



Matthew 25:31-46

# SHEEP & GOATS

*Taken as a whole, the Olivet discourse is one of the great prophetic utterances of Scripture and provides facts nowhere else given in quite the same way. In it, Christ, the greatest of the prophets and the master Teacher, described the end of the age as the climax of the troubles of earth in a great tribulation. The time of unprecedented trouble will be terminated by the second coming of Christ. The saved and the unsaved will be separated, and only the saved will enter the millennial kingdom. This is the final word, which Matthew brings in answer to the leading question of this first gospel, concerning the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament of a glorious kingdom on earth. Matthew states clearly that while Christ, in His first coming, suffered and died and was rejected as both King and Savior by His own people, He will come again and, in triumph, will bring in the prophesied kingdom literally, just as the Old Testament prophecies had anticipated. There is postponement but not annulment of the great prophecies of the kingdom on earth.*

—John F. Walvoord

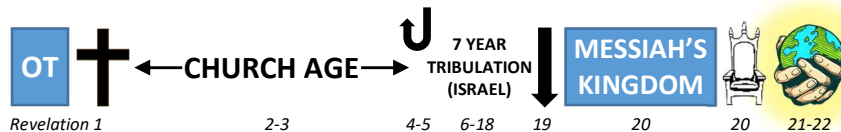
In the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24-25), Jesus addresses two questions:

## **When will the world end? And how will the world end? (24:3)**

In 24:4-31, Jesus describes *how* the world will end, detailing the future tribulation, prophesied in the OT as the *time of Jacob's trouble* (Jer. 30:7), the *day of the Lord* (Joel 3:1-16), and *Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week* (9:27).

In 24:32-25:30, Jesus answers *when* the world will end—*no one knows except God* (24:36). Instead of setting dates, Jesus uses seven parables to teach His disciples how to live in light of His imminent return—which may be sooner than expected or later than expected.

Jesus ends His Olivet Discourse by describing the judgment that will take place *when the Son of Man comes in His glory* (25:31-46).



## **WHEN does this judgment take place?**

It takes place after Christ's return and before the \_\_\_\_\_ (millennium, Rev. 20:6). This is not the great white throne judgment which takes place after the millennium, involves all the "dead," and only results in condemnation (Rev. 20:11-15).

## **WHERE does this judgment take place?**

It takes place on earth in \_\_\_\_\_ on the throne of David (cf. 2 Sam. 7:8-16; Psalm 89:34-37; Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:30-33).

*In the Middle East sheep and goats were (and are) often pastured in mixed flocks. The sheep, though generally lighter colored than goats, are not as predominantly white as the flocks familiar to us... so that it can take a practiced eye to distinguish between the two.*

—R. T. France

*This judgment should be distinguished from the judgment of the church in heaven [1 Cor. 3:10-15], the judgment of the wicked at the end of the millennium [Rev 20:11-15], and the judgment of Israel [Ezek. 20:38].*

—John Walvoord

*There will be no one to sit on the throne of David until the Messiah of righteousness, the Branch of David, comes [Jer. 23:5-6]. To Him and His seed the covenant of the kingdom has been given.*

—Qumran Fragment (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> cent BC)

*I and others, who are right-minded Christians, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and 1000 years in Jerusalem which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.*

—Justin Martyr (AD 100-165)

## WHO is the Judge?

The Judge is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:22-27; Acts 10:42; 17:31).

Only Jesus has the right to rule over this earth as the Son of \_\_\_\_\_,  
Son of \_\_\_\_\_, Son of \_\_\_\_\_, and Son of \_\_\_\_\_.

## WHO are the judged?

This is a judgment of all the \_\_\_\_\_ alive at the end of the tribulation. Israel will already be purified (Zech. 12:10; Rom. 11:26).

## HOW are they judged?

Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats based on:

- His sovereign, \_\_\_\_\_, intimate knowledge of them (Psalm 139:1-24; John 10:14; 22-30; 2 Tim. 2:19).
- The condition of their \_\_\_\_\_ as evidenced by the fruits that are displayed in their life (7:15-20; Gal. 5:16-26).

“The least of these My brethren” refers primarily to the \_\_\_\_\_ who will be hated, persecuted, and killed during the tribulation (10:16-23; 24:15-22; Rev. 12). Those who help them and harbor them, at the risk of death, will show the reality of their faith in Jesus Christ (10:40-42).

## WHY are they judged?

- Refusing to show \_\_\_\_\_ to others reveals a heart that has not received the \_\_\_\_\_ of God (5:7; 9:13; 18:21-35).
- Judgment is without \_\_\_\_\_ to the one who has shown no \_\_\_\_\_ (James 2:13; cf. 7:1-5; Rom. 2:1-29).
- It is impossible to \_\_\_\_\_ God and \_\_\_\_\_ your brother (John 13:34-35; 1 John 2:9-10; 3:10-18; 4:7-8; 20-21).

Ultimately people are judged for their sin and their rejection of the gift of grace offered in Jesus Christ who died on the cross for their sins.

## WHAT is the result of this judgment?

- Those who have received God’s grace enter into everlasting life.
- Those who have refused God’s grace depart into everlasting fire.

*Is there any phrase more startling than “the wrath of the Lamb” [Rev. 6:16]? I think that if we had desired to describe wrath figuratively we should have written, the “wrath of the lion,” but therein we should have failed. It is the wrath of the Lamb which is terrible, the wrath of One whose very heart and nature are love and gentleness. Wrath kindled by love is the fiercest flame that burns.*

—G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945)

**Nations.** Greek, *ethnos*, “nation, tribe, people group.” In its plural form, it almost always refers to Gentiles as distinct from Jews (cf. Matt. 4:15; 6:32; 10:5; 20:19, 25).

*The majority view throughout church history has taken “My brothers” to be some or all of Christ’s disciples... The minority view throughout church history, which is probably the majority view today, is that these “brothers” are any needy people in the world.*

—Craig L. Blomberg

*It is rare to find interpretations that Jesus’ brothers in this verse are in fact Jews—Jesus’ blood relatives... But it was common for believers in Jesus to still consider unbelieving Jews, even the hostile ones, as “brethren.” [cf. 5:47; Acts 2:29; 3:22; 7:2; 13:38; Rom. 9:3].*

—Wayne Hilsden

*Mercy toward others is a mark of salvation.* —John MacArthur, Jr.

*Biblical orthodoxy without compassion is surely the ugliest thing in the world.* —Francis Schaeffer

*There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, in the end, “Thy will be done.”* —C. S. Lewis