

Jim's Notes
November 29, 2006
The Gospel According to St. Matthew 7:21-23

Matthew 7:21

St. John Chrysostom (died A.D. 407)

He said "whoever does the will of my Father" shall enter, not whoever does my will. Why? Nothing is insufficient if they do the will of the Father. What he did say was itself a very difficult thing to accept in view of their weakness. He implied that to do his Father's will is to do his will. There is no other willing of the Son than the will of the Father. This may apply in particular to those who commit themselves in detail to legal rules yet take little thought for the actual embodiment of their better intentions. Elsewhere Paul confronts them directly when he says, "Consider this. You bear the name Jew, rely on the law, boast in God and know the will of God" (Romans 2:17-18) but in all this you 'derive no benefit as long as the actual fruits of good living are not present. (The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 24.1)

Matthew 7:22-23

St. Hippolytus of Rome (died AD 236)

Then shall they also give an answer to the dread Judge . . . Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to you? Lord, do you not know us? You formed us, you fashioned us, you made us of four elements, you gave us spirit and soul. We believed in you; We received you seal, we obtained your baptism; we acknowledged you to be God, we knew you to be Creator; in you we restored sight, through you we cast out demons, for you we mortified the flesh, for you we preserved virginity, for you we practiced chastity, for you we became strangers on the earth; and you say, I do not know you, depart from me! Then he shall answer them, and say, you acknowledged me as Lord, but you did not keep my words. You were marked with the seal of my cross, but you deleted it by your hardness of heart. You obtained my baptism, but you did not observe my commandments. You subdued your body to virginity, but you did not practice mercy, but you did not cast the hatred of your brother out of your souls. For not every, one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall be saved, but he that does my will. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. (On the End of the World 48)

St. Cyril of Alexandria (died A.D. 444)

There may be some who, in the beginning, believed rightly and assiduously labored at virtue. They may have even worked miracles and prophesied and cast out demons. And yet later they are found turning aside to evil, to self assertive deception and desire. Of these Jesus remarks that he “never knew them.” He ranks them as equivalent to those who were never known by him at all. Even if they at the outset had lived virtuously, they ended up condemned. God knows those whom he loves, and he loves those who single-mindedly believe in him and do the things that please him. (Fragment 88.4)