

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 02.29.2020

SHEEP OR GOAT? – MATTHEW 25:31-46

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

So far the Lord has been teaching about the prophetic events that will transpire as *birth pains* just before the 2nd Coming of the Messiah. But now Jesus turns to the Gentile Nations upon His return. For when Jesus comes in His Shekinah Glory, the Nations will realize there is only ONE God, the God of Israel. Jesus adds He will be accompanied by Millions of Angels along with the Raptured believers. He will take His place sitting on His glorious throne as Judge and Messiah-King. All Nations will be before Him for the final judgment. Christ speaks of three different groups of people: the sheep, the goats, and my brethren. The sheep and goats are the people of all nations except the Jews. The sheep are the Gentiles (non-Jews) who trust in Christ during the seven years of suffering and tribulation. The goats are the Gentiles who refuse to trust in Christ. My brethren are the Jews. We first see that Christ will separate the sheep from the goats. Then Christ will reward the sheep. Let’s get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most or spoke to you from Pastor Ray’s message this last weekend?
2. When you encounter someone begging for money, what do you typically think and why? How do you typically respond? How do you feel afterward?
3. How do you think Jesus would respond to a beggar? Why?

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

Have a volunteer read Matthew 25:31-46

1. How would you explain the message of the sheep and goats in your own words?
2. Given that Jesus is the One dividing sheep from goats, what does that imply about our ability to distinguish between them?

Palestinian shepherds frequently had to separate their flocks similar to the way Jesus describes. Sheep and goats freely intermingled and often looked quite similar in appearance, at least from a distance. Similarly, we could probably not guess from superficial knowledge and external appearance who are truly God’s people, but Jesus knows.

1. Why do you think Jesus chose to use sheep to represent believers and goats to represent unbelievers? What qualities or purposes do these animals possess that make them a good choice for Jesus’ teaching points?
2. Why does Jesus bless the sheep in this passage? What did they do to receive Jesus’ blessing?

What basic human needs are met by the sheep? In what ways are you meeting these basic needs for others?

“PREPARE!” in 2020

Wool made sheep more valuable than goats, so naturally Jesus chose the sheep to represent those individuals who are blessed by God and inherit His kingdom. The sheep are blessed because of their good behavior. They cared for Christ, feeding Him when He was hungry, giving Him drink when thirsty, providing adequate clothing when He was ill-clad, showing Him hospitality when he was a foreigner, and visiting Him when He was sick or imprisoned. Here are three basic human needs, apart from salvation—food, shelter, and companionship.

1. What are the sheep surprised about (vv. 37-39)?
2. How are you impacted knowing that by serving the hungry, homeless and lonely you are serving Jesus?

Many of the sheep are understandably surprised. No doubt several of these conditions did characterize Christ at various stages of His earthly life, but the vast majority of the “righteous” will not have been present then and there to help Him. So how did all this happen? The texts says that they were surprised because they did not understand how they had ministered so directly to Jesus.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ Matthew 25:41-46.

1. In verse 34, the sheep are told that the kingdom of God had been “prepared” for them. In verse 41, what place has been prepared and who has it been prepared for?
2. Why are the goats given to the eternal fire if that place was not prepared specifically for them?

It is interesting that the fire was not prepared for the goats but for the rebellious angels. No Scripture ever indicates that the fallen angels had any subsequent chance to repent, but people do. So no one need join the demons in this fire. Still, some will opt for hell by rejecting Christ. When they do, they have no one but themselves to blame.

3. How are the sheep and the goats similar? How are they different?

The goats ask the same kind of question as the sheep did, and Jesus offers a parallel reply. These people are condemned for sins of omission as well as commission. Improper response to Christian witnesses leads to damnation.

4. How did Jesus summarize the parable? How does that conclusion impact the way that you see Jesus?
5. How does it impact the way you see and serve the needy?

There remains no more pressing priority in this life than to respond properly to Jesus and His messengers by becoming disciples through faith in him. Then we must demonstrate Christ’s lordship in our lives through acts of service.

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

This parable weighs the actions of Gentile Nations in the Last Days immediately after the time of Jacob’s Trouble. It will be a *dark and dangerous time for the Jewish world*, and it is understandable Gentiles will be judged on how they react in their own day. They will be the ones to enter the blessing of Jesus Kingdom because they showed the true fruit of salvation in the treatment of Jesus relatives in that hour. Both Israel and the Gentiles will face the Judgment Day. Are you ready? Are you a faithful servant? Do you have the Oil of the Holy Spirit in your life? Are you faithful with the Talents God has given you? Are you among the Sheep or the Goats? The key is a personal relationship with Jesus as Savior! Communion – the Gospel.

“PREPARE!” in 2020

1. How would the world be different if every Christian became involved in ministering to people in need?
2. What opportunities does our church provide for ministering to people in need? How can you participate?
3. How does the fact that you will be judged change the way you view your life? How does it change the way you look at others?

Close in prayer, asking God to give you a heart for the poor and needy. Praise God for His wisdom and ask that He would show the people of our church ways to help people in our community. Thank God for His saving grace and for the glimpses of His majesty that He gives us in our world.

“ I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land.” (Joel 3:2)