): The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

Matthew 24:31 (Parallel theme): And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

