

Episode #926 Matthew 25 Part 4-Sheep and Goat Nations

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was continuing His discourse regarding His Parousia and the consummation of the eon. After giving two parables regarding that time, He now sets forth literally an event that will take place at that time.

III. The Sheep and Goat Nations. Matthew 25:31-46.

- A. Verse 32. “Gathered” is *sunago*, brought forth or presented together. “Before Him” means in front of Him, in His presence. It should be understood that this is not a universal gathering of all people but a gathering of nations, and when nations gather they gather in their representatives. These are the rulers who direct the nations. They could be kings, presidents, dictators, etc. These men give the nations their character. The first thing He does, lo and behold, is to separate them. “Divides” is the same word as “separate” in the Greek. It is true that the sheep nations are the good nations here and the goat nations the bad nations. Yet this has led today to the idea that the goat is a symbol of evil or of Satan. Goats were a common, important, valuable animal in ancient agriculture. In Exodus 12:5, the Israelites were told that they could take their Passover “lamb” from among the sheep or from among the goats. Their word for “lamb” was a “young one of the flock,” and could mean a kid as well as a lamb. How could a goat be the symbol for Satan and evil and yet be a symbol for Jesus Christ, the Passover sacrifice, at the same time? Just because something is used as a symbol for something bad in one parable does not mean it must be something bad in all parables. Christ is the “Passover kid,” not just the Passover lamb.
- B. Verse 33. “Set” or cause to stand. There is no word for “hand” here. The “sheep” nations are to stand on the right, the “goat” nations on the left.
- C. Verse 34. Again, this is those on His right, not His right hand.
 1. “Blessed” is a nebulous word in English, meaning very little. The Greek word here is *eulogeo*, meaning to be spoken well of. These are spoken well of by His Father for their actions.
 2. To “inherit the kingdom” means to enjoy an allotment in His government.
 3. “Prepared” or made ready; arranged for you.
 4. “Foundation” is *katabole*, meaning to cast down along certain lines or to found. Casting down along certain lines is like the “casting” of metal, when the molten metal is “cast” into the mold. It is not an “overthrow,” as some have erroneously tried to make it. We can see this in Hebrews 11:11, where *katabole* is translated “conceive” seed. Did she overthrow a seed? No, she founded it. The translators are correct when they translate *katabole* “found,” and it never means “overthrow.”
 5. The “world” here is the *kosmos*, the orderly system or arrangement. It exists on earth, but it is not the earth. The question is: which world? The good world that God made in the beginning? The wicked, corrupt world that came about as a result of Adam’s sin and following after Satan? The world God created in Israel when He made them His nation? Or the future world of the kingdom of God that He is going to create on this earth? This passage, referring to the

time after the Parousia, takes place long after God has founded His order on the earth. I believe the “world” referred to is the future order of the kingdom of God. That order will exist to prepare the earth for the advanced stage of the kingdom during the Parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. Conclusion: The Lord will separate the nations the good from the bad. However, this does not indicate that goats are an evil creature or a symbol of Satan. The world God has prepared to found is that of His coming government on earth, a new world that will reverse the terrible effects of sin on this earth. Those nations who are rewarded by Him get to remain a part of it during His thousand-year presence on earth. May those glorious days come soon!