



Separating the Righteous from the Cursed
December 30, 2018
Matthew 25:31-46

“Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?’” (Matthew 25:37).

After Jesus began His public ministry in the world, He taught both those He judged to be, or who would become, “sheep” (the righteous) and those He judged to be, or who would become, “goats” (the cursed). Because Jesus knew that strong warnings can sometimes influence people to change their behavior, He warned the goats that upon His return in glory as the Son of Man and King that He would separate the sheep from the goats based on their habitual behavior. Looking first at the behavior of those Jesus judged to be sheep (the righteous), notice they did many good things; such as, feeding the hungry, giving drinks to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and imprisoned. Jesus proclaimed that He would say to the righteous, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). Because they loved their neighbors, the righteous saw the needs of others and wisely tried to find ways to help them without even thinking about any rewards they might receive from God for their good deeds. They did not think of seeing Jesus in these needy people; they only saw themselves in a position to help those who could not help themselves. Because of their relationship with Jesus, their Good Shepherd and King, they thought and acted as Jesus thought and acted. The goats admitted that though needy people lived all around them, they never saw people who were hungry or thirsty or strangers or naked or sick or in prison (Matthew 25:44).

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?