

### **Matthew 25:31 – 46. The Sheep and the Goats.**

One day soon all humanity will be called before Christ's heavenly throne for final judgement. This is the warning of Jesus' final epic sermon recorded in Matthew 24 – 25. The final three blocks of teaching, found in Matthew 25, form the conclusion to Jesus' visionary sermon. First, in the parable about the ten virgins (25:1 – 13) Christ's followers are warned to keep watch and always be ready to join Christ's heavenly wedding procession into his kingdom. Next, in Jesus story about the money entrusted to three servants (25:14 – 30), we are challenged to keep diligently doing our master's work until his return. Finally, using the analogy of a Shepherd who separates his sheep from his goats, our Good Shepherd tells the whole world of his extremely close identification with his sheep -- even the least among his flock who might seem to have little importance in this present age. As we now look into this final section of Jesus' sermon we need to understand that Jesus has begun a humble revolution against the world's pride. This revolution began when God's own Son laid aside his equality with God and became the least of all human servants by dying on a cross for the world's sins. Now Jesus declares to those who want to belong to the kingdom of heaven to adopt his attitude and join his lowly flock of servants on earth, until our Good Shepherd and King returns (Philippians 2:5 – 11).

Read Matthew 25:31 – 46 and answer the following questions

1. Take time to reflect upon verses 31 - 33. Describe the picture that Jesus' words call to your mind. (For a similar vision see Revelation chapter 5).
2. According only to verses 34 – 36, why will the multitudes on the King's right receive the heavenly blessing of the righteous?
3. According only to verses 25:41 - 43, why will the multitudes on the King's left be cursed by him and cast out of his kingdom?
4. According to verses 25:37 – 39 and 44 why will those on the King's right and left initially be confused by the King's proclamations?
5. How will Jesus answer the questions of both groups according to Matthew 25:40 and 45? Who are 'the least of these brother [and sisters] of the King? (See also Matthew 10:40 – 42 and 12:46 – 50)
6. According to 25:46 explain the final consequences of this great day of judgement.
7. How does this teaching of Jesus challenge you?