

Matthew 25:44

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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?

Analysis

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord (τότε ἀποκριθήσονται καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες, Κύριε, tote apokrithēsontai kai autoi legontes, Kyrie)—Even the condemned call Him Kyrie (Lord), echoing Jesus's warning: 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 7:21). Verbal profession without obedient action proves empty.

When saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? (πότε σε εἶδομεν... καὶ οὐ διηκονήσαμεν σοι, pote se eidomen... kai ou diēkonēsamen soi)—The verb diakoneō means to serve, to minister. Their protest reveals they never saw Christ in the needy; they lacked the eyes of faith that perceive Christ's presence among 'the least of these.'

Historical Context

The goats' defensive question parallels Israel's complaint in Malachi 3:13-15: 'What have we spoken so much against thee?' When confronted with their hard words, they feign innocence. Similarly, the goats can't recall neglecting Christ because they never perceived His presence in the vulnerable. This judicial scene anticipates Revelation 20:12-15, where books are opened and the dead judged 'according to their works.'

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does calling Jesus 'Lord' without obedience constitute taking His name in vain?
2. What spiritual blindness prevents people from seeing Christ in the suffering and marginalized?
3. In what ways might our theological correctness mask practical failure to serve Christ through serving others?

Interlinear Text

τότε	ἀποκριθήσονται	αὐτοὶ	καὶ	αὐτοὶ	λέγοντες	Κύριε		
Then	answer	him	also	him	saying	Lord		
G5119	G611	G846	G2532	G846	G3004	G2962		
πότε	σε	εἶδομεν	πεινῶντα	ἢ	διψῶντα	ἢ	ξένον	ἢ
when	thee	saw we	an hungred	or	athirst	or	a stranger	or
G4219	G4571	G1492	G3983	G2228	G1372	G2228	G3581	G2228
γυμνὸν	ἢ	ἀσθενῆ	ἢ	ἐν	φυλακῇ	καὶ	οὐ	
naked	or	sick	or	in	prison	also	not	
G1131	G2228	G772	G2228	G1722	G5438	G2532	G3756	
διηκονήσαμέν	σοι							
did	unto thee							
G1247	G4671							

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 7:22 (References Lord): Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

Luke 10:29 (Parallel theme): But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

Jeremiah 2:23 (Parallel theme): How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways;

Jeremiah 2:35 (Parallel theme): Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.

Malachi 3:13 (References Lord): Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?

Malachi 2:17 (References Lord): Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

Malachi 1:6 (References Lord): A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?