

Who Are Jesus' Brothers and Sisters? (1)

Scripture Reading — Matthew 25:31-40

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40 —

We're called to care for the hurting brothers and sisters of Jesus. Someday the King will ask us to give an account of our care for them. What will we say?

As we think about this, we might want to ask, "Who are these brother and sisters anyway?"

Some people suggest that Jesus' story in our reading for today pictures a judgment in which the nations are assessed on how they have treated the Jews. According to a book called *Constantine's Sword* by James Carroll, the nations as well as the church may have something to worry about. Jews have been slaughtered again and again throughout history, from the days of the Roman Empire and on through the Crusades and more recently in the Holocaust of World War II.

Now, I agree that the Jews are Jesus' brothers and sisters as much as any other people, and many of them have been horribly oppressed. But Jesus himself did not single out the Jews in this story. He's talking about people of all nations who have been mistreated and who need to be shown his love, just as he showed it to us.

We must care for all the hurting brothers and sisters of Jesus, including the Jews. As the apostle Paul reminds us, God wants everyone to embrace Jesus as Savior (Romans 10-11). So we should take care not to exclude anyone when we think of Jesus' brothers and sisters.

Prayer

Lord, we grieve at how the Jewish people have been persecuted throughout history. Bring peace, we pray, for all your people in this world, by your saving grace. Amen.

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