

Awake, Church, Awake; God Is Separating His Sheep From The Goats

'Thus says the Lord God, "As for you, O My flock; behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams (male sheep) and male goats"' (Ezekiel 34:17).

'All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people from one another as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats; and He will cause the sheep to stand at His right hand, but the goats at His left; then the King will say to those (sheep) at His right hand, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" ... Then He will say to those (goats) at His left hand, "Begone from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels"' (Matthew 25:32 to 34 & 41).

'The Lord had said to them, "They shall surely die in the wilderness." There was not a man left of them except Caleb son of Jephunneh, and Joshua son of Nun' (Numbers 26:65).

"None of the men who came out of Egypt shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob because they have not wholly followed me, except for Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord" (Numbers 32:11 & 12).

There is a worldwide popular notion that if we do nothing more than believe in Jesus then our souls are saved and we will all go to heaven when we die. If we study the scriptures will see how wrong that belief is. The only way to get into the Kingdom of God is to wholly follow the Lord, and be found doing so at the time of our death or at the day of the Lord's return. Many professing Christians are satisfied living their own lives and think they are spiritually safe because they may have been Christened or baptised, and are sometimes even filled with the Holy Spirit. This Bible study will show through the scriptures, that God does require us to be baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit, but He also demands much more than that from us. The above verse refers to nations standing before the Lord, but we will all have to stand before the Lord on Judgement Day as individuals.

Jesus said we are to squeeze through a straightened, restricted, narrow gate because the wide gate is the one that leads to destruction; the furnace; the lake of fire. 'Enter through the narrow gate for wide is the gate that leads to destruction and many are those who are entering through it. But the gate is narrow and the way is straightened that leads to eternal life and few are those who find it' (Matthew 7:13 & 14). Jesus said many people are called, invited, summoned or gathered to Him, but from them, only a few will be chosen to enter the Kingdom of God (Matthew 22:14). Only a few sheep will enter through the narrow gates of heaven. Many goats will take the wide path of self-indulgence and disobedience that will ultimately lead them to destruction.

If we use the children of Israel as our example, we can see they were all 'baptised' and had the constant presence of the Holy Spirit, but they were all lost except for just two men; Joshua and Caleb. 'For I do not want you to be ignorant Brethren, that our forefathers were all under the cloud (of the Holy Spirit) and every one of them passed safely through the waters (of the Red Sea), and each one of them was baptised in the cloud and in the sea; all of them ate the same spiritual food (manna); they all drank the same spiritual drink (water) from the spiritual Rock which followed them and the Rock was Jesus the Messiah. Nonetheless, God was not pleased with the great majority of them and they died in the wilderness. These things are examples for us not to crave after the things of the flesh as they did ... we should not try the Lord's patience ... nor complain as some of them did ... now these things that befell them were written as a warning to us ... therefore anyone who thinks they stand, take heed lest he fall and be lost' (1 Corinthians 10:1 to 12).

The verses written above regarding the sheep and goats are not talking about non-believers. They were people who stood before God, or in the presence of God. The 'goats' are believers who have not obeyed God's Word and they are rejected because of their disobedience. Only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land which later became a kingdom. The Promised Land is a 'picture' of heaven or the Kingdom of God. The Israelites were taken out of slavery or bondage, just as we are taken out of spiritual slavery and the bondage of the kingdom of darkness and of sin. 'The Father has delivered us out of the kingdom of darkness, into the Kingdom of the Son of His love' (Colossians 1:13). 'We know that our old self was crucified with Jesus ... so that we would no longer be in bondage to sin' (Romans 6:6). The genuine sheep are a merged group of Jews and Gentiles who wholly follow the Lord. Once again we can turn to the example of the children of Israel. There is one small detail that many people miss. Joshua was a Jewish man, but Caleb was a Kenizzite – a Gentile who wholly followed the Lord. The name Joshua is the same as Jesus. It is pronounced Yeshua and it means Saviour.

Jesus said not everyone would enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only the people who do God's will and are found doing so when He returns, will enter the Kingdom of God. 'Blessed is that servant whom, when his Master comes, he will be found so doing' (Matthew 24:46). "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but He who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in Your name and driven out demons in Your name and done many mighty works in Your name?' Then I will say to them publicly, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me you who act wickedly'. So everyone who hears these words of Mine and obeys them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the Rock, and when the floods came he did not fall because he was founded on the Rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not obey them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand, and when the floods came the house fell, and great was the fall of it'" (Matthew 7:21 to 27). We notice here, Jesus is very clearly talking about Christians who prophesied, cast out demons and did mighty works in His name, but they were all rejected on Judgement Day because they were disobedient and refused to listen to the words of Jesus. Wise sheep hear the Lord's words and obey. Foolish goats don't listen.

Jesus said children of the Kingdom will be sent to outer darkness and they will wail and grind their teeth in despair because they missed out on heaven. Children of the Kingdom are born-again Christians. We know that because the Kingdom of God only came to earth when Jesus came to earth (Matthew 12:28). That is a very sobering thought and we need to actively avoid allowing ourselves to be in that situation. We need to listen and pay attention to the scriptures or the disobedient believers will receive the exact same punishment as the unsaved and the wicked. This the punishment of the wicked: 'The Son of Man will send forth His angels and they will gather out of His Kingdom all causes of offence and all who do wickedly, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 13:41 & 42). This is the punishment of disobedient Christians: 'I tell you many will come from the east and the west and will sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, while the children of the Kingdom will be driven out into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 8:11 & 12).

In the New Testament, believers were likened to fish. Here is another parable to warn us that many fish will be discarded. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet which was cast into the sea and gathered fish of every sort. When it was full, men dragged it up on the beach and sorted out the good fish into baskets but the worthless ones they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go forth and will separate the good from the wicked and cast the wicked into the furnace of fire; there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 13:47 to 50).

Another parable is about the wheat and tares or darnel. Darnel is a 'false' genus of wheat. It looks exactly like wheat but when it is harvested the husks are empty. They are only good for fuel. Sheep and goats are growing up together in the house of God, just as wheat and darnel are growing up together in God's field. Jesus said, "Let them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will say to the reapers, 'Gather the darnel first and bind it in bundles to be burned but gather the wheat into My barn'" (Matthew 13:30). We can see again, these are all believers growing up together, but some are like weeds, fit only to be burned.

We must all separate ourselves from sin and not behave as the world does. 'What harmony can there be between Jesus and the devil? What has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement can there be between God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God and God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they will be My people, so come out from among unbelievers and separate yourselves from them," says the Lord, "Touch no unclean thing, then I will receive you; then I will be a Father to you and you shall be My children," says the Lord Almighty' (2 Corinthians 6:15 to 18). The Lord receives and dwells among His sheep but those goats who fellowship with evil people will be rejected. Remember God's warning, 'Evil companionships corrupt good character' (1 Corinthians 15:33).

We must not drink with the drunken. 'And he begins to beat his fellow servants and drink with the drunken ... and God will punish him and put him with the hypocrites' (Matthew 24:49 & 51). Notice this man was not drunk, he was just drinking with the drunken, and he was a violent servant (believer). There are many Christians today who think it is okay to indulge themselves and drink alcohol as long as they don't drink to excess and get drunk. Notice the man in this parable was merely drinking. He was not drunk, yet he was rejected and received the same judgement as the wicked because he was acting the same as the wicked. This man was violent and he beat the other servants of God who were with him. Perhaps they should not

have been with him. There are many Christians who think it is okay to be nasty and aggressive but they will be judged with the wicked.

Jesus said we must be born-again. "I assure you, unless a person is born-again they can never see the Kingdom of God ... unless a person is born of water (baptised) and of the Spirit (filled with the Holy Spirit) he cannot enter the Kingdom of God ... Marvel not at My telling you, you must all be born-again from above" (John 3:3, 5 & 7). We are called to repent, be born-again and be baptised. 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). 'We were buried with Jesus by baptism so that just as Jesus was raised from the dead ... so we too might live in newness of life' (Romans 6:4).

The children of Israel were our first examples – they came out of bondage, were 'baptised' in the Red Sea and were covered by the cloud of the Holy Spirit – but they all died except the two men who wholly followed the Lord. Jesus is our second but main example. He was sinless and had no need of repentance. We are the ones who need to repent; we have to come out of darkness and bondage to sin. Jesus was baptised in water, and He said we all must be baptised in water. Jesus died and so we must also 'die' to sin. Jesus was raised from the dead, and as we come up out of the waters of baptism, so we too are symbolically raised from the 'dead'. Jesus said we are all to be baptised or filled with the Holy Spirit, and the evidence of that is speaking with other tongues. Jesus was the incarnate of the Spirit of God and He was covered with the cloud of the Holy Spirit on the mount. 'Behold, a shining cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My Son, My Beloved, with Whom I am delighted. Listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:5). Jesus said those who listen to Him are wise, and those who do not listen to Him are foolish.

Those steps to salvation are vital if we are to ever enter the Kingdom of God. We are to come out of bondage by repentance, be born-again then be baptised in water to symbolise our death to sin and resurrection to our new spiritual life, and we are also required to be baptised or filled with the Holy Spirit as part of our spiritual walk with God in this age of grace. To reject the free gift of the Holy Spirit is to reject a free gift given to us by God. If we reject that, it could cost us our salvation. Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit are wise, and those who reject it are foolish and will be rejected. Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. We have the parable of the ten believers, who all met the Lord, and were initially all filled with the Holy Spirit, all had light in their lives (the lamps), but while they were waiting for Him to return, five became complacent and did not keep in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. When Jesus returned, He rejected them. 'The Kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins (believers) who took their lamps and went to meet the Bridegroom. Five of them were wise and five were foolish, for when the foolish took their lamps they did not take extra oil, but the five wise took extra oil with them and their lamps. While the Bridegroom waited they all fell asleep, but at midnight there was a shout, "Behold, the Bridegroom. Go out to meet Him." All the wise virgins got up and put their own lamps in order and the foolish virgins said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil." But the wise replied, "There will not be enough, go and buy some more for yourselves." While the foolish were away the Bridegroom came and those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage feast and the door was shut. Later the foolish virgins came and said, "Lord, Lord, open the door to us!" But the Bridegroom replied, "I do not know you" (Matthew 25:1 to 12). So this parable shows us we must be filled with the Holy Spirit if we are to be ready for the Lord's sudden return. The virgins were all believers and had all met the Lord, but half of them were rejected because they refused to keep their oil supply topped up, or in spiritual terms, they did not have an ongoing relationship with God and their 'oil' ran out.

To be obedient we must be actively serving God when He calls us to give an account of our service to Him. The scriptures give us the parable of three men. God gave one man ten talents; another man five talents and a third man received one talent. When the three men were called to give their account of service, the first man and the second man had doubled his talents by serving God and working hard. God said, "Well done, you faithful servant ... enter into the joy of the Lord." The third man refused to serve God and he was called wicked, lazy and good for nothing, and was sent to outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:14 to 30). The lazy servant was a believer but was rejected because he was complacent in his service to God and was afraid God would judge his work harshly.

We must also support the Jews and Israel. When we refuse to support the Jewish people, Jesus considers that a refusal to support Him personally. When we do support the Jews, Jesus accepts that as supporting Him just as personally. If we assist and help the Jews we are blessed, but if we ignore them we are cursed. That is a startling fact, but true. 'I will bless those who bless you and will curse those who curse you' (Genesis 12:3). Jesus did not call everyone, Brethren. He only ever called the Jews His Brethren. He said, "I tell you, when you did it for one of the least of My Brethren, you did it for Me ... When you failed to do it for

the least of My Brethren, you failed to do it for Me.” Then He will say to those at His left hand, “Begone from Me you cursed ...” (Matthew 25:35 to 46). We can walk with God all our lives, but if we refuse to accept the Jewish people as our spiritual family and help them out where we can, we can bring a curse upon our own heads.

Only those ‘sheep’ who are worthy will enter the Kingdom of God; those who live clean and holy lives; those who wholly serve the Lord faithfully to the point where God considers them worthy. The service we do for God is what makes us worthy and is what gives us our ‘wedding garments’. Without the garments, we may try to sneak into heaven, but will ultimately be rejected. ‘Let us rejoice for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. She has been permitted to dress in fine linen, dazzling and white – for the fine linen is the righteous acts of God’s holy people’ (Revelation 19:7 & 8). ‘When the King came in to view His guests He saw a man who had no wedding garments. The King said, “Friend (believer) how did you enter in here without your wedding garment?” The man was speechless. The King said to His attendants, “Tie him hand and foot and throw him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 22:11 to 13). Those people who have met all the conditions, plus have overcome weaknesses known to mankind, will be considered worthy and given a white garment (Revelation 3:5).

There are many other scriptures that tell us complacent believers will miss out. Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, I know them and they follow Me” (John 10:27). If we don’t obey the Lord we are called goats. In the Old Testament under the Law, goats were accepted as readily as sheep for offerings, but unclean animals were not. In this day of God’s grace, goats are still accepted readily but in the day of Judgement, the goats will be rejected along with the ‘unclean’ or wicked people. The goats and the wicked, unsaved unbelievers will suffer the exact same penalty or punishment. Both sheep and goats will stand before the Lord. What is the difference between spiritual sheep and goats? How can we know in which category we stand? If we study the scriptures, there are marked differences.

Sheep are obedient to the first vital steps towards salvation; they have repented, are born-again, have been baptised in water by full immersion, are filled with the Holy Spirit and are actively, constantly and wholly serving God and being obedient to His ongoing call.

Goats do not believe they have to follow these vital steps. Some have repented but think baptism is not important. Some are baptised but do not think being filled with the Spirit of God is important. Some have been baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit but do not obey and serve God. Some have been baptised but have never truly repented. Without fulfilling these first important steps, they don’t even have their foot in the door.

Sheep live by faith, they believe what the Bible says and they obey the voice of Jesus our Shepherd. Sheep support Jews and Israel as we have been commanded. Sheep are more inclined to believe Jewish people wrote the whole Bible in their native Hebrew language – including the New Testament, which was translated into Greek about 300 AD. Sheep love the Jewish people and accept that our salvation came from the Jews.

Goats ignore Israel. They insist the New Testament was written in Greek. It was anti-Semitic Christians who tried to de-Judaize the New Testament over 1,500 years ago, by trying to destroy the Hebrew letters and epistles that made up the New Testament. They often believe the incorrect replacement theology. Goats blame the Jews for the most ridiculous things and are subtly anti-Semitic.

Sheep live by faith and trust the Lord to provide in every circumstance.

Goats trust in the prosperity teaching and usually amass wealth for themselves, rarely giving any more than a token gesture to the poor. Pastors who are goats usually have a mini-sermon about money every Sunday.

Sheep follow the Lord’s divine order where God is the Head of Jesus, Jesus is the Head of the church and His body, and the husband is the head of the wife and the home (Ephesians 5:22 to 24). The head pastor of a church should always be a man of God.

Goats allow women to rule over men in the church, and the divine order is broken. Women who rule over men are usually aggressive and have a Jezebel spirit. The flock in churches ruled by women often act like undisciplined children because it is out of God’s divine order.

Sheep accept this world will go through terrible trials and those who endure to the end will be saved – and not before. ‘You will be hated by all men for My name’s sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved’ (Matthew 10:22; Mark 13:13) ... ‘He who endures to the end will be saved’ (Matthew 24:13) ... ‘Here is a call for patience and faithfulness of God’s people’ (Revelation 13:10) ... ‘Here comes a call for the endurance of God’s people; those who obey God’s commandments and keep their faith in Jesus’ (Revelation 14:12).

Goats trust in the rapture theory, which began in the occult and was accepted into the church about 150 years ago. Before then it was unheard of. When goats realise the rapture story is a lie preached from the pulpit by false prophets, many will fall away and some will turn on the sheep and will pursue them with hatred. The love of the goats will grow cold but the sheep will endure to the end and will be saved (Matthew 24:10 to 13).

Sheep live for God, consciously avoiding sin and go out of their way to avoid making anyone stumble. Their holy lives are a witness to all who are acquainted with them. Their lives are holy and righteous every day. Their relationship with God, maturing in Him and leading people into the Kingdom of God is their top priority.

Goats cause stumbling by their carnal lives that discredit our Lord. Goats are the ones who make the unsaved pull away from God. They are the ‘Sunday’ Christians who are sweet and friendly on Sunday and are carnal every other day. They tend to be immature people who act defensively and angrily when confronted with their carnality. Their relationship with God is always there, but is not as important as their jobs, family or television sets. Not many goats turn off their television set so they can pray effectively.

Sheep are constantly on the lookout for the return of our Lord. They live their lives as though Jesus could come back to earth any moment. They have made themselves ready and are prepared.

Goats are blasé about the Lord’s return and live their lives accordingly.

Sheep actively fellowship with one another and are like-minded. They walk in unity of the Spirit.

Goats frequently use any excuse not to attend church, and if they do go to church, it is usually a spiritually dry church full of other goats and they feel comfortable with their carnality. Sheep are squeezed out, called fanatics, are not allowed to challenge the state of their church and are often treated very poorly.

Sheep love worshipping God and are happy to worship Him for extended periods. Sheep love to worship in the Spirit and in peace.

Goats dislike worship, cut it off or disallow it altogether. Goats will accept so-called ‘Christian’ rock music as normal and they have it so loud it drives the genuine sheep away. There is no peace in the devil’s music and rock music does not come from God and is not blessed by God.

Sheep spend much time in quiet prayer and personal Bible study.

Goats do not have a good solid prayer life and rarely, if ever, read their Bibles. They rely on their ministers to teach them instead of seeking out answers in the Word for themselves.

Sheep enjoy divine health because they meet God’s conditions.

Goats are often sick to varying degrees and their children are often sick.

Sheep share the Gospel regardless of the circumstances, the people, the threats or abuse that can sometimes result.

Goats think they are okay and often never even tell their families about the free gift of salvation. Their attitude is often, “I’m saved, I’m okay, I don’t care about them.”

Pastors who are sheep develop disciples within their churches and allow those disciples to reach people and obey the Lord as written in the scriptures (Matthew 28:19).

Pastors who are goats have many outreaches, but have few of the Lord’s disciples.

Sheep lead their children to the Lord and raise them in the Lord. Those children do not stray from their relationship with God.

Goats often have teenage or adult children who are far from the Lord and they do not understand why. It is because children need to see their parents behaving like sheep and when all they see are goats, they become disillusioned and walk away.

We have to consciously work on our salvation and keep our lives clean. We have to keep our speech pure. By our words we are justified, and by our words we are condemned (Matthew 12:37). We have to make deliberate decisions to shun evil and hold tight to what is good (Romans 12:9). This is what the scriptures mean when they say; 'Work out your own salvation with fear (awe) and trembling' (Philippians 2:12). That does not mean we can work out our salvation without Jesus; it means we are to constantly work on our relationship with God and behave in a manner that does not offend Him. We must be cautious and have an awareness of what offends God and discredits the name of Jesus, and avoid doing those things. If you feel that you just might be a 'goat', repent, change your attitude, change whatever has to be changed, commit yourself wholly to serving the Lord whatever the cost, and ask the Lord to help you become one of His beloved sheep.

Out of the few of million people who left Egypt, only two actually entered the Promised Land. If we look at that same ratio with today's population, very few professing Christians are going to make it. Every one of the children of Israel believed in God and had the potential to make it through, but because of their own sinfulness and disobedience, they lost their chance. Those things that befell them were written as a warning to us. 'These things are examples for us not to lust after carnal things as they did ... these things befell them as a warning to us ... therefore anyone who thinks they stand, take heed lest he fall and be lost' (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 & 12). Every one of them had been saved from bondage. While they were walking with God on earth, they were protected. Believers today are told to make ourselves ready and be prepared or we too will miss out. Even Paul kept himself disciplined so he did not miss out. 'I discipline my body and subdue it for fear that after proclaiming to others the Gospel I myself should become unworthy and be rejected' (1 Corinthians 9:27).

If we look at the scriptural ratio of believers who actually enter the Kingdom of God, according to the words of Jesus, then there are many church-going people who will miss out because they were not prepared, and God will not be pleased with them, just as He was not pleased with most of the children of Israel. If we break down the numbers through careful study of the scriptures, we will work out the losses. Just like the children of Israel, believers have been saved from bondage, baptised and covered and protected by the cloud of the Holy Spirit. Every one has the potential to make it through but as Jesus said, many will call out, "Lord, Lord," and will be lost forever. If we take the millions of professing Christians today, according to the parable, half are foolish so only the wise half will make it through. Then if we take that wise half and remove a third of them because they did not serve the Lord by using their talents, the numbers diminish further. Then if we take the remaining two-thirds of those who used their talents and remove those who were not doing righteous acts so they did not have their wedding garments, the numbers of saved are lessened again. Then if we remove the worthless 'fish' and 'darnel' and also those who refuse to support Israel and the Jewish people, we are left with a very small number of sheep who will squeeze through the narrow gate. Jesus said only a few will find that gate to the eternal Promised Land but many will be destroyed. There is a vast difference between genuine believers (sheep) and Sunday seat warming church-goers (goats). Just being a member of a church is not in itself, enough to get people into heaven. Jesus said, 'For I tell you unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees there is no way you will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven' (Matthew 5:20).

There is a very good reason why goats will be left out of heaven. Jesus likened heaven to His Father's house. 'In My Father's house there are many mansions' (John 14:2). There are many millions of Jews already in heaven. Certainly there are people from every other country too, but the Jews were there first. God is our Father. There is no father who would invite people to live in his house, if those he invited were hostile to his children already living there. In the same way, God the Father will not accept people into His house (heaven) who are hostile to His children, the Jews. If we want to enter into heaven, we must first accept the Jews. There is no racism or anti-Semitism in heaven. 'Blessed are those who obey His commandments, that they might have the right to the tree of life and enter through the gates into the city' (Revelation 22:14).

Amen and God bless you.

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