

## The Sheep and the Goats

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> 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, <sup>36</sup> 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.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

<sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

<sup>44</sup> “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

<sup>45</sup> “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

<sup>46</sup> “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

## STUDY QUESTIONS

### 1. Who is the “Son of Man” that Jesus says will come in his glory and all the angels with him?

*This is Jesus, who refers to himself as “the Son of Man” referring to his being both human and divine. He is also the “King” as is noted after verse 34.*

### 2. What will the King do when he comes?

*He will sit on his glorious throne (of judgment) while the nations are gathered before him and separated like sheep and goats. The sheep on the right, the goats on the left. Then he will pronounce judgment on each group.*

### 3. What does the King invite those who are on his right (the sheep) to receive?

*They are invited to take their inheritance, the kingdom prepared for them since the beginning of creation.*

### 4. Why are the “sheep” given this inheritance?

*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.’*

**5. Why are the “sheep” surprised by this?**

*They do not know when they ever saw him (the King, the Son of Man, Jesus) in need of any of these things.*

**6. How does the King answer their question?**

*‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’*

**7. What does the King say to those on his left, the “goats”? and what is their response?**

*He likewise tells the goats that they must depart from him into eternal hell which was prepared for the Devil and all his angels because they neglected to care for the King when he was in need. They are surprised and ask when they ever saw him in need. The king answers that in neglecting the needy in this world, they neglected him.*

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**In this third parable that Jesus gives in Matthew 25, Jesus is telling us that we will all be judged according to how we live out our faith, his command to love one another. Notice that Jesus does not mention anything here about faith in him or repentance/forgiveness, etc. which we generally assume are the means of gaining eternal salvation? Why do you suppose Jesus does not mention those things here?**

*Those things are assumed, Jesus is cutting right to the point here. He does not just want lip-service he wants us to practice what he has commanded. True discipleship, true Christianity is proven by how we live out the commandments, his teachings in our own lives. The Apostle James explains in his letter that both faith and works are necessary components of faithful discipleship.*

**Why do you suppose the “goats” in this parable are surprised by the judgment they received from the king for not helping the needy? How might we be guilty of such neglect in our lives?**

*It is easy to not see the suffering of others around us if we are not looking for it. We can all make lists of reasons for not helping people (excuses). The Pharisees would have been notably good at this and given the context of Jesus’ teaching and sharing of these parables, they would have been some of those who would have been surprised by this parable’s teaching. Jesus mentions in his teaching and for that matter the Old Testament prophets often spoke against people acting religious and pious but failing to please God because they failed to love and take care of those in need.*

**What are some ways that we can care for the needs of others around us in our community?**

*(make a list)*