

THE SHEEP & GOATS JUDGMENT Matthew 25:31-46

1. SUMMARY: What This Passage IS Teaching

After Jesus Christ returns to the earth at His Second Coming in glory and has judged and rewarded Israel, He will likewise judge and reward the Gentiles. He will distinguish between Gentiles who believe in Christ (i.e., “sheep”) from Gentiles who don’t believe (i.e., “goats”). The “sheep” will be granted entrance into Christ’s earthly kingdom because they are righteous through faith in Christ, but their entrance will also be coupled with a positive reward for their good works done toward persecuted, suffering Jewish believers in the tribulation, who are Christ’s brethren. By contrast, Gentile “goats” will be prohibited from entering Christ’s kingdom and eternally punished because they are unbelievers who never received the gift of God’s righteousness through faith in Christ, and who, because of their unbelief, failed to minister to Jewish believers during the tribulation.

2. CLARIFICATION: What This Passage Is NOT Teaching

This passage is not teaching that final salvation is based on our _____. (Rom. 4:4-5; Eph. 2:8-9)

This passage is also not teaching that certain kinds of works are necessary for salvation, such as _____ works. (Titus 3:5)

This passage is also not teaching that while faith alone saves, the _____ of “saving faith” will always be a pattern of good works in the life of church age saints. (1 Cor. 3:1-4, 14-15)

3. WHEN: The TIME of This Judgment (25:31)

The time of the Sheep and Goats Judgment is _____ Jesus Christ returns to the earth in glory and _____. He has judged Israel by purging out Jewish unbelievers (Ezek. 20:33-38; Matt. 25:24-30) and rewarding Jewish believers (Matt. 25:14-23).

- *How does this passage relate to the previous parables of the faithful servant, ten virgins, and talents?*
- *How is this judgment distinct from the Judgment Seat of Christ?*
- *How is this judgment distinct from the Great White Throne judgment?*
- *How does this passage support the pre-millennial view of eschatology vs. amillennialism and postmillennialism?*
- *How does this passage support the pre-tribulation rapture view vs. the post-tribulation view?*

4. WHERE: The PLACE of This Judgment (Joel 3:2; Zech. 14:4)

Since Scripture describes Jesus Christ's Davidic throne (2 Kings 7:12-16; Matt. 1:1; 12:23; 25:31; Luke 1:69) as earthly and not merely heavenly (Ps. 72:8-10, 16; Jer. 23:5; Dan. 2:35; 7:27; Zech. 9:9-10; Rev. 20:6-9), the location of the Sheep and Goats Judgment will be near _____ in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2).

5. WHO: The PEOPLE at This Judgment (25:31-33, 37)

"All the nations" (v. 32, *ethnē*) refers to _____ who physically survived the _____ (Matt. 24:6-9, 21-22; Rev. 6:8; 8:11; 9:18). "Nation" (sing., *ethnos*) sometimes includes Israel (Luke 7:5; 23:2; John 11:48, 51-52; 18:35; Acts 10:22; Rom. 16:26; Rev. 15:4), but most often it is used in the New Testament to distinguish the Gentiles from the Jews (Luke 21:24; Rom. 3:29; 9:27, 30; 11:13; 15:27; 16:4; Gal. 2:12; etc.).

While the reference to "all the nations" later in the Great Commission passage of Matthew 28:19 may refer to all the Gentile nations plus Israel, _____ other use of "nations" or "all the nations" (plural) in Matthew refers to the Gentiles in contrast to Israel (4:15; 6:32; 10:5, 18; 12:18, 21; 20:19, 25; 24:9, 14; 25:32; 28:19).

The Gentiles who are "sheep" are considered already _____ (v. 37), presumably through believing (Matt. 5:20; 7:21-23; 21:31-32; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:22; Phil. 3:9) the gospel of the kingdom (24:14; Rev. 7:1-14). Conversely, the "goats" must be unbelieving Gentiles who remain unjustified before God.

The third group of people called by Christ "the least of these, My brethren" (vv. 40, 45) are _____ (Zech. 13:8-9; Matt. 1:1; 12:47-50; 23:8; 28:10; Heb. 2:11-17), who were persecuted in the tribulation but survived.

6. WHY: The REASON for This Judgment (25:35-45)

Since the Abrahamic Covenant is eternal and still operative (Gen. 12:3), the Gentile believers ("sheep") will be _____ by God (vv. 34-40) for how they treated Christ's brethren (Jewish believers) during the tribulation (Jer. 30:5-7; Joel 3:2; Matt. 24:15-22; Rev. 12), while the unbelieving Gentiles ("goats") will be _____ by God (vv. 41-45) for their treatment of Jewish believers during the tribulation.

7. WHEREFORE: The RESULTS of This Judgment (25:34, 41, 46)

The positive reference to sheep _____ the kingdom (v. 34) refers to both _____ into the kingdom through faith in Christ (Matt. 5:20; 7:13, 21; 18:3; 19:23-24; 21:31; John 3:3-5; 1 Peter 1:4) and a _____ in the kingdom (Matt. 16:27-28; 19:27-29; 25:21, 23; 1 Peter 3:9; Col. 3:24) or "abundant entrance" into it (2 Peter 1:5-11) through perseverance or faithfulness.

The negative judgment for Gentile unbelievers will involve _____ by Jesus Christ (v. 41) and _____ punishment in fire (vv. 41, 46; 13:42, 49-50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:12, 30).

- *What lasting lessons can we learn from this passage and the Olivet Discourse?*