

“Sheep and Goats?”

Matthew 25:31-46

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- “You are HERE”! Orientating ourselves as to where we are in our study of Biblical prophecy
- We are currently in the time gap between the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the Kingdom
 - The course of the tribulation period, beginning with the Antichrist signing a peace covenant with Israel
 - Middle of the tribulation, breaking of the covenant and establishing himself as god to be worshiped.
 - The various judgments by God: sealed, trumpet, bowl
 - The campaign of Armageddon and the fall of Jerusalem spiritually preparing the Jewish people to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Messiah.
 - The second phase of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ
 - Matthew 24:29-31-- *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”*
 - The Jewish remnant will be saved.
 - Zechariah 12:10-- *“I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”*
 - Romans 11:26-27-- *“The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”*
- Time gap of 75 days between Christ’s Second Coming and beginning of the Kingdom. Time used to determine who of those living on the earth will enter the kingdom and who will be banished. A series of judgments will determine who is in, and who is not in.
 - Those who are watching for the signs of Christ’s second coming will be spiritually ready for His return, and thus will enter into the kingdom.
 - Those who are waiting, filled with the oil of the Spirit will be ready to join the procession to the kingdom festivities.
 - Those who are working, doing what God has for them to do with the resources He has entrusted to them will also enter the Kingdom.
 - Genuine Gentle believers who are watching, waiting, and working will enter the kingdom. They will enter along with the living Jewish believers who were already judged. All others will be excluded.
- One more test to see who among the living Gentiles at the end of the tribulation have genuine faith and thus entrance into the kingdom, and those who do not. The Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats.

“Sheep and Goats?”

- Matthew 25:31-46-- *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’”* *“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them,*

“Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘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?’ Then He will answer them, saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

A. The Identification of the Judge: Jesus Christ, the “Son of Man”

- Daniel 7:13-14-- *“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.”*
- John 5:22-- *“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son”*

B. The Time of Judgment: His Second Coming

- Matthew 25:31-- *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.”*
- 1. **Accompanying and assisting Jesus will be His holy angels.**
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:7b-8-- *“when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- 2. **Also accompanying Him will be His saints**
 - Jude 14-15-- *“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”*
 - Colossians 3:4-- *“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”*

C. The Subject of Judgment: “All the nations”

1. Greek word “ethnos” literally means “peoples”
2. Since the living Jews have already been judged at His second coming, and only saved Jews remain, the “nations” must refer to living Gentiles.

D. The Separation of Judgment: Sheep on the right; Goats on the left.

- Matthew 25:32-33-- *“He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.”*
- 1. The cultural custom of shepherds separating sheep and goats for grazing and for sleep.
- 2. **The “right hand” is the side of blessing in bestowing a blessing or inheritance.--** Jacob blessing Joseph’s sons.

E. The Inheritance of the Sheep: The righteous, saved, living Gentiles

- Matthew 25:34-40-- *“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”*
- 1. At first glance it looks like the “sheep” inherit the kingdom based upon their good works.

2. But a closer look reveals that **the “sheep” enter the kingdom based on their inheritance, not their works.**
 - a. A child’s inheritance is not based on what they do, but rather upon having been born into the family
 - b. This inheritance was *“prepared for them before the foundation of the earth.”*
 - Romans 8:29-- *“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”*
 - c. The source of salvation is the Father’s blessing. His “grace”.
 - Ephesians 2:8-9-- *“by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*
3. **The good deeds mentioned here are the FRUIT, and not the ROOT of their salvation.**
 - Ephesians 2:10-- *“we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*
4. **True children of God and citizens of God’s kingdom love one another and seek to address the needs of others, proving that they have genuine faith.**
 - James 2:15-17-- *“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*
 - 1 John 3:17-18-- *“But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”*
5. **Their humble, selfless response to the King gives credence to their faith.**
 - Matthew 25:37-39-- *“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’”*
6. **Doing it “to the least of these, my brethren, you did it unto Me” Who are “my brethren”?**
 - Matthew 25:40-- *“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”*
 - a. Some hold that **“my brethren” are Jesus’ Jewish brothers**, and that the judgment of the surviving Gentiles is based on how they treated and aided the Jewish people during the tribulation. Based on whether one is pro-Israel or pro-Semitic or whether one is anti-Israel and antisemitic determines who enters and who is barred from the kingdom.
 - 1) Based on three groups of people in this prophecy: Sheep and goats which are living Gentiles, and then “My brethren” who must be Jews, since the Gentiles are covered with the Sheep and Goats.
 - 2) Based also on the promise God made to Abraham to “bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.”
 - Genesis 12:3-- *“I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*
 - b. Others hold that **“my brethren” are Jesus’ disciples**, His followers who will be persecuted during the tribulation period.
 - 1) Jesus never refers to the Jewish people as being “His people” or “My brethren”
 - 2) But He does call His followers, His disciples His family, His brothers,
 - Matthew 12:46-49-- *“While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, ‘Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.’ But He answered and said to the one who told Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers!’”*
 - Luke 8:20-21-- *“it was told Him by some, who said, ‘Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.’ But He answered and said to them, ‘My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.’”*
 - John 20:17-- *“Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ ”*

- 3) During the tribulation, many of Jesus' "brethren" will be suffer hardship, be persecuted and martyred for their faith.
 - Revelation 7:9-- *"a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands."*
 - Revelation 7:16-- *"They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat."*
 - 4) The righteous "sheep" will be sympathizers, perhaps secret disciples like Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus who come to the aid of the more outspoken followers of Jesus Christ.
7. **In aiding the followers of Christ, they will unwittingly be aiding Christ Himself.**
- Matthew 10:40-42-- *"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."*
8. **Loving the brethren is one tell-tale sign of being a genuine follower of Jesus Christ.**
- John 13:35-- *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

F. The Inheritance of the Goats: The unbelieving, living Gentiles.

- Matthew 25:41-46-- *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, '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?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*
1. Some reasons why they choose not to aid believers during the tribulation.
 - a. Indifference or a "care-less" attitude
 - b. Preoccupation with their own business and prosperity
 - c. Sympathetic with the Antichrist's program and actually approve of his actions through their silence and inaction.
 2. **Main reason: Their lack of fruit reveals the root. NO spiritual life, but under the curse.**
 3. Consequences; Spend eternity in hell, excluded from the kingdom.
 - Matthew 25:41-- *"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"*
 - Matthew 25:46-- *"these will go away into everlasting punishment."*

Applications for today: Tests of true Christians

1. *Are you watching for His Coming, for the rapture of the Church? Do you love His appearing?*
2. *Are you waiting, spiritually prepared for His coming?*
3. *Are you busy working for Him, using the resources God has given to you to accomplish His work?*
4. *Do you love Christ's brethren?*
 - 1 John 4:7--*"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."*
 - 1 John 4:12-- *"No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us."*
 - 1 John 3:14-17-- *"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"*
 - 1 John 3:18-- *"not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth,"*