

Which Are You: A Sheep Or A Goat?

Matthew 25:31-41 [New King James] *“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:”*”

Jesus Christ tells us that at His Second Coming He will separate the “sheep” from the “goats.”

The sheep will inherit the Kingdom of God, the created family of God, and the goats will end up burnt up in the lake of fire.

This is how important it is that we know which we represent in the eyes of the Creator God, when we stand before the judgement seat of Jesus Christ, [**Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10**].

Quotation from ‘Zondervan Encyclopaedia of the Bible’ – page 741:

“In most western countries the problem of dividing sheep from goats ... would never arise, for flocks are unlikely to mix and the two species are not easily confused. This is not so in many lands around Palestine where they often run together, and native breeds may be alike in size, colour and shape.”

While the size and colour may appear similar, their behaviour could hardly be more unlike.

God’s Word, the Christian Bible, mentions sheep many times, representing loyalty and gentleness, [2 Samuel 12:3] patience, [Psalms 44:22] and meekness, [Isaiah 53:7].

Sheep and their shepherd enjoy a close and intimate relationship of trust, dependence and submission.

John 10:3-4 [New King James] *“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”*

This is how Jesus Christ describes His relationship with God’s people.

Jeremiah describes the behaviour of he-goats in the flock in his prophecy regarding the nation of Judah coming out of Babylonian captivity.

Jeremiah 50:8 [NIV] *“Flee out of Babylon; leave the land of the Babylonians, and be like the goats that lead the flock.”*

Goats do **not** follow, they push their way to the front of the flock as they are being led out to graze. **There are advantages in being at the head of the flock. You get to the best pasture first.**

Ezekiel pictures the goat’s behaviour once they are out in the pasture.

Ezekiel 34:17-21 [NIV] *“As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet? Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away,”*

The goats take the best for themselves, ignoring the needs of the weaker members of the flock.

Down through the history of humanity selfish people have done this, using their strength, cunning or other advantages to get the best of the less fortunate, justifying their behaviour because they are “better” and “deserve” it.

A bad shepherd like the Pharisees mentioned in Luke 18:9 will not stop the damage being done to the flock they are supposed to be caring for by the “goats” in the flock among whom they themselves are listed by Jesus Christ.

Any bad “shepherd” like the Pharisees are not only selfish but destructive.

They pollute the refreshing Word of God by raising doubts, teaching false ideas and hiding sinful actions in their own lives, all of which destroy the flock’s spiritual nourishment.

The Pharisees works were merely done to be “seen by people,” [Matthew 6:1-2, 5, 16]; theirs was a self-serving “goat-like” religion, a vehicle to material wealth, [Luke 20:47; Mark 12:40] because they loved money, [Luke 16:14]. “Goat like” ministers are well paid “professionals” not servants of the people.

Matthew 5:20 [NIV] *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

The life of any true Christian must exceed this “false righteousness” of the Pharisees.

The sheep-like true Christian follows the example of the Good Shepherd by serving those who are in need, [Matthew 20:28].

Luke 14:12-14 [NIV] *“Then Jesus said to his host, ‘When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.’”*

This is an example of such service. If we give only to be rewarded, we will **not** be rewarded by the Creator God.

Notice what Jesus Christ said about His sheep, [Matthew 25:35-36]; they did all these things because it was part of their new nature, [Matthew 25:37-40] not so with the selfish “goats” [Matthew 25:45]. Sobering words indeed!

Luke 13:26-27 [NIV] *“Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’”*

To hear the Christian message is not enough, we have to follow the example of the Good Shepherd to serve without seeking gain, we also will hear Jesus Christ say what is recorded in Matthew 25:34 personally.