

## Who Are the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25?

(Go To Meeting)  
Steve Durham—2021

Christ gives at the end of His Olivet Prophecy, which is sort of the tail end of the questions the apostles asked Him about what the signs of the time of the end of the age would be. He poses this comparison between the sheep and the goats.

Today I want to talk about who are the sheep and the goats of Matt. 25. It's just a little section stuck in the middle of Matt. 25, but it has a lot of information, and a lot of meaning and import for us today, as it did for them when they heard it first hand from Christ.

It seems a little strange for us who haven't bee farmers or shepherds, at least to me it does to try and get my head around. We hear about sheep all the time; that we're the sheep and we have a shepherd, but goats, the part of the goats is kind of interesting. You have to kind of picture this.

Forget everything else you've heard about in the Bible about goats. Let's focus on Matt. 25 and what Christ says about them in comparison to sheep.

He gives both a warning to us, and it's also encouragement if we stay the course and endure as He told us in Matt. 24:13. So, both encouragement and a warning! It's a stir to action to endure to the end, and to stay focused on the Kingdom of God. If we fail to do so, our end is going to be disastrous, and we'll be a goat and lumped in with Satan and his demons in the Lake of Fire.

Matthew 25:31: "Now, 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 He shall gather before Him all the nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep at His right hand, but the goats at *His* left" (vs 31-33).

The right shows that there's some honor there, it's on the good side. The goats are on the left, which is dishonor.

These sheep and goats are together at this point; then they get separated. A lot of the research that I did, people were all over the board about when this happened. Some thought that it was 70<sub>A.D.</sub>, some thought it was at the beginning of the Millennium. But we're going to see that where they are these are spirit beings that were changed, the firstfruits, the Church.

When it says *all people*, prophetically nations and people, you have to go back and take a look at that, but it's referring to the entire world. Everybody is going to get an opportunity to understand the Truth and God is going to give them that opportunity to make a choice as to whether they are sheep or goats.

The right side designates a place of honor. Christ sits on the right hand of God the Father. The left side is not where you want to be.

- Who are these sheep and goats of Matt. 25?
- Who are they referring to?
- What is their fate?
- Do the sheep and goats pertain to us today?
- If so, which are we?

*Let's see what God says about the sheep and the goats!* Let's see what we can learn about them and how it can help us in our journey toward the Kingdom of God, as well as especially our relationships.

Remember Matt. 22:35-39<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>? It talks about loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and your neighbor as yourself. That's very important. That's the hard part.

Matthew 25:34<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>: "Then shall the King say to those at His right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit...'"

We can see in Rom. 8:17<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> and other places where it talks about the inheritance of the sons of God.

**"...the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"** (v 34)—*this plan for mankind was begun and designed and put into place by Jesus Christ and God the Father!* The Word—Logos—and the Father, the Almighty, the Eternal One!

Here are the things that are why those who are on the right are blessed and have an inheritance and will enter into a relationship with God.

Here's what they do; v 35: "For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat..."

Think about these, it's more than just he physical. It is the physical and that's very important. Christ said that 'if you have done it to one of the least, you have done it to Me.' But there's also the spiritual aspect of it.

- How do you feed people?

Who Are the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25?  
(Go To Meeting)

- How do you give them?
- What did Christ do with the woman at the well?
  - He fed her the Truth!
  - He gave her information that was pertaining to eternal life

*The world is hungry!*

“...I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink...” (v 35).

Remember the woman at the well, it’s the Holy Spirit, *rivers of living water!*

“...I was a stranger, and you took Me in...” (v 35)—*hospitality*

1-Timothy 5:10—*talking about a woman*: “If she has a good report for her good works... [God inspired; not her works] ... if she has brought up children, if **she has shown hospitality** to strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if **she has given relief to those who were afflicted**, if she has devoted *herself* to every good work.”

*This is the one on the right, the sheep!*

Matthew 25:36: “I was naked, and you clothed Me...”

Throughout the Bible it talks about the righteous’ clothing, giving them connection and a relationship with God, through Jesus Christ. You’re seeing righteousness imputed to you; you have the white robes of righteousness.

“...I was sick, and you visited Me...” (v 36).

James 1:27: “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world”—*away from the world!*

We are called out of the world, we’re to not be part of the world, but we’re in the world.

But God wants us to do is be a light to the world, and salt. That’s how we get on the right side. That’s how we become a sheep.

We follow Christ and all He did and His example, the very first thing He talked about when He came to the synagogue at the beginning of His ministry was:

Isaiah 61:1: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me because the LORD has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor... [there’s the food] ...He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted...” *To take care of those who mourn an are sick*, many things that can cause a broken heart.

People are not happy, and we have

something to give them that brings them hope and helps them with abundant live physically as well as spiritually in the future.

“...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound” (v 1).

The sins that we have weigh us down, put us in prison and bind us; they keep us down. But the Truth gives us liberty, freedom!

Verse 2: “To preach the acceptable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.”

That’s showing that we are followers of Jesus Christ, imitating Him, being changed to become like Christ; to have His mind to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Jesus Christ.

As we’ve been given grace and we live under grace, we all understand that in this fellowship what that means and we are then gracious to other people and giving that them. That’s what Jesus wants us to do. That’s what Christ did.

In order to be sheep on the right hand side, these are things we need to do. He is our Chief Shepherd! Here we see those who go on the right side, following all of those characteristics that Christ wants us to have.

We can read so many places in the Bible; there is the theme of blessings and the cursings that runs throughout the Bible. Sheep care! They love one another! They love others, in the flock and out of the flock.

A couple of things that I have found in researching this, it’s kind of interesting. You watch these traits and sheep and goats have, and apply them to people. I know that God did that for a reason, so that in analogy it is for teaching purposes.

Sheep are highly social and relational; they’re gregarious. They’re great mothers, loving and nurturing. Sheep form strong bonds within the flock, and friendships among those around them. They can identify up to 50 different traces in other sheep and also the shepherd. They know their shepherd! They know their shepherd’s voice (John 10).

They can recognize different facial and emotional expressions such as *fear and contentment!* They have many different vocalization and communication skills where they’re very vocal and communicate a lot with one another. They tend to be more content to stay with the herd. They’re more content to be in that group. As a matter of fact, that’s where they have their safety and protection.

Who Are the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25?  
(Go To Meeting)

So, they seem to be more content to stay with the herd. This is a perfect description of those who are here in Matt. 25, the sheep that are on the right side of the Throne. They care for the flock. In fact, they display their love for Jesus and for others by showing their love to fellow man. Christ told us that:

John 13:34: “A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another **in the same way that I have loved you, that is how you are to love one another.**”

He shows us; He came before to show us the way, the Truth and life. We imitate that! We all understand that.

Verse 35: “By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—**if you love one another.**”

Jesus’ entire ministry was that theme, and also the Kingdom of God, which is comprised of sheep. Sheep are very dependent on the shepherd

Hebrew 13:1: “Let **brotherly love** be present...” *We say that and we just kind of gloss over it!*

- What does that mean?
- How do you show that?
- How do you put that in practice?

*among you continually.... [even in the hard times] ...Do not forget to show hospitality; for by this some have unknowingly welcomed angels as guests. Be mindful of prisoners, as if you were imprisoned with them; and think of those who are suffering... [actual prisoners, but prisoners in other ways] ...afflictions, as if you yourselves were in their body” (1-3). Sympathy and empathy for their affliction!*

We want to become sheep on the right side of God, at His Throne and in His Family forever in that relationship.

These are the sheep, and they’re collected at the last trumpet, and people have difficulty understanding when that is. I’ve done a lot of research on it, and they are all over the board. But they are collected at the last trumpet, on Pentecost as firstfruits.

Matthew 24:30: “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And **He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet;** and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (vs 30-31).

We’re going to see that on the Day of Pentecost, and we will be anticipating that. Then we

will be sorted and separated and put on the right hand side of Christ.

Let’s think about this! Before we think that we’re anything great—we’re called, we’re the elect, we’re special—we are in God’s eyes, but we’re really nothing, nothing at all. We need to remember where we started.

We started out in the world, we were all goats. Were you a sheep before you were called? *NO!* we were part of the world; carnality and enmity against God.

Romans 8:6: “For to be carnally minded *is* death, **but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, because the carnal mind is enmity against God,** for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*” (vs 6-7).

We need to have understanding as we deal with one another. Maybe some of those goat traits are popping out, and we need to tuck them back in. Maybe a horn or beard or something is popping out on one another, and we need to be patient and merciful.

But once we’re called, we repent of who we were and who we are. We are then baptized and given the Holy Spirit, and we’re able to begin this change to a new creature, this change from a goat to a sheep.

2-Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore, if anyone *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; the old things have passed away... [being a goat] ...behold, all things have become new.” *Then this metamorphosis begins:*

Romans 12:2: “Do not conform yourselves to this world... [come out of the world] ...**but be transformed by the renewing of your mind** in order that you may prove what *is* well-pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God.”

- to become a sheep; to become like God
- to become like Christ and have His mind

We do find that occasionally we fall back into actions and attitudes that are goat like and we have to repent of them. This is for all of us—me, everybody—this is our calling and what we need to examine and be on this every day.

2-Peter 2:20: “For if, after escaping the moral defilements of the world through *the* knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ... [that’s how; we didn’t do it on our own, the Father drew us] ...they again become entangled in them... [becoming like a goat again] ...and are overcome, the final end is worse than the beginning. **For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the Holy**

**commandment that was delivered to them**” (vs 20-21).

Do you see the warning? *But there is a great hope, a great future!* There’s a warning! We have to endure to the end; hang in there, stick with it (Matt. 24:13). It’s a marathon race, not a sprint. We have to hang in there and keep going no matter what happens!

Who are the goats? *It could be us, as well if we do not stay the course and fight the good fight* as Paul talked about.

Goats are exactly opposite of sheep. Instead of caring for their fellow man, they despise them. They only care for themselves; they’re self-centered and inward. They think of themselves, not what they ‘can do for you, but what can you do for me.’ They’re oblivious to anyone in need. They are self-centered and proud and vain.

We’re going to actually look at some of those who have been personified for us, and kept in God’s Word for us to look at.

Matthew 25:41: “Then shall He also say to those on *the* left... [the goats] ...’Depart from Me, *you* cursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’” *We don’t want that!*

Verse 42: “For I was hungry, and you did not give Me *anything* to eat; I was thirsty, and you did not give Me *anything* to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not take Me in; *I was* naked, and you did not clothe Me... [this world needs that; they need the Truth] ...*I was* sick, and in prison, and you did not *come to visit Me*” (vs 42-43)—*bound by the sins that drag me down!*

They do not do any of the things that the sheep do. Their reward is opposite of what the sheep have; they’re on the left side. This is a warning for us, and it’s also an encouragement to see what the reward is at the end. Isn’t that encouraging and exciting? We are our brother’s keeper; we are to help and bear one another’s burdens. We do it in love!

There are times when we need to confront sin and things so that that person who is in that sin will not sprout horns and a beard and end up being a goat and end up on the left hand side, because we love them. We don’t want to see that happen to them. *We have to examine ourselves constantly and daily!*

Some of the natural traits of goats:

- curious and often get into mischief and trouble as a result

Have you ever seen someone who is always in trouble? *Someone whose life that they never seem to get out of difficulty!* They’re always in difficulty. Nothing seems to go well for them. Why is that? *It’s not always somebody else, you’re not always a victim!* Sometimes you are.

- independent

Independence is okay when you’re under a bad teacher, false prophet or an abusive leader. In our Church history we’ve seen those things, and when it’s like that remove yourself, where they’re not teaching the Truth.

Get back to the Body, and in that way you are taking a step, being independent of that false environment, that toxic environment.

- headstrong and obstinate

Ask yourself: Am I like this? *The normal thing is to say, ‘I know a lot of people like that!’* When you point the finger, see how many are pointed back at you.

Think about how obstinate and opinionated! Some people on social media start chat rooms and want to discuss their opinions; they want to talk about it and complain and gossip and sew discord and division. It’s their opinion, and they’re vocal in that! They’re complaining and rash, and they don’t think first! They don’t stop to check and let it process with the Holy Spirit. They don’t let I marinate in the Holy Spirit because it comes out. When you do that, most of the time it doesn’t come out. Or when it does, it comes out with grace and love.

- rude, rash and ready to fight at a drop of a hat

‘you’re not going to do that to me. You don’t know who you’re dealing with.’

- disagreeable—*always disagreeable*
- troublemakers and busybodies

It talks about it, look up busybodies and troublemakers. They don’t want anyone telling them what to do. they don’t listen, always in trouble, always off somewhere else.

- forage, browsers

Goats want to forage on their own; they want to get their own food; go on the Internet and read this and that book, and ‘I got something to tell you guys, did you know about this...?’ *‘Ah, really! Wow! That’s amazing!’*

- they don’t need a shepherd

‘I can do it myself.’

- they will eat anything

Sheep eat grass and drink fresh, clear water. Goats browse on anything that you throw at them, anything they can find—*tin cans, anything!* Weeds, trash, garbage in/garbage out!

Finally, v 40: “And answering, the King shall say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you have done *it* to **one of the least of these My brethren**, you have done *it* to Me.’”

Look at who we’re talking about—1-Cor. 1:26-27—we’re the least. We’re nothing, absolutely nothing! We understand that, and realize that, and once we do, then the slightest --- and the ground is fertile to begin planting and growing a crop or fruit, spiritual fruit.

But if we think we’re something, there’s no room of growth. You don’t need Jesus Christ, a shepherd or the Truth; you’ve got your own. ***That’s what a goat is!***

So, the comparison given in Matt. 25 between the sheep and goats is for us. We’re either sheep, if we follow the Chief Shepherd and eat what He feeds us—remember that He’s the Bread of Life—rely on and trust Him for our needs, security and protection. Then emulate that and show love and care for our fellow man and their needs of everything—*physical and spiritual*—being ready and willing to help wherever we can. That’s sheep caring for one another.

If we don’t want to fall into the category of a goat and be cast in the Lake of Fire with Satan and his demons, to be burned up, then we need to examine and think. It’s serious, very serious!

How do we follow the example set for us by Christ and become sheep-like brethren? *John epitomized this*, and he was the apostle of love; he spoke about love a lot.

1-John 3:14: “We know that we have passed from death into life because we **love the brethren**... [and ***the Truth***] ...The one who does not love *his* brother is dwelling in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him”(vs 14-15). *In other words, the Holy Spirit is not activated, not active, not fired up!*

Verse 16: “By this *very act* we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us, **and we ourselves are to lay down our lives for the brethren**.”

We don’t have a lot of people being martyred right now; there are Christian around the world being martyred. But we lay down our lives through our time, service and giving, being selfless;

not self-centered.

Verse 17: “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him... [hopefully he has them] ...how can the love of God be dwelling in him? My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed and in Truth” (vs 17-18).

Colossians 3:17: “And *in* everything—**whatever you do in word or in deed**—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him”—*to glorify Him!*

- What does a goat and sheep situation look like in the Church of God?
- Do you know any of those?
- Have you ever seen anything like that?

*We have in the record, the Word of God, an example of that!*

It’s for our benefit and growth. It’s a warning for us, and there’s a lot to learn in this section of 3-John. It describes what sheep in a congregation look like. And it describes what a goat in the congregation or fellowship looks like; easily spotted or scene. Not that you’re judging—judge righteous judgment—but by the fruits, if the fruits are apparent and they’re continuous, then you can make an evaluation. You don’t condemn that person, but you make an evaluation and we have directives from God as to what to do in love to care for the brethren, the other sheep and watch out for them. To say, ‘There’s a wolf; Shepherd, there’s a wolf.’ Then in love deal with that situation.

Sometimes there’s no reconciliation and sometimes there is. So, those are the things that need to be done within a fellowship. This describes what sheep in the congregation look like.

3-John 1: “The elder [John] to Gaius... a great example; and Demetrius later on] ...the beloved, whom I love in Truth.” *John and Gaius both were walking in Truth!* Those two were connect as one, of the same mind.

Verse 2: “Beloved, I personally am praying for you, that in all respects you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul is prospering. For I rejoiced exceedingly at the coming of *the* brethren *who* testified of you in the Truth... [they brought a report of Gaius to John] ...even how you are walking in Truth.”

- Can that be said of us?
- Are you hospitable?
- Are you walking in Truth?

*All of that that means!* We gloss over that!

Who Are the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25?  
(Go To Meeting)

- What does that mean?
- What is the truth?
- What are we to do?
- What's laid out in the Bible and God's Word for us?
- What are Their operating directives for us?

Verse 4: "I do not have any greater joy than these *testimonies* that I am hearing—that my children are walking in Truth. Beloved, you are faithfully **practicing** whatever you have been doing for the brethren... [remember what the sheep did] ...and for strangers" (vs 4-5)—*in and out of the flock!*

Not just in their little fellowship group, and those you don't know. It's an attitude and a lifestyle, a mindset and heart!

Verse 6: "Who have testified of your love before *the* Church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God."

He says that for a reason; the goat in this case is not doing this.

Verse 7: "Because for the *sake of His* name they went forth *preaching*, taking nothing from the Gentiles":

- for Christ's sake
- for the Gospel
- for the Kingdom of God

***God took care of them! Christ is the Shepherd and He cares for the sheep!***

Verse 8: "For this cause, we are personally obligated to receive *those who do* such *service*, in order that we may be fellow workers in the Truth."

Now John begins to talk about the problem; he's talking about a goat in the congregation: *Diotrephes!* I don't know if you've studied about Diotrephes, but this is very interesting. Try to put Diotrephes today in a fellowship group. *If we ran into Diotrephes:*

- would we recognize it?
- would we identify that?
- would we sound the alarm?
- would we do as Christ wants us to do?

There is a difference between an Matt. 18 situation and a desperate situation where you need to say that there's a wolf, help, and let's do something about that before it hurts anyone.

This shows—about Diotrephes —that this can happen to a member who does not care for the flock, but rather as self-serving, proud, arrogant and:

- wanting to be noticed
- wanting to be acknowledged
- wanting everyone else to know that they have something, knowledge and information that maybe is *new* truth
- maybe something you hadn't thought about before

So, John begins to talk about Diotrephes; there's not a lot written about him, but you can read between the lines here.

Verse 9: "I wrote to the Church, but Diotrephes, the one who loves to be chief among them, does not accept us."

John just spent the first 8 verses talking about receiving and hospitality and going back and forth, one minded, loving one another. This individual won't receive those that bring the Truth. There's a reason for that:

Verse 10: "Because of this very thing, if I come, I will call him to account for the actions that he is practicing with evil words—maliciously berating us... [John and the others that were with him] ...and he is not satisfied with these things, *for* he himself neither receives the brethren, *nor does he permit* those who wish *to receive the brethren*, ***but he forbids them and casts them out of the Church***"—*or out of his group!*

He's got a following! He's got a select group! Anybody else who brings the Truth in, or calls him on it, Diotrephes is going to cast them out. 'You can't be part of this group anymore. You're bad and you're out!'

Let's take a look at Diotrephes; he liked have pre-eminence over the brethren. There's only one other place in the New Testament that that word is used.

Colossians 1:17: "And He [Christ] is before all, and by Him all things subsist. And He is the Head of the Body, the Church; Who is *the* Beginning, *the* Firstborn from among the dead so that in all things **He Himself might hold the pre-eminence**" (vs 17-18). *That's what Diotrephes wanted!*

- Does that sound familiar?
- Do we know of another place in the Bible that someone wanted the pre-eminence over the brethren?

The word 'pre-eminence' is 'proteuo'—from 'protos.' The definition is to have *first place!* Diotrephes wanted to be first in the fellowship. He wanted everyone to see him as *first*. Who else did that?

Who Are the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25?  
(Go To Meeting)

Isa. 14 & Ezek. 28—Satan wanted the pre-eminence! He wanted to be *God*. So, when we do these things as *goats* who are we of? *Satan!* What did Christ say?

John 8:44: “You are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice. He was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

Isaiah 14:12: “How you are fallen from the heavens, O shining star, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!”

When this happens, it weakens the fellowship and our brethren, the sheep. They’re affected and it puts a stumbling block, the atmosphere is toxic. It was a toxic environment in the fellowship where Gaius, Demetrius and Diotrephes were.

Verse 13: “For you have said in your heart... [this is what he was in his mind and heart] ...‘I will ascend *into* the heavens, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High” (vs 13-14).

WOW! God gave him the earth to govern, but he wasn’t happy with that, was he? He’s the ‘god of this world’ and was cast back down. Christ came to qualify to take over, and He will when He comes back. But Satan wanted the Throne of God, and he wanted to be exalted above the stars (Rev. 12). He wanted to rule over the angels. Here are his character traits that were part of his heart:

- greed
- vanity
- selfishness
- self-exaltation
- pride

What did it do? After you watch this for a while, a root of bitterness formed and festered in him, and it broke out into an action. He didn’t have to do it on his own, he recruited others to join in this coup, to agree with him that the Father was bad.

We’re victims and He’s over there and we’re here and we’re being victimized; this is not right. So, he got some to join his crew, and if they didn’t agree with him he would just cast them out, kick them out, and they couldn’t be part of the group anymore.

- spreads discontent
- makes accusations

Who is the accuser?

- division
- speaking evil of dignitaries (John—speaking evil of him)
- How did this fellowship get into this mess with Diotrephes?
- How did it happen?

*It didn’t start out that way!* We don’t know who, but John probably planted that congregation or fellowship, and they started out with the Truth. I’m sure that they started out with everybody happy. ***But a little leaven leavens the whole lump!***

Diotrephes—with the attitude, heart, mind and the influence of Satan—caused a big problem. He got a following and he worked and worked on them.

- How did Satan get a third of the angels?
- How long did that take? *I don’t know, but I’m sure he didn’t do it overnight!*

1-John 3:10: “By this *standard* are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, and neither is the one who does not love his brother.”

Diotrephes didn’t love his brother. He looked like he looked the part, but he was tuned into Satan. He wanted it all and would cast out anyone who defiled him or spoke evil against him, or didn’t trust him.

- Do you know what the word Diotrephes means? *Reared by Zeus! Jupiter! Reared by the son of Satan!*
- Who did Zeus represent?
- Who did Jupiter represent?

*That’s what Diotrephes means!* Maybe he:

- was an aristocrat
- had a lot of money
- had family lineage and heritage
- thought he was somebody special

He had a desire to be seen and acknowledged and known. May be was a smart guy, a good communicator! A good speaker and thought of himself as somebody great, higher and better than any other, especially the Apostle John; maybe even Jesus Christ, and maybe even the Father; *I don’t know!*

He lorded it over that little congregation/fellowship and *he gained a following!* There’s the problem; he gained a following. That’s how it became a mess. It wasn’t acted on. Some

Who Are the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25?  
(Go To Meeting)

there listened to him and supported his sedition. He cast out those who would dare to disagree and call him out for his evil, warning the Church of the wolf in their presence.

Some people will stand up against the evil they see, and they will warn the shepherd, 'Hey, there's a problem!'

- What does Satan do to them?
- What does he do typically?

This is age old! He turns it on them and makes them look like the bad guy, because they would dare to challenge him.

He probably looked the part. He was able to speak and tell it good. He was ambitious, proud, inhospitable, disrespectful of apostolic authority, and rebellious.

- What are stubbornness and rebellion? *It's as witchcraft* (1-Sam. 15).
- Where does witchcraft come from? *Satan!*

If you have a stubbornness, are rebellious, independent and you don't need anybody, basically you're saying that you don't need Jesus Christ. You're doing like Satan did. You are a child of disobedience.

We have to think about this! We have to examine ourselves constantly. We want to be sheep, not goats. How did this get that way?

Verse 11: "Beloved, do not imitate that which *is* evil; **rather, imitate that which is good.** The one who practices good is of God; but the one who practices evil has not seen God. We have received testimony from everyone on behalf of Demetrius, and from the Truth itself..." (vs 11-12). *That was the litmus test!*

Diotrephes<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> was going against Christ, going against the Truth, not John, not Gaius, not Demetrius. Diotrephes was going against the Head of the Church. ***Serious stuff!***

"...and we also bear witness, and you know that our witness is true. I had many things to write, but *now* I will not write *them* with ink and pen" (vs 12-13).

In other words, 'I'm not going to put it down on paper to be used against me. I'm going to him face-to-face.'

Verse 14: "For I hope to see you shortly, and I will speak with you face to face."

I'm sure he did it in a loving way, but he was firm, unmovable. He had seen Christ, he walked with Him, was taught by Him; he was unmovable!

Verse 15: "Peace *be* to you.... [Christ said, 'My peace I leave with you'] ...*Our* friends salute you. Salute the friends by name." *In other words, know them!*

Just like the sheep can remember 50 couples/people and the shepherd; we are to salute our friends by name.

A warning to the Diotrephes of the world, isn't it? Those in our Body of Christ around the world, wherever they may be.

Romans 2:3: "Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God?"

If you're going to be a goat, what happens to the goat on the left hand side?

Verse 4: "Or do you despise **the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering**, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?" (v 4). *That's the hope!* It's not to 'beat' anyone up or be mean to anybody. *But allow the graciousness of God to lead you to repentance!*

Verse 5: "But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God's righteous judgment, Who will render to each one according to his own works" (vs 5-6).

Serious stuff! Peter gives us a proper way to become a sheep. He's talking to the elders, but also to each one of us:

1-Peter 5:2: "**Feed the flock of God** that is among you..." *Remember 'Feed Me when I was hungry...'*

"...**exercising oversight**..." (v 2). How?

God set this up, and there's a reason why He did; there's a reason why He came as a Chief Shepherd in love, kindness, peace and comfort.

"...not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an* eager attitude" (v 2).

If you're helping someone, you're not trying to get something for that. You're doing it because your heart leads and guides you. The Holy Spirit leads you to show love, care and concern for people.

Verse 3: "Not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions; but *by* being examples to the flock of God. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory" (vs 3-4)—*on the right side of God as sheep!*

Even as bad as this is, God shows us that we are to be long-suffering, patient, having mercy and



Who Are the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25?  
(Go To Meeting)

forgiveness when repentance is shown, being firm in the face of evil! Protecting the flock and our brothers, and caring for them, watching out for them.

Why does God wait to the end to separate them? The sheep from the goats?

2-Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not delaying the promise *of His coming*, as some in their own minds reckon delay; rather, **He is longsuffering toward us, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**” *That’s how we should be!*

Verse 10: “However, the Day of *the Lord* shall come as a thief in *the night* in which the heaven itself shall disappear with a mighty roar, and *the elements* shall pass away, burning with intense heat, and *the earth* and the works in it shall be burned up.” **Where are we going to be?**

Verse 11: “Since all these things are going to be destroyed, what kind of *persons* ought you to be in Holy conduct and Godliness” *toward our brothers and others!* God’s character is that He never rushes to judgment. He says:

‘As surely as I live,’ declares the Sovereign Lord, ‘I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but rather that they turn from their way and live, and become sheep’ (Ezek. 33).

Join the Family! Join the fellowship of likeminded loving brethren!

In His great love and mercy, God waits as long as possible to judge those who are goats, because His heart is to give them as much time as possible to allow for repentance. This doesn’t mean that He won’t eventually bring judgment, but He’s patient before He does!

Jesus identifies who are the sheep and who are the goats in Matt. 25. We can see that now. We can see through and example and through the traits of the goats and the sheep. It’s simple. **Who are they?**

The sheep care, the goats don’t! it can simply be that the mark of your love for God is how you love the brethren. Christ tells us that in many places. And your fellow man of selfless, loving and caring Christ-centered servants. That’s who He’s looking for, and that’s who the sheep are. Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd, loves all and set the example for His sheep.

1-Corinthians 13:4—*Paul tells us:* “Love is patient *and* is kind; love envies not... [like Diotrephes] ...does not brag about itself...”—*have a stage to be seen!*

- you can tell when people are like that.

- you can tell when people speak from the heart.
- you can tell when people are theatrical, parading themselves

“...is not puffed up” (v 4).

Colossians 3:12: “Put on then, as *the elect* of God... [that’s who we are; not anything great, but we are precious in the eyes of God] ...Holy and beloved... [by the Father and Jesus Christ] ...deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering; forbearing one another... [in the difficult times] ...and forgiving one another... [ready to forgive] ...if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*” (vs 12-13).

There’s your personal Matt. 18; there’s your situation. That covers most things. If you have two people who have God’s Holy Spirit, those get taken care of at the lowest level, at the face-to-face. Very seldom do they escalate. It’s when you have a goat in the middle of the mess that they escalate.

If we do these things, we will hear at the end of Pentecost and the Sea of Glass:

Matthew 25:23: “His lord said to him, ‘**Well done, good and faithful servant!** *Because you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.*”

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 25:31-33-35
- 2) 1 Timothy 5:10
- 3) Matthew 25:36
- 4) James 1:27
- 5) Isaiah 61:1-2
- 6) John 13:34-35
- 7) Hebrews 13:1-3
- 8) Matthew 24:30-31
- 9) Romans 8:6-7
- 10) 2 Corinthians 5:17
- 11) Romans 12:2
- 12) 2 Peter 2:20-21
- 13) Matthew 25:41-43, 40
- 14) 1 John 3:14-18
- 15) Colossians 3:17
- 16) 3 John 1-10
- 17) Colossians 1:17-18
- 18) John 8:44
- 19) Isaiah 14:12-14
- 20) 1 John 3:10-15
- 21) Romans 2:3-6
- 22) 1 Peter 5:2-4
- 23) 2 Peter 3:9-11
- 24) 1 Corinthians 13:4
- 25) Colossians 3:12-13

26) Matthew 25:23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 24:13
- Matthew 22:35-39
- Romans 8:17
- John 10
- 1 Corinthians 1:26-27
- Matthew 18
- Ezekiel 28
- Revelation 12
- 1 Samuel 15
- Ezekiel 33

SD:bo  
Transcribed: 8/16/21

Copyright 2021—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.