

Meeting Human Needs

Key Verse: *“The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”*
—Matt. 25:40

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 25:31-46

The details involving the separation and judgment of the sheep and the goats imply it will require the entire period of Christ’s one-thousand-year reign with his church. During that time, each individual will receive a knowledge as to God’s will.

By the time the end of that period arrives, all the world of mankind will have symbolically arranged themselves either as sheep or goats, depending upon whether or not they have learned the spirit of righteous obedience.

The sheep of this parable have identified themselves with righteousness and will receive a blessed everlasting reward of earthly life. (Matt. 25:33,34) They are the “other sheep” who will not be part of the heavenly fold that is now being developed and who obey Jesus

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the parable of the sheep and the goats. It describes a future time of judgment for the world of mankind after the church receives its heavenly reward. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”—Matt. 25:31,32; II Tim. 4:7,8

in this life.—John 10:16

These ‘other sheep’ will be rewarded because they will demonstrate a helpful attitude towards those who were hungry, strangers, naked, sick, or in prison. Since those literal conditions will not exist during Christ’s kingdom of righteousness and blessing, the foregoing terms appear to be symbolic. As individuals are raised from the tomb (John 5:28,29, *New Revised Standard Version*), the sheeplike members of mankind will then lovingly assist fellow members of humanity to obtain the spiritual food of God’s Truth. This will aid in the removal of sin-sickness as members of the human race are released from the prison house of death. The sheep class will do all that they can to promote reconciliation of sinners back to God.—Matt. 25:35-39

Our Key Verse indicates that Christ will consider all the positive assistance given by mankind to aid their fellow members of humanity in learning righteousness and prospering during the thousand years of his kingdom rule, as though it was literally rendered unto the Master himself.—Matt. 25:40

Unlike the sheep of the parable, the goats will think only of themselves during the time mankind will be returning from the tomb and will not assist them in the process of regaining God’s favor (vss. 41-45) Fire is frequently used in Scripture as a symbol for destruction as opposed to the dying process, and hell (the grave) ultimately will cease to exist as they are cast into the “lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:14) This is defined as the “second death”—a death from which there will be no resurrection.

The parable concludes by asserting the wicked will experience “everlasting punishment,” while the righteous will be granted “life eternal.” (Matt. 25:46; Acts 3:23) What a marvelous plan the Heavenly Father has developed to render appropriate judgment to all members of the human family, after permitting them to use their free moral agency to choose either right or wrong. ■