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## The Parables of Jesus Christ: Separating the Sheep from the Goats

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# THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

## PARABLE FORTY-SEVEN: Separating the Sheep from the Goats (Mt. 25:1-46)

### SURVEY

Jesus compares the final judgment to a shepherd's separating sheep from goats.

- The separator (25:31): The Savior Himself will occupy this role.
- The separation (25:32-33): The goats (lost people) will be placed on his left hand, and the sheep (saved people) on his right hand.
- The separated (25:34-46):

#### 1. The sheep (25:34-40)

They will be rewarded!

##### a. The contents (25:34)

They will receive the Father's Kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

##### b. The cause (25:35-36)

It is due to their loving ministry in feeding, clothing, caring for, and even assisting Jesus in prison!

##### c. The confusion (25:37-39)

The saved ask when all this takes place.

##### d. The clarification (25:40)

Jesus says that when they ministered to others, they ministered to Him!

#### 2. The goats (25:41-46)

They will be punished!

##### a. The contents (25:41)

Eternal hell

##### b. The cause (25:42-43)

They did not minister to Jesus!

##### c. The confusion (25:44)

The unsaved ask when it was that they did not minister to Jesus.

##### d. The clarification (25:45-46)

Jesus says because they did not minister to others, they did not minister to Him!

## SIGNIFICANCE

- This parable is the most well-known in regard to the Second Coming.
- It is the final of four parables contrasting the saved with the unsaved in regard to the Second Coming of Christ:
  1. The wheat and the tares (parable 14)
  2. The good fish and the bad fish (parable 19)
  3. The wise virgins and the foolish virgins (parable 45)
  4. The sheep and the goats (parable 47)

## SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- At first reading this parable seems to teach that salvation can be earned by good works, which of course, is totally refuted by a host of Scripture verses (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5, etc.). At least five questions need to be answered in rightly interpreting this parable.
  1. When does this judgment take place? The context clearly indicates that it occurs at the end of the Tribulation.
  2. Who is being judged here? According to Matt. 25:32 it will be the Gentiles.
  3. What is the basis of this judgment? It is based on how they have treated or mistreated a certain group during the Tribulation.
  4. Who is this group? Christ calls them "*my brethren*" (Matt. 25:40); thus they are Jewish people.
  5. Why would some Gentiles risk their lives during the reign of the antichrist to help persecuted and suffering Jews? The new birth experience would offer the only logical explanation for such behavior. Thus, the good works spoken of here are not the basis for salvation, but rather the proof of salvation.
- This parable tells us one of the six activities of God the Father before He created man.
  1. He was fellowshiping with His Son (Prov. 8:22-30; Jn. 17:5, 24).
  2. He was preparing for Calvary (1 Pet. 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8).
  3. He was creating the stars and angels (Job 38:4, 7).
  4. He was choosing the elect (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9).
  5. He was planning for the Church (Eph. 3:8, 9).

6. He was preparing a kingdom:

*"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" (Mt. 25:34).*

- Jesus prophesied condemnation of the wicked unsaved here is sobering indeed: *"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" (Mt. 25:41).*

Especially observe three frightening phrases:

1. *"Depart from me"*

This is in stark contrast to His previous gracious invitation, also recorded by Matthew:

*"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Mt. 11:28-30)*

2. *". . . into everlasting fire "*

There are some today who would deny the concept of unending punishment, but here Jesus warns of it on two occasions! *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Mt. 25:46)*

3. *". . . prepared for the devil and his angels"*

One of the saddest aspects about hell is that it was originally prepared for Satan, not for man! In fact, heaven is said to be the prepared place!

*"In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (Jn. 14:2)*

*"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." (Heb. 11:16)*

Tragically, though, when men refuse the prepared place, they are forever banished to the unprepared place!