

**Articles and Sermons :: "SHEEP AND THE GOATS JUDGMENT" -kirkwood**

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[Image: <http://biblia.com/jesusbible/jesus-white-throne-22g.jpg>]

**"SHEEP AND THE GOATS JUDGMENT"**

Standing on your right is an elderly Korean woman, the wrinkles of many hard years etched across her face. To your left stands a short, young Russian man. His worn clothing and calloused hands make you suspect he was a farmer or factory worker.

Like everyone else in the sea of people around you, those two silently stare at the raised platform off in the distance. From your vantagepoint, hundreds of yards away, it appears to be at least forty feet high. It shines with a brilliance unlike anything you've ever seen, as if it were made from gold, encased in one huge diamond. A solitary piece of furniture sits on the front of the platform, what is obviously a king's throne. The hushed multitudes gaze with wonderment. Obviously something awesome is about to happen on the surreal stage.

Daring to pull your eyes away for just a moment, you survey the crowd around you. There are more people than you've ever seen, stretching for what must be miles in every direction. In fact, you realize that no ground is visible in any direction; even the horizon is made up of far-away people bordered by a golden sky that stretches like a dome above them.

Studying those nearby, you note that they are a kaleidoscope of every kind of people—white, red, brown and black. Some are wearing business suits; others various kinds of ethnic dress; a few others wear only loincloths. The only similarity they share is that all are silent, and all stand transfixed, staring at the shining stage and its golden throne.

**His Appearance**

Suddenly, a sound breaks the silence. Coming from the platform is heard a deep, resonating chord, powerful and majestic, unlike anything you've ever heard. Its crescendo is like a mixture of a thousand symphonies coupled with the roar of Niagara.

A glistening rainbow arches over the stage, and then a Being appears, seated on the throne. His form is barely discernible, for His brilliance is like the sun. His presence is felt by all, and as they shield their eyes from His glory, one collective thought seizes their minds: He is pure—purer than the freshest spring water or the crystal snowflakes. He is Holy. Nothing is hidden from His sight. Hearts race.

The brilliant Being lifts up His arms, hands clasped together, and then pulls them apart, sweeping His arms to each side. Instantly you feel an invisible power lifting you upward, until you find yourself floating, along with many others, above the heads of a few who remain in their places. Together, you are pulled by an irresistible force to the right, while you observe that the few below you are pulled to the left, and once the two groups are separated, the invisible force sets you down again on your feet. Neither the Korean woman nor Russian man are with you now.

The great Being speaks to the mass on His left. His voice is not audible, but deep within, you hear His unmistakable utterance. Obviously, from looking at the shock on the faces of those around you, everyone else is hearing the same words in his or her own language:

“Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me” (Matt. 25:41-43).

In unbelieving horror, the once-silent crowd collectively responds with a cacophony of questions: “Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?” (Matt. 25:44). “Surely You've never been in those conditions! You're the Lord! We see You now, shining like the sun; if we had seen You before, we would have known it! What in the world do You mean that we had seen You before, starving, thirsty, homeless, naked, sick or in prison?”

He answers: "Those who believed in Me on earth became one with Me. They became members of My body and I came to live in them. I placed My love in them. Thus it is obvious who truly believed in Me. Those who did, loved My brethren. Those who didn't love My brethren didn't believe in Me or love Me. And those who did love My brethren demonstrated their love. They cared about their brethren who were suffering, and they did what they could to relieve their pain, even if it cost them money or time. They denied themselves, truly following Me. They didn't do those kind deeds to earn salvation—they did it because they were transformed by My grace.

"I even warned you of this very judgment, and My warning is recorded in Matthew, chapter 25. You didn't heed My warning, and now it's too late. Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did not do it to Me. Depart from Me into the everlasting fire."

#### The Condemnation

His words are final. There is no sense arguing. It seems impossible, but you are condemned. As a new gravity begins to pull you downward, images race through your mind. Together, they constitute your former idea of what Christianity is all about:

Church services. Hundreds of them.

Church dinners.

Church picnics.

Church choir practices.

Church committee meetings.

Sermons and more sermons. What did the pastor say about the judgment of Matthew 25? Now you see him standing in the pulpit: "This judgment of the sheep and goats is not a judgment that Christians will face, but is considered by many Bible scholars to be a final judgment of unbelievers."

How foolish! Why didn't we notice that there were believers at the Matthew 25 judgment scene? Why didn't we notice that the crowd at this judgment consisted of "all the nations"?

Another scene flashes into your mind: Listening to a radio preacher in your car while driving to work: "This judgment of Matthew 25 is not one Christians need fear. Most likely, it is a judgment of various nations after the Tribulation Period. Those nations that extended kindness to the nation of Israel will be permitted to enter the Millennium. They are represented by the sheep. Those that were unkind to Israel during the Tribulation, the goats, will be sent to hell."

As your descent accelerates, more images enter your mind, things that consumed all your time, energy and money on the earth, so that you had no time, energy or money to assist suffering Christians. Now you see all those things in a brand new light:

Watching TV and paying the cable bills.

Movies and entertainment to fill up time.

Playing video games all day long.

Taking care of pets.

Vacations.

Hobbies.

Christmas time. Loads of new toys.

Sports and knowing more about football than God.

New electronic gadgets.

Eating out.

Buying designer fashions.

Surfing the Internet.

Seconds later, you stand before the gates of hell. One final thought springs into your spinning mind before the horror of your eternal nightmare overtakes every cell of your brain: Didn't the money that I gave to the church count for something? Your conscience, now free from being suppressed by all the former lies, speaks clearly: The church you attended gave no money to help destitute and suffering believers. The small amount of money that you gave to your church helped pay for the mortgage, so you could have a building in which to enjoy church services. Your money also helped pay the utility bills, so you could be warm in winter and cool in summer during your church services. Your money also helped pay for

r the Sunday School curriculum so your children could have fun classes. Your money also helped pay for the pastor's and staff salaries, whose time was spent completely on activities related to keeping the congregation happy. Your money thus benefited you, and it was not given out of love for God, but love for yourself. And, in fact, you gave less than your fair share compared to other church members, effectively sponging off them. Additionally, what little you did give required no sacrifice on your part. Demonic laughter echoes from the smoke-filled canyons beyond Hell's gates.

In the past year, how many hungry Christians have you fed? How many thirsty believers have you supplied with drinking water? How many homeless children of God have you provided with shelter? How many naked Christians have you furnished with clothing? How many sick or imprisoned followers of Christ have you visited? If you were to die at this moment and stand in the judgment Jesus described in Matthew 25, would you be among the sheep or goats? These can be sobering questions for those whose lives more closely resemble that of the goats.

*excerpt from the David Kirkwood book: "Great Gospel Deception"*