

Parable of the Sheep and Goats

Matthew 25:31-46

³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: ³³ And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

This speaks to the second coming of Christ and the beginning of His reign on earth.

Control of the earth was taken from satan and given to man in the Garden. Man transferred authority and dominion back to satan in the fall (Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:12-19, Gen 1:2, 28). Believers will be restored and we possess an inheritance where we will reign and rule with Christ (1 Peter 1:4, Eph 1:10-11). Our reward is coming based on our works (Rev 22:12). All nations will come and bring their glory (Rev 21:24-26). There are many planets in the heavens and we will be rulers over His works (Pastor Lee Bruner).

This is the final harvest that we studied in the earlier parables where there will be a judgement and separation between wheat and tares, etc.

The thought by some is that this is after the tribulation and the judgement is for the righteous and unrighteous who survived the tribulation.

The comparison is to that of sheep and goats. They can live together but even today farmers will separate them to prevent disease, safety, difference in diet, etc.

The greater blessing was given by the right hand rather than the left. Ecclesiastes 10:2, shows right represents wisdom while the left represents foolishness.

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? ³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The reward for the sheep on the right side. They are called blessed of God and will receive the inheritance and will rule with the King of Kings. The King then describes why they are selected and



called blessed; they ministered to those hungry, thirsty, took in strangers, provided cloths, visited the sick, ministered to those in prison.

When they did it for the least of the brethren, they were doing it for Christ. We serve the King by serving others.

⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: ⁴³ I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. ⁴⁴ Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? ⁴⁵ Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

Judgement for the unrighteous on the left is explained to them and to us as their failure to minister to the least, so they missed the opportunity to do it for the King.

⁴⁶ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Let's be cautious here. The works alone do not produce salvation. The works come after salvation or salvation must be first and drives the charitable works noted. You can do the above works and not be saved or doing them not for the glory of God and the King.

From Got Questions:

However, Scripture does not contradict itself, and the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that salvation is by faith through the grace of God and not by our good works (see [John 1:12](#); [Acts 15:11](#); [Romans 3:22-24](#); [Romans 4:4-8](#); [Romans 7:24-25](#); [Romans 8:12](#); [Galatians 3:6-9](#); and [Ephesians 2:8-10](#)). The good works mentioned in the parable are not the *cause* of salvation but the *effect* of salvation. As Christians we become like Christ (see [Romans 8:29](#); [2 Corinthians 3:18](#); and [Colossians 2:6-7](#)). [Galatians 5:22](#) tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Good works in a Christian's life are the direct overflow of these traits, and are only acceptable to God because of the relationship that exists between servant and Master, the saved and their Savior, the sheep and their Shepherd (see [Ephesians 2:10](#)).

The core message of the Parable of the Sheep and Goats is that God's people will love others. Good works will result from our relationship to the Shepherd. Followers of Christ will treat others with kindness, serving them as if they were serving Christ Himself. The unregenerate live in the opposite manner. While "goats" can indeed perform acts of kindness and charity, their hearts are not right with God, and their actions are not for the right purpose – to honor and worship God.

Key points taken from Jesus Film Project website:

1. The sheep didn't know what they did



It's impressive to realize that the sheep are surprised by this turn of events. They weren't serving others to be noticed or to curry favor with the King. They were doing good because it was in their nature to care for others.

2. Little things matter a lot

The King commends the sheep for everything from feeding the hungry to clothing the naked. But in there, He recognizes something as simple as a drink given to the thirsty. The point is that there is no service too small for Jesus to remember.

3. Don't leave good undone

The King's interaction with the goats is the most sobering aspect of this parable. It's one thing to celebrate the positive and kind things someone does. It's another thing entirely to realize that the King is paying attention to opportunities to help others that we neglect to capitalize on.

It's a mistake to assume that becoming more Christlike is merely a case of stopping bad behaviors. [The more like Jesus we become](#), the more our lives are poured out in service to others.

4. We have to put in the effort

So many of the kindnesses the King mentions are ones the sheep would have had to go out of their way to perform. No one just happens upon someone in prison and stops for a visit. You have to make a plan to spend time with someone in that position. If we want to be sheep, we'll be on the lookout for ways to love people around us.

1. Becoming people who do good

It's by God's grace that we are reconciled to God. There is absolutely nothing we can do to earn the privilege of becoming God's children. But that doesn't mean that what we do doesn't matter. Jesus explained it to the Pharisees this way:

"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit" (Matthew 12:33).

In the story of the sheep and goats, Jesus wants us to understand that our choices reveal the kingdom to whom we belong.