



MISUSED SCRIPTURE, Week 7

Matthew 25:40-46

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OPENING:

Being saved from the threat of hell is not the real gift of Christianity; being in union with God, that is the real gift.

- Audrey Assad on the [Midrash NYC podcast](#)

- When are times you have felt in union with God?
- What were you doing?

READING:

Matthew 25:40-46 (NIV)

40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

UPCOMING EVENTS:

We have some great events planned for the summer! For a full list and to RSVP, please go to forefrontnyc.com/summer

7/28 - [Evensong](#)

8/30 - [Mets Game](#)

WHY FOREFRONT?

Help us improve our outreach strategies - take this two question survey!

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DISCUSSION:

In this passage, Jesus uses the word *gehenna* where it is translated into English as *hell* or *eternal fire*. "Gehenna" referred to a trash heap outside of the city of Jerusalem. It was a real place. Jesus uses it here as a metaphor for the "trash people" the Pharisees had become. Outsiders and those deemed unclean were banished there.

- Why do you think Jesus uses this strong metaphor?
- We read this metaphor literally - translating a trash heap outside of Jerusalem into *hell* or *eternal fire*. Why do you think this was important to translators to make literal?
- What does making *gehenna* literal do to the gospel message of Jesus?
- How does the passage change when we read *gehenna* as a metaphor for becoming "trash people"?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Spend a few moments meditating in silence on this phrase.

God with us, guide me on the further journey.