



The Life of Jesus (93)

The Parable of The Sheep and the Goats



Matthew 25:31-46

#1 The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

Even though it's called a parable because it contains symbols and metaphors, it's more like a blueprint or an outline of what will ultimately happen on the last day.

1) Return of Christ

When Jesus first came to the world, He came in the form of a weak human baby, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and the suffering servant. But **when He comes back, He will come in glory** with a loud trumpet sound that resounds all over the world and with all the angels.

“The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God” (1Th 4:16)

On that day, Jesus will sit on His glorious throne and all the nations, referring to all people on earth without exception, will be gathered before Him. And Jesus will judge every person and reign over the world.

#2 The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

1) Return of Christ

This scene of the last judgment is also prophesied in the Old Testament.

“As I looked, “The Ancient of Days took his seat... His throne was flaming with fire... The court was seated, and the books were opened... and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” (Dn 7:9–10)

This is what Daniel saw about the judgment day to come. This was predicted even before Jesus was born. And as promised and prophesied, the day will surely come.

#3 The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

2) Eternal Separation

On that day, all people will be divided into two groups.

“All the nations will be gathered before him, and **he will separate the people one from another** as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left” (Mt 25:32–33)

Now, Believers and unbelievers live in the same house, city, and country but there will come a time when they will be eternally separated.

In the parable of the weeds, the owner will command the harvesters, the angels, to “**collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn**” (Mt 13:30)



#4 The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

3) Eternal Separation

In the parable of the net, Jesus also said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. **Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.** This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous.” (Mt 13:45–47)

Even though all kinds of fish coexist now in the net, when the last day comes, the good fish will be separated from the bad and the bad ones will be thrown away.



What these parables emphasize is that **the day of eternal separation will come.** All people will be separated and belong to one of two groups. We don't know who belongs to which group now. But Jesus knows who belongs to Him and He can separate them from those who belong to the group of goats.

#5 The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

Where we stand on that day is determined by where we try to remain while living here on earth now. Every decision we make every day, big or small, can determine our eternity.

4) Acts of Love

Then, an important question is, “How can we stand on the right side of the throne on the last day?”

The King didn't say that He would put the rich on the right and the poor on the left. He didn't say that He would put those who are smart and have higher education levels on the right. **These kinds of things that most people seek after in this world will lose their meaning before the judgment seat of Christ.**

Rather, Jesus said that those who serve others sacrificially with love, namely those who follow God's will in the world, **will be permitted to join in the kingdom of God.**

But, we need to be careful about this. A casual reading of today's passage seems to suggest that salvation is the result of good works.

#6 The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

5) Faith and Action

However, Scripture does not contradict itself, and the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that salvation is by faith alone through the grace of God and not by our good works.

“We maintain that **a person is justified by faith apart from the works** of the law” (Rm 3:28)

No good works can save us from our sins or justify us because they can never be perfect in God’s sight. **Only the precious blood that Jesus shed on the cross can wash away all our sins, make us righteous, and save us.**

Even though we don’t find the word ‘faith’ in the parable, we know that faith definitely plays a very important role because that’s the reason the sheep on the right side did the righteous things.

The good works mentioned in the parable are not the cause of salvation but the effect of salvation.

#7 The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

5) Faith and Action

We don't do good works in order to be saved. That never works. But, if we remain in Jesus by faith, we will naturally bear many good fruits like a branch attached to its vine.

In other words, we do good works not to be saved. We do them because we're already saved. What the King in the story really sees is not their outward acts of love, but their faith that enables them to do them.

About the relationship between faith and action, the apostle James wrote, “Faith without deeds is useless... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead” (Jms 2:20, 26)

Faith without deeds is useless and dead. And we can't be saved through dead faith. If we say, 'I have faith in Jesus' but fail to prove it through our actual good works, we would turn out to be liars, not believers.

Memory Verses

“All the nations will be gathered before him, and **he will separate the people one from another** as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left” (Mt 25:32–33) (2)

“This is how it will be at the end of the age. **The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous.**” (Mt 13:47) (1)

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” (Mt 25:35–36) (2)

“We maintain that **a person is justified by faith apart from the works** of the law” (Rm 3:28) (1)

“**Faith without deeds is useless**... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead” (Jms 2:20, 26) (1)

Reflection Questions

1. What do you think is an important criterion that differentiates the sheep from the goats on the last day? Which group do you think you're more like and why?

2. What do you think is true and saving faith? How can you know that you have such faith? What are some practical things you can do in order to live out your faith this week?