

Second Death

Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.—Matthew 25:34

The parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46) pictures kingdom conditions after the church class has been glorified in heaven. It is the only one of Jesus' parables which explains the work of the kingdom after it has been set up.

All people of all nations, including those who are now asleep in death, will be on trial before The Christ (Jesus and his church) during the thousand years of the Millennial age.

Their true desires will be determined—whether or not they are willing to come into full harmony with God and the laws of the kingdom.

The sheep in the parable represent the people who willingly learn of the love and righteousness of the Heavenly Father and his son, Jesus Christ, and strive to obey the laws of the kingdom. These people will gradually come into harmony with the laws; because they do, they will be judged worthy of everlasting life—to live forever on the perfected earth! Like sheep, they are meek and willing to be led to the “pastures” of truth and righteousness.

The goats, which are not nearly as numerous as the sheep, will show their stubborn and self-willed ways and refuse to receive the instruction which would give them everlasting life. Since they make no attempt to change their sinful ways, they will be judged worthy of second death or destruction—being cut off from life (Revelation 21:8; Acts 3:23).

Many Scriptures use fire as a symbol of destruction. God never intended us to think of fire as punishment for sin. He is a God of love and mercy and would never torture any creature forever in such a terrible way.

Because fire destroys things so completely, the Bible often uses it to show total destruction. The garbage dump of Jerusalem was in the Valley of Hinnom, where a fire was kept burning constantly. Not only was garbage thrown into it, but also dead animals and even the bodies of vicious criminals whom no one had bothered to bury. The Valley of Hinnom was also called Gehenna, often mistranslated “hell” in the Bible. Gehenna represents the second death from which there will be no redemption, no coming back to life ever again.



Original Photo-Drama slide

The parable of the sheep and goats pictures conditions in the kingdom.