

Eudaimonism: Juxtaposition to the Concept of the Last Judgment on Matthew 25:31-46

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Abstract

The concept of “last judgment” means punishment for the wicked and reward for the righteous with the ultimate goal of human life. Philosophers’ theories sometimes contradict the contents of the Bible. Does eudaimonism go against the Bible or support each other? This study endeavours to cultivate a deeper insight into Aristotle’s happiness theory-eudaimonia juxtaposed with the pericope in Matthew about the final judgment. With a literature review approach, this qualitative method interpreted the narrative through several stages. Eudaimonia walks in rhythm with the concept of the final judgment in Matthew 25:31-46. Eudaimonia is about doing virtue as a self-maximizing potential to achieve the ultimate goal of human life, which is judged by reason as a demand of someone’s current situation with the assumption that leads to the truth. Matthew 25:31-46 reveals that the determination of “last judgment” is judged through practical religion by sharing Jesus’ friendship “today” through virtue with those who hunger and thirst for truth. Those who do it will receive the kingdom of God, and those who do not will be thrown into eternal fire.

Keywords: Eudaimonism, Last Judgment, Matthew 25:31-46.

Abstrak

Konsep “penghakiman terakhir” berarti hukuman bagi yang jahat dan penghargaan bagi yang benar dalam fase terakhir kehidupan manusia di bumi, sedangkan eudaimonisme, dari sudut pandang Aristoteles, menghubungkan kebahagiaan dengan tujuan akhir kehidupan manusia. Teori para filsuf terkadang bertentangan dengan isi Alkitab. Apakah eudaimonisme bertentangan dengan Alkitab, atau saling mendukung? Kajian ini berupaya untuk menggali lebih dalam dan menumbuhkan wawasan yang lebih dalam tentang teori kebahagiaan Aristoteles-eudaimonia yang disandingkan dengan perikop dalam Matius 25:31-46 tentang penghakiman terakhir. Penelitian ini

menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan kajian literatur dengan melakukan tafsir narasi melalui beberapa tahapan. Sebagai simpulan, *eudaimonisme* dalam konsep, berjalan seiring dengan konsep penghakiman terakhir di Matius 25:31-46. Pandangan Aristoteles tentang kebajikan adalah melalui potensi maksimal diri dalam mencapai tujuan akhir kehidupan manusia yang dinilai oleh nalar sebagai tuntutan situasi yang sebenarnya karena nalar mengarah pada kebenaran. Matius 25:31-46 mengartikan bahwa penentuan “*last judgment*” dinilai melalui agama praktis yaitu mempraktikkan teologi melayani dengan berbagi persahabatan Yesus “hari ini” melalui kebajikan kepada mereka yang lapar dan haus akan kebenaran. Orang yang melakukannya akan menerima kerajaan Tuhan, dan yang tidak melakukannya akan dimasukkan ke api yang kekal.

Kata-kata Kunci: Eudaimonisme, Matius 25:31-46, Penghakiman Terakhir

Introduction

There are many myths about happiness. Practically, some people believe that marrying the right partner, having children, and working for a large of salary will make a person happy forever. On the other hand, not being married, not having children, and difficult finding a job could make a person unhappy. The concept of happiness for everyone is relative¹ and sometimes influenced by culture and real life.² Studies have shown that happiness is significantly related to cultural factors such as collectivism. The culture that is higher in collectivism—strong kinship and group relationships—is more likely to promote general social engagement and enhance the experience of happiness. Happiness, in this case, is a positive feeling while doing social engagements and having connectedness.³ Kuba Krys, et al., in contrast to what Ford et al. assumed and argued in their study of fifty countries with alternative representatives of cultural individualism, that happiness is more easily measured specifically by the level of personal life satisfaction.⁴

¹ P. Fargas & J. M. Innes, (eds.) *Recent Advances in Social Psychology: An International Perspective* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Science, 1989), 235.

² C. Hommerich & S. Klien, “Happiness: Does Culture Matter?” *International Journal of Wellbeing* 2, no. 4 (2012): 292, <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v2.i4.1>

³ Howard-Brook Wes, *Becoming Children of God: John's Gospel and Radical Discipleship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 9.

⁴ Kuba Krys et al., “Personal Life Satisfaction as a Measure of Societal Happiness Is an Individualistic Presumption: Evidence from Fifty Countries,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 22, no. 5 (2021): 2197, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-020-00311-y>.

From a psychological perspective, happiness can be explained from two perspectives. First, the perspective of welfare theory. This theory emphasized on the valued experiences, positive confidence, and positive psychological functioning. Second, the basic emotional perspective of what is experienced. This theory relates to what is done, and what is achieved.⁵ It is corroborated by Diener's research. According to Diener, happiness is a manifestation of positive emotional feelings and a few negative emotions.⁶ Seligman et al., termed the theory of happiness and the theory of well-being, with components of the enjoyment of life, the good life, and meaningful life that focuses on the self after the pursuit of actual achievement and social relationships.⁷ The studies described by several researchers above however, can be used as a foundation for understanding the meaning of happiness and its cultural and psychological aspects.

Theory of Eudaimonia and Last Judgment

In contrast to the meaning of happiness that has been described from the cultural and psychological aspects, Aristotle connected happiness with the ultimate goal of human life by using the word "eudaimonia". Happiness (*eudaimonia*) is an activity that corresponds to virtue. Michael Pakaluk demonstrated that if happiness is an activity that corresponds to virtue, then it is natural if it becomes an activity that corresponds to the highest virtue.⁸ Edward L. Deci & Richard M. Ryan argued that eudaimonia was about individual, non-collective happiness because of the strong kinship ties resulted from the process of realizing

⁵ Lukasz Dominik Kaczmarek, "Happiness," in *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, ed. Virgil Zeigler-Hill and Todd K. Shackelford (Switzerland: Springer, 2020), 1876.

⁶ Ed Diener et al., "New Well-Being Measures: Short Scales to Assess Flourishing and Positive and Negative Feelings," *Social Indicators Research* 97, no. 2 (2010): 143, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-009-9493-y>.

⁷ Martin E. P. Seligman et al., "Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions," *The American psychologist* 60, no. 5 (2005): 410, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.60.5.410>.

⁸ Michael Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 24.

one's true nature.⁹ This statement is confirmed in the journal reviewed by Veronica Huta and Ryan who mentioned that eudaimonia was about one's best ability to apply virtue, show gratitude, and develop one's potential.¹⁰ The assertion of Aristotle's statement is also expressed by Ryan and Martela who argue that eudaimonia should not be understood as a subjective experience limited to feelings of happiness but more to good and valuable living behaviours and lifestyles that can produce happiness, vitality, and health.¹¹

The last judgment in Christian theology is the eternal judgment of God upon every people. This concept is found in all the canonical gospels, especially in the gospel of Matthew. There are many versions of the explanation of God's last judgment offered by various denominations. Although, there are many views offered by various church denomination in regard to time of the execution of God's last judgement, this study concurs with the idea that the last judgement occurred at the second coming of Jesus.

Studies on the last judgment focus more on sin. A person will receive the last judgment on the sins he has committed. People who have sinned will not escape from the last judgment, and they will hear the words "depart from Me".¹² Proverbs 6:17-19 categorized sin as an abomination: a proud eye, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises evil plans, feet that quickly run to evil, lying, and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

In the final judgment, the pericope of Matthew 25: 34-36 explains that the last judgment deals with the separation of people based on their

⁹ Edward Deci and Richard M. Ryan, "Hedonia, Eudaimonia, and Well-Being: An Introduction," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 9, no. 1 (2008): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9018-1>.

¹⁰ Veronica Huta and Richard M. Ryan, "Pursuing Pleasure or Virtue: The Differential and Overlapping Well-Being Benefits of Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 11, no. 6 (2010): 735-762, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-009-9171-4>.

¹¹ Richard M. Ryan and Frank Martela, "Eudaimonia as a Way of Living: Connecting Aristotle with Self-Determination Theory" in *Handbook of Eudaimonic Well-Being: International Handbooks of Quality-of-Life*, ed. Vittersø, J. (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 110.

¹² Olowu Ayodeji, "Christians' Perception of the Concepts of Death and Judgment: A Multimodal Discourse Analytical Study of Selected Editions of Christian Women Mirror Magazine," *International Journal of English and Literature* 4, no. 10 (2013): 511, http://academicjournals.org/article/article1383241275_AYODEJI.pdf.

behaviour. Doubtless, the happiness of Aristotle's theory was intertwined with the last judgment. It just needs to be cultivated deeper. Does Aristotle's theory of happiness have the same meaning as giving behaviour? How alignment is it to the last judgment?

Method

This study used a qualitative method¹³ with a literature review approach by interpreting the narrative. The first step is to analyze and discuss the philosophy of "eudaimonism" coined by Aristotle. The second step is to examine and debate Matthew 25: 34–36 in the context of the final judgment and "giving" behaviour. The third step is to analyze and compare the eudaimonism theory to the Matthean final judgment.

Result and Discussion

Eudaimonia

Discussing the word *eudemonia*, however, is always linked with the idea of the ethics of kindness¹⁴ which can be explained from various perspectives. First of all, in terms of etymology, eudemonia consists of two words; "εὖ" (*eu*) and "δαίμων" (*daimon*). "εὖ" means "well" or "good", and "δαίμων" relates to divine beings, divine power, and luck. If the two words are combined, they will form a new word; eudaimonia (εὐδαιμονία), which connotes prosperity, happiness, wealth, good fortune, and satisfaction. Second, the word eudaimonia is important to interpret from the point of view of ancient Greek philosophy, which deals with central concepts in Aristotelian ethics. In this case, eudaimonia (εὐδαιμονία) must be juxtaposed with "ἀρετή" (*arete*), which means moral virtue.¹⁵

When Aristotle used the word "eudaimonia," he defined it as 'the happiness of the soul,' precisely the happiness that humans always

¹³ Eko Sudarmanto et al., *Desain Penelitian Bisnis: Pendekatan Kuantitatif* (Medan: Medan: Yayasan Kita Menulis, 2021), 45.

¹⁴ E. Charry, *Theology after Psychology, Care for the Soul: Exploring the Intersection of Psychology and Theology*. (Eds.) Mark McMinn and Timothy Phillips. (Downer Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press., 2011), 11.

¹⁵ R. Hursthouse, *Environmental Virtue Ethics*, In Rebecca L. Walker & Philip J. Ivanhoe (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 89.

experience while living in the world. According to him, life itself consisted of having an active mind. He believed that most people get most of their enjoyment of learning things in the world. He assumed that the attainment of an understanding of the world was not merely academic knowledge, but an understanding of every aspect of the experience as the true goal of life itself. It is also related to the process of learning to think about how to live well and live the best way. This requires a self-conscious habit, which animals, according to Aristotle, are incapable of.¹⁶ Aristotle's view was also supported by another ancient Greek philosopher, Democritus, who held the view that a happy life in the context of eudaimonia is closely related to virtue, goodness, pleasure, or a prosperous life.¹⁷ The explanation above demonstrates that eudaimonia is one of the ancient Greek ethics and is often referred to as Aristotle's ethics.

However, Aristotle's ethic is unselfish and complete. To explain the entire virtue, Aristotle employs the concept of general justice. First, he distinguishes virtues that are performed concerning oneself such as modesty, and second, virtues that are performed with others. People with general justice have both. General justice will be a quality found only in communities where virtuous people can find people to object to their virtuous actions. That is the meaning of "complete".¹⁸

The understanding of the word "eudaimonia" is almost always translated as "happiness". The word "happiness" is commonly used to translate eudaimonia, but the translations can easily give the wrong impression. Happiness in English is assigned to feelings, perchance a feeling of contentment, or pleasure. In the psychological literature, the term "happiness" is viewed as a general representation of well-being that refers to aspects of hedonistic or pleasure-centered behaviour.¹⁹ Happiness is the extent to which individuals can give pleasure and evaluate their lives rightly. In particular, Seligman, 2005 related eudaimonia to positive psychology. Positive psychology was introduced by Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis on basic techniques for changing

¹⁶ Edith Hall, *Aristotle's Way* (London: The Bodley Way, 2014), 112.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁸ Roger Crisp, *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 122, 132.

¹⁹ Susan A. David, Ilona Boniwell, and Amanda Conley Ayers, *The Oxford Handbook of Happiness* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 104-110.

emotions with habit-forming beliefs. Seligman et al. combined Beck and Ellis' theory with Aristotle's notion of universal virtue as a strength of character. The result is a meaningful and virtuous life recognized by all human cultures.²⁰

In regards to the idea of happiness, Pearce, Huta & Volaca (2020) demonstrate that happiness is different from well-being. According to them, happiness can be noticed from two approaches: the hedonian and the eudaimonian. The hedonian approach is a condition of seeking maximum pleasure, pleasant life as a whole with instant gratification. Whereas, eudaimonia relates to changing and growing that calls for people to recognize and live according to their true self.

It is fundamental to determine the terms "hedonia" and "eudaimonia." Veronika Huta in David et.al²¹ clarified that eudaimonia encompasses the state and/or pursuit associated by using and developing the best in oneself. Hedonia includes conditions and/or pursuits related to pleasure and enjoyment, and the absence of pain and discomfort. In contrast to Veronika Huta, Taysa-Rhea Mise & Michael A. Busseri²² stated that hedonia and eudaimonia are identified as related factors, though, they still remain different; related in terms of general orientation and motives, but different in terms of individual orientation and motives.

The focus of this study is on eudaimonia. Eudaimonia from Aristotle's outlook was about how one reaches their full potential, and it's not only a matter of feelings. It is much more closely related to what one has made of oneself and one's life. Happiness, in the sense of eudaimonia, is about living well or do sincere kindness.²³ Eudaimonia is important when paired with the word "arete". Arete refers to quality. In Ethics, Aristotle speaks specifically of two types of arete. The first is one's moral character, such as courage, or generosity, and the other is one's skills in thinking, such as being good at planning, or quickly

²⁰ Jules Evans, *Philosophy For Life and Other Dangerous Situations : Ancient Philosophy for Modern Problems* (London: Rider Books, 2012), 76-77.

²¹ David, Boniwell, Conley, 104-110.

²² Taysa Rhea-Mise and Michael A. Busseri, "The Full Life Revisited: Examining Hedonia and Eudaimonia as General Orientations, Motives for Activities, and Experiences of Wellbeing," *International Journal of Wellbeing* 10, no. 4 (2020): 74, <http://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v10i4.951>

²³ Gerard J. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics* (Canada: Routledge Philosophy GuideBooks, 2003), 92.

grasping the meaning of something.²⁴ From a religious perspective, Christianity in the west and Confucianism in the east assert that eudaimonia is a concept of what it means to be a better person. There are the principles of virtue, humanity, and the delay of satisfaction.²⁵ Huges argues that eudaimonia is precisely the goal of morality related to fulfilment, happiness, and well-being.²⁶

If eudaimonia plays a role in well-being, then it is important to determine what makes people feel eudaimonia. Distal and sustainable potential predictors include cultural backgrounds, religious backgrounds, values and guidances provided by one's parents and role models, life experiences such as meeting psychological needs and past challenges, and opportunities permitted by living conditions such as basic security and everyday life. Personality and genetics both play a role in making people eudaimonian.²⁷

When eudaimonia is about full potential, quality, and getting better, it gives an understanding that there is a process to achieve happiness. The process includes the implementation of all the virtues limited by contemplation. The meaning of meditation is to ensure that when an individual does good, he needs to meditate on whether the purpose of his doing virtue is for service to God or self-pride. If you do it sincerely for the glory of God, do it.²⁸

Eudaimonia: Doing Virtue

One of Aristotle's most authoritative works is ethics. According to Aristotle, the goal of ethics is to fulfil the purpose of life and to acknowledge that happiness is the highest ultimate good. This idea relates to the pursue good things in order to achieve happiness.²⁹ In other words, Aristotle declared that the way to accomplish happiness is through virtue.

²⁴ Gerard J. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*, 92.

²⁵ David et. al., 104-110.

²⁶ Gerard J. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics* (Canada: Routledge Philosophy GuideBooks, 2003), 92.

²⁷ Veronika Huta, "Eudaimonia," in *Oxford Handbook of Happiness*, eds. S. David, I. Boniwell, A. C. Ayers (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-13

²⁸ Anthony Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethic* (UK: Clarendon Press, (2016), 234-240.

²⁹ Paul Kleinman, *Philosophy 101* (Massacussets: Adams Media, 2013), 114.

More simply, Aristotle characterized the highest kind of happiness, which is the highest virtue, as practicing sense (mind) in living life through intellectual contemplation. However, to achieve such a level of virtue, one requires the right and acceptable social environment.³⁰

A more practical explanation was given by Hauerwas. Eudaimonia is the name of a sequence of affectionate actions and activities. As Aristotle stated, eudaimonia is a charitable soul activity performed by a virtue. All the supported goods are necessary prerequisites for happiness or are essentially partners with them and advantageous instruments for achieving them.³¹ Aristotle also tied this conception of complete virtue with special law and general justice. The concept exposes that the law ultimately aims to manifest all virtues in the citizens it governs. So, what is generally fair is what is legal. Aristotle thought of the law in an ideal sense. General justice is another individual virtue, which must be equated with temperament, generosity, courage, and so on, as part of general justice.³²

In Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, eudaimonia was the outcome of virtue, supported by learning action, and ardent effort. He concluded that if an individual evolves himself to be favourable, by doing good deeds and governing self-ugliness frequently afterward, he will achieve a happy state of mind which comes from the habit of doing the right thing.³³

Philosophy is not just a process of abstract reflection, but also practice. Aristotle teaches us those individuals obtain virtue through practice. Philosophy is about training, a series of daily mental and physical exercises, that becomes easier by practice. Greek philosophers often used the metaphor of gymnastics: just like when you want to strengthen the muscles, then you need to train them repeatedly to such an extent that the muscles become strong, so, when you want to

³⁰ Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethic* (UK: Clarendon Press, 2016), 234, 240.

³¹ Stanley Hauerwas, "Happiness, The Life of Virtue and Friendship: Theological Reflections on Aristotelian Themes Part I : On Being Temporally Happy," *The Asbury Theological Journal* 45, no. 1 (1990): 5, <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/asburyjournal/vol45/iss1/2/>.

³² Roger Crisp, *Nicomachean Ethics* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 122, 132.

³³ Edith Hall, *Aristotle's Way* (London: The Bodley Way, 2014), 112.

strengthen your “moral muscles”, you need to train them repeatedly until they become strong. After adequate training, we naturally feel the correct emotions and situations, and do the right thing.³⁴ Virtue should be practiced. When practiced repeatedly, in such a way, the muscles of happiness become strong. When they are strong, they can create emotion of happiness.

Seligman et.al. showed that virtue is closely related to religion. Religion has been empirically linked to three human virtues. Forgiveness, which means releasing painful and bitter thoughts and emotions; gratitude, which is a sense of awe and appreciation for life; and compassion, which is a virtue of nurturing, giving concern, and having altruistic love.³⁵

James Wallace classified virtues into three groups. The virtues of self-discipline, like courage, determination, and endurance; virtues of conscience, such as honesty and justice; and virtues that require benevolence towards functioning as kindness and compassion. These three virtues could alter the accomplishment of individual projects and integrate them into communities. Humans are expected to be content if the people around them are happy.³⁶

Virtue has always been the focus of teaching in every religion. Islam asserts that virtue is Islamic identity, ethical principles, and human values.³⁷ Hindu teachings believe in the moral responsibility of each individual towards others in the practice of virtues such as giving charity, doing good, doing righteousness, giving forgiveness, tolerance, compassion, self-control, brotherhood, friendliness, patience, and gratitude.³⁸ Virtue, according to Buddhism, consists of four virtues. Love

³⁴ Michael Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 76.

³⁵ Martin E.P. Seligman et al., “Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions,” *The American Psychologist* 60, no. 5 (2005): 410, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.60.5.410>.

³⁶ James Wallace, *Virtues and Vices* (Brook Street, LN: Cornell University Press, 1978), 9, 10 in Edith Hall, *Aristotle's Way* (London: The Bodley Way, 2014), 112.

³⁷ Mansoureh Ebrahimi and Kamaruzaman Yusoff, “Islamic Identity, Ethical Principles and Human Values,” *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 6, no. 1 (2017): 326, <https://doi.org/10.26417/ejms.v6i1.p325-336>.

³⁸ Sarim Abbas and Mohammad Jalaluddin, “Ethics and Morality in Islam and Hinduism,” *INSANCITA: Journal of Islamic Studies in Indonesia and Southeast Asia* 1, no. 1 (2016): 38, <https://journals.mindamas.com/index.php/insancita/article/download/28/27>

(*mettā*), inner balance (*upekkhā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and joy (*muditā*).³⁹ For Christianity, virtue is often referred to as moral excellence, goodness, and conformity of life and behaviour to the principles of morality. Christian virtue can be described as having pious excellence, goodness, or righteousness. It is the application of conscious will and personal responsibility to do what is right from the revealed Word of God. These include integrity, honesty, humility, and purity.⁴⁰

Contrary to happiness that is spontaneous, virtue requires choice and habit. It requires a decision that comes from an individual's disposition and must be done over and over again so it becomes a habit.⁴¹ Virtue is a topic of both theoretical and applied knowledge, such as in the fields of music and medicine. In consonance with doctors and musicians, apart from mastering the theoretical aspects of their expertise, they also practice its application. Similarly, when someone wishes to be a good person, he or she not only learns the teachings thoroughly but also practices doing so.⁴²

Giving is the root of all virtues and is a part of theological virtues. This statement is elaborated very clearly by Aquinas. Why is it called a theological virtue? because the object is God. Giving is an expression of love and friendship with God. In theological virtue, God reveals His happiness to man. Like friendship, love puts us in the right relationship with God and one another, even the enemy.⁴³

From the descriptions of experts, Eudaimonia is a series of acts of kindness given to others, practiced in real life, trained, and repeated with the result that it will shape a habit, and ultimately become an automatic activity. The action is completed as a reflection of the existence of love for God, which is bestowed on fellow human beings.

³⁹ Christian U. Becker and Jack Hamblin, "Conceptualizing Personhood for Sustainability: A Buddhist Virtue Ethics Perspective," *Sustainability* 13 (2021): 5, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13169166>.

⁴⁰ Peter White and Samuel K. Afrane, "Maintaining Christian Virtues and Ethos in Christian Universities in Ghana: The Reality, Challenges and the Way Forward," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 73, no. 3 (2017): 3, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4442>.

⁴¹ Paul Kleinman, *Philosophy 101* (Massachusetts: Adams Media, 2013), 114.

⁴² Evans, 39.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 39.

The Last Judgment-Matthew 25:34-36

Matthew 25:31-46 is part of Olivet discourse in which Jesus discusses the end time issue. In particular, the passage under study is about the last judgment, who will execute the judgment and how the judicial process will be imposed. In this passage, Jesus the Son of Man, clothed in glory on the throne and surrounded with the angels, would accomplish His final judgment and inaugurates His eternal kingdom. Later, the Almighty harvests all the nations and begins to separate them into two groups or "dividing them into two groups" (Today's English Version). On His left are cursed people who will be cast into eternal fire with Satan and his angels for not doing good, and on His right are those who are blessed and will inherit the Kingdom that God has prepared in Heaven for their good deeds (Matt. 25:34-41).

Matthew 25:34-46 argues that eschatological accolades and punishments will ensue from the basis of deeds. In other words, the final accolade and punishment are disposed of as consequences that necessarily discharge from the two directions taken; salvation or curse is received through the actualization of two different attitudes, kindness or unkindness. Therefore, the function of Matthew 25:31-46 is to show figuratively that human well-being is formed by a certain dimension of entirety: the response to God and the human feedback in the world are two real sides of the same coin which are interrelated with each other.

George Njeri confers a contrary statement. In his study, he emphasizes how people scared when they are facing the judgment. He declared that Jesus characterized mankind's final judgment by pointing out that the righteous are rewarded and the wicked are punished. Nonetheless, both the righteous and the wicked were astonished by their dignity and were heedless of the criteria of judgment.⁴⁴ Moreover, in contrast to Njeri, Cornelis P. Venema described the final judgment by relating it to justification. He concluded that on the day of judgment, believers who believe in God alone as the truth will be openly released. Their faith in Christ confirms it. Faith will construct good works, as true faith is always supported by its fruits. Believers elaborate the reassurance from the expectation that their good works will be perceived and even

⁴⁴ George Njeri, "Surprise on the Day of Judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 and the Book of the Watchers," *Neotestamentica* 54, no. 1 (2020): 87, <https://doi.org/10.1353/neo.2020.0008>

rewarded at the final judgment. Undoubtedly, for such believers, it will be a day of joy, when their Master says to them: “Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Lord,” (Matt. 25:21, ESV).⁴⁵

As portrayed in the passage, the final judgment of Jesus relates to each person’s behaviour in terms of giving. Peter White and Samuel K. Afrane clarified that becoming Christians relates to the effort of creating “an atmosphere of love and harmony among the various classes of people.”⁴⁶ There will be only two classes of people and their eternal destiny will be decided by what they have done or neglected to do for Jesus which is shown by helping the poor and those who are suffering. As shown in the passage, the word “I” in this parable refers to Jesus. When a person shows kindness by giving to others in need, it is the same as doing a virtue for Jesus. In other words, the last test of every human being is closely related to implementing the principles of true religion through paying attention to people in need, such as feeding, lodging, giving clothes, visiting people who are sick, and visiting people who are in trouble (Matt. 25:36). Concerning the help shown to the needy, James also writes that pure and undefiled worship before God is shown by visiting orphans and widows in their affliction and by keeping oneself unspotted by the world (Jas. 1:27).

Ellen G. White asserted that true religion is a practice. Religion certainly consists of liturgies, rituals, and church ceremonies, but if the activity is not accompanied by virtue practices, then the worship becomes in vain.⁴⁷ Religion is practical piety, and it is the only brand of religion recognized in God’s courtroom. The standard of Heaven’s judgment is faith that bears fruit through the practice of good deeds toward others, especially those in need. Fruitful faith is reaffirmed in several Bible verses. Matthew 13:23 says that whoever hears and understands the word, will bear much fruit. If the Father is glorified, then he will bear much fruit (John 15:8), and the fruits of his spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

⁴⁵ Cornelis P. Venema, “Justification and Judgment,” *Table Talk Magazine* (USA: An Outreach of Ligonier, 2021), paragraph 19, accessed March 3, <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2021/10/justification-and-judgment/>

⁴⁶ White and Afrane, 3.

⁴⁷ Ellen G. White, *SDA Bible Commentary* (USA: Review and Herald, 1967), 1123.

The Juxtaposition of Eudaimonism in the Last Judgment Concept Matthew 25:31-46

The classical theory of eudaimonism, introduced by the philosopher Aristotle (ca. 384–322 BC), can be equated to the pericope of the last judgment found in Matthew 25: 31–46. The ethics of kindness speak of the behaviours and habits that enable a person to have a good end of life and achieve well-being. Aristotle stated that an action was considered “right” when the purpose of that goodness for well-being could be achieved through the practice of daily virtue in a proper social environment.⁴⁸ Aristotle argued that virtue must be defined in terms of “judgment.” According to him, in order that the emotional response becomes virtuous, it must follow what is judged by reason which becoming the actual demands of the situation. For him, reason leads to truth.⁴⁹ This is a very essential allegation. Matthew 25:31-46 also explains the same emphasis on the final judgment.

From a practical religious point of view, Aristotle emphasized that eudaimonia is practical wisdom, while Matthew 25:31–46 terms it as practical piety. Aristotle assumed that people with practical wisdom would support conventional Athenian morality. Such a person can be perceived to be leading a good life. What a wise person practically does is to get the balance right every time.⁵⁰ From a religious point of view, practical piety is about practical religion and practical holiness such as works of benevolence and charity⁵¹ which is authentic as a living religion that reflects the interrelationship between the life and religious manifestations.⁵² Life in practical theological contemplation is essentially formed and determined by resurrection theology (*theologiaresurrectionis*). It also indicated pneumatology, a type of praxis influenced by habit theology, how to demonstrate the gifts of the Spirit (charisma) in daily life. More specifically, it is about charisma and pneumatology fides

⁴⁸ Paul Kleinman, *Philosophy 101* (Massachusetts: Adams Media, 2013), 114.

⁴⁹ Gerald J. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics* (Canada: Routledge Philosophy GuideBooks, 2003), 92.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁵¹ Bobby Kurnia Putrawan and Ludwig Beethoven Jones Noya, “Piety in Thoughts of John Wesley And Friedrich Schleiermacher,” *Jurnal Jaffray* 18, no. 1 (2020): 59, <https://doi.org/10.25278/jj.v18i1.426>.

⁵² Birgit Weyel, “Practical Theology as a Hermeneutical Science of Lived Religion,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 18, no. 1 (2014): 150, <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijpt-2014-0012>.

quaerens vivendi emphasizing the practical theology which is determined by the moral character and ethical ethos of sacrifice and confirmed hospitality, generosity, and service –called *praxis pietatis*.⁵³ Wes Howard-Brook affirmed that practical theology is a theology coming from the heart to share Jesus' friendship "today" particularly in serving those who hunger and thirst for truth. The gift of friendship conveys the ardent truth of the body of Christ: that believers are called to be children of God, to share in the lives of others, and to joy. Practical theology guides the human desire for affection by offering the friendship of Jesus the Messiah. Such high intimacy conjures the spiritual gift of being conveyed by the 'Spirit of God' to take part in the liturgy of joy and singing, at the service.⁵⁴ The "time now" following the Jewish tradition is emphasized through the question, "When will the Messiah come? The answer "today" means "as soon as possible, if the people obey God."⁵⁵ The Scripture reveals that the end of life occurs at the second coming of Jesus. When will Jesus come again? The answer is "soon".

The final life, according to the Bible, ensues at the second coming of Jesus, which commences with a judgment. When a person is chosen by Jesus to be on His right side and inherit the kingdom of Heaven, a good outcome occurs. The group of people who will enter the kingdom of Heaven is a band of people serving Jesus during their life on earth by showing kindness to fellow human beings. Matthew 25:31–46 does not address sins that have been committed but rather conveys the human behaviour of not doing good to everyone who suffers where ever they may be found.

Conclusion

Aristotle explained the concept of Eudaimonia from an ethical and law/judgement point of view. Eudaimonia is happiness of the soul. He connects with one's life purpose. The purpose of one's life is to achieve happiness, and happiness is obtained by doing kindness.

⁵³ Daniël J. Louw, "Practical Theology as Life Science: Fides Quaerens Vivendi and Its Connection to Hebrew Thinking (Hālak)," *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 51, no. 1 (2017): a2239, <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v51i1.2239>

⁵⁴ Howard-Brook, *Becoming Children*, 50.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

Matthew 25:31-46 with the passage title "The Last Judgment" also describes kindness. Kindness deeds done by God's people. At the end of the process of "doing kindness" there will be separation. Separation of two groups of people. The first group is the group sitting at the right side to Jesus who has done kindness deeds and the second group is the group sitting to the left side to Jesus who has not done kindness. This concept is not ignoring about salvation by grace. The assurance of salvation is a gift from God. Kindness is the behavior of the saved. It means, that we are saved by grace, and those who have been saved will be seen from the fruit of their lives (Jas. 2:17). Vertically, loving God, horizontally, loving fellow human beings through doing kindness to the people around us, especially those in need.

The classical theory of eudaimonism corresponds to the last judgment passage found in Matthew 25:31-46 in the concept of goodness from the soul carried out through practice. Aristotle stated that an action is considered "right" when the goal of goodness is to perform everyday virtues in an appropriate social setting. He also argues that virtue should be defined as a process of judgment because it contains elements of justice in doing good. Matthew 25:31-46 also explains the same emphasis on the final judgment which explains that every person who has been saved will be seen through his good deeds. In other words, there is no contradiction exists between the message of Matthew 25:31-46 and the principle seen in Aristotle's understanding of Eudaimonism.

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