

Matthew 25:31-46 ESV

Jesus' Return and the Final Judgment

As Jesus Took Action For Us, So Believers Take Action For Others!

Services: Sunday, 11/26 at 8:00 & 10:45

Church Year: Last Sunday in the Church Year – 2017

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Two weeks ago we focused on living expectantly – *expecting Jesus to return*; then last week on living responsibly – *using what has been entrusted to us to bless the kingdom of God*. Today the focus is on *the return of Jesus and the final judgment!*

1. **Returning, Gathering, and Separating:** ³¹ “**When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.** ³² [And] **before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.** ³³ **And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.”**
 - a. Jesus' glorious throne: During His time on earth Jesus was in His state of humility, *but He will come in His state of glory!* That is when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord ([Phil. 2:9-11](#))!
 - b. Jesus will do the separating: Since the two categories have everything to do with **who knows Jesus** and **who does not**, Jesus Himself will do the separating! Also, the separating itself will reveal each person's eternal outcome; what

follows only justifies why Jesus put *some in the sheep category* and *others in the goat category*.

2. **The Sheep:** ³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?’ ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?’ ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”

- a. Blessed: The Father chose us to be His own before creation (Eph. 1:3-6). Therefore, *on the basis of our relationship with Him, we will inherit the kingdom!*
- b. Faith / Works: Since only Jesus can see faith, He will use works – simple works, things anyone can do – *as the evidence of faith, to identify the sheep*. But not just any works will do, *they must come from faith, thus from love for Jesus*.
- c. Compassionate: That means *showing concern for others*; those who know Jesus are also people who ♦pay attention to others and ♦take action to help them. Paul explained ♦the proper attitude

and ▶the resulting behavior with these words:
 “...with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4 NAS). The sheep exercised such interest, *but never to earn eternal life!* Also, their kindness was done toward people who could not repay – *the hungry, thirsty, naked...*

3. **The Goats:** ⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you [having been] cursed, into the eternal fire [having been] prepared for the devil and his angels.’ ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
- a. Cursed: Unfortunately people *unknowingly* bring God’s curse upon themselves *by putting THEIR logic over GOD’S Word*. Their logic tells them that good actions will get them into heaven, but God’s Word tells us that “...all who rely on works of the law are under a curse” (Gal 3:10 ESV).

- b. Eternal fire: The book of Revelation calls it the *lake of fire*. It says that all people will stand “before the throne [and be judged] according to what they had done. ...if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (20:12, 15 ESV). Lenski noted that “the devil and his angels whose promptings these men followed on earth will be their constant companions in the eternal fire” (997).
- c. So how do we avoid the eternal fire, by faith or by works? Consider these *related* components:
- i. **Trusting** in Jesus (*being in a relationship with Him > living with compassion*) > **inheriting** eternal life.
 - ii. **Not trusting** in Jesus (*not being in a relationship with Him > not living with compassion*) > **not** inheriting eternal life. Notice, too, that *the sins of the goats are not of commission but of omission*. “If a person knows what is right, but does not do it, he is sinning” (James 4:17 NET).
 - iii. **So what is the answer?** We are saved *through knowing Jesus* (Matt. 7:21-23; John 17:3). “In the final analysis it is unbelief that damns” (Lenski, 998).

Conclusion: Let us pray: Dear Father, keep us in relationship with Jesus and living with true compassion!