

Biblical Notes — Matthew 25:31-46

"There are three different ways that premillennialists have responded to this argument. The first response is that Matthew 25 contains an example of prophetic foreshortening a compression of future events in which the divine sentence of eternal punishment is rendered at the Second Coming, but the actual consignment to eternal fire does not occur until a thousand years later. According to this view, the righteous enter the millennial kingdom at the Second Coming, but the wicked are not immediately thrown into the lake of fire, even though this eternal sentence is rendered at the return of Christ. In this way, at the judgment of Matthew 25 the eternal fire prepared for the devil becomes the immutable and ultimate destination of these unbelievers without being their immediate experience."

— Matthew W. Waymeyer, Amillennialism and the Age to Come: A Premillennial Critique of the Two-Age Model, (The Woodlands, Tx, Kress Christian Publications, 2016), 121.

"A third and final premillennial response is that the unbelievers who are alive when Jesus returns will be consigned immediately to the lake of fire in Matthew 25 and therefore will not take part in the final judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. Although this view is not common among premillennialists, it appears to be consistent with the biblical data, and several arguments can be made in its favor. First, this view is most easily harmonized with the straightforward reading of Matthew 25:41 and 46, which appears to portray unbelievers being thrown into the eternal fire at the very time that this judgment takes place. Second, the description of the goats' destiny as "the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and for his angels" (Matt 25:41) seems to imply that they are consigned to this fire prior to Satan, who is not consigned there until the end of the millennium (Rev 20:10). Third, Scripture clearly teaches that at least two individuals—the beast and the false prophet—will be cast into the lake of fire at the time of the Second Coming (Rev 19:20), a thousand years before the final judgment in Revelation 20:11-15; so there is categorical reason that these unbelievers could not also be thrown into the lake of fire when Jesus returns. Fourth, if the goats are resurrected and judged again in Revelation 20:11-15, their physical death must take place at the Second Coming, but Matthew 25 says nothing about their death as part of this initial judgment. It cannot be proven that Scripture requires this view, but it certainly appears to be consistent with what the Bible teaches."

— Matthew W. Waymeyer, Amillennialism and the Age to Come: A Premillennial Critique of the Two-Age Model, (The Woodlands, Tx, Kress Christian Publications, 2016), 123-124.