

Thursday, November 30

Scripture Reading: NIV Matt. 12:49-50 (cf. Matt. 12:46-50)

Text for Today: Pointing to his disciples, he said, *Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.*

The poet, W. H. Auden stated during the “ramping up” period just prior to World War II, “We must love one another or die.” This Christmas season, when we stand on the brink of a larger war, the birth of Jesus reminds us of the metaphorical brotherhood of all people as a result of all being equal in worth in the sight of God, and that as Christians we are also adopted at baptism as brothers and sisters of Christ.

When Cain killed his own brother Abel, who was a shepherd of sheep, God asked him, “Where is your brother Abel?” – indicating a social responsibility for his brother. Cain sidesteps that difficult question with sarcasm: “Shall I shepherd the shepherd” Shall I shepherd him as he shepherded sheep? Or, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” as he kept sheep. I doubt that condescension has been missed by many of the recipients of aid given by those who saw themselves as their brother’s keeper.

In the story in Genesis, God ignored Cain’s impudence, and said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.” (Genesis 4:10) From the direct teachings of Jesus, the answer to Cain’s question is, “No! You are your brother’s brother.” That’s worth remembering this Christmas season as the winds of war blow as cold as a winter wind.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, born to rule as Christ and King over all creation, grant peace and have mercy upon us and open our hearts and minds to the joy that you now in heaven rule and judge in behalf of God the Father Almighty. Amen.

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