

kingship for eternity. The expected Messiah of the Jewish people was to be a king of the same ilk as David.

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Our Old Testament lesson from Ezekiel describes God like a good shepherd - gathering the sheep in after they have been scattered, giving them the security of the herd, feeding them with good pasture, and watering them. God will save the flock by separating them and protecting them from those who would push them around and butt them with their horns.

Matthew's picture of Jesus is similar. This Christ the King is the shepherd who would bring all the nations together and protect the sheep by separation from the rough goats. The king would separate those who are gentle and caring from those who would push others around or ignore their needs.

This Christ the King gives assurance to those who follow his ways and aspire to live as Jesus taught and lived. And this King deals harshly with those who do not live in harmony with this kind of community.

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For us today as we enter Thanksgiving week, let us too hear the message of Matthew as one of good news. Let us give thanks for all that God has given us as we have been gathered together into community, fed and watered according to our needs, and protected from those who would harm us. Christ Jesus is the eternal king who assures us that shepherd's protection.

As citizens of Christ's eternal kingdom, let us always be those who have the nature of feeding the hungry, quenching the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, visiting the prisoner. As believers in Christ's kingship let us be people of compassion and righteousness.

And for goodness sake, don't be an old goat!