

A Great Separation is Coming

International Bible Lesson

Matthew 25:31-46

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“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” (Matthew 25:31-32—KJV).

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (Matthew 25:31-32—NRSV).

The more we learn about some world events the more appalled we become. Jesus Christ promised to take away the sin of the world (to solve the world’s problems). For two thousand years Jesus has done this when people have come to believe in Him and obey Him. Unhappily, some people hate Jesus and His followers; furthermore, they do not want to have anything to do with His way of life. Jesus promised to come again someday and solve this problem too. Surprisingly, perhaps, Jesus will not solve the world’s problems by killing those who do evil. When He comes, He will separate those who love God from those who do not, the sheep from the goats. Interestingly, the devil is often pictured as a goat, but Jesus will not kill the devil and those who live like the devil. Jesus promised He would bring peace to the world by separating the sheep from the goats. Jesus said that He would send those He characterized as goats to the place originally prepared for the devil and his angels (those who rebelled against God). Jesus will never compel a goat (someone who does not want to love God and live with Him and His followers) to live with sheep; however, those who do not want to live with His sheep will live forever in a place not prepared for them; therefore, people must choose wisely where they want to live forever.

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Thinking Further

1. Jesus has told us some of His plans upon His return to earth as our glorious King. Who are those who will rejoice when he comes?
2. For what group did God prepare the place of eternal fire for eternal punishment?
3. Based upon the way they act and have acted, with which group will the goats be the happiest: the sheep or other goats? Which group forever?
4. What might you say to someone who says they do not believe in hell, and a loving God would never send anyone to hell?
5. When Christians help other Christians in need, how are they helping Jesus? How is Jesus helping those in need?