

Matthew 25:31-46: The Final Judgements, Cont.

Verses 31-46: The coming judgment on gentiles

When the Lord returns “in His glory,” He will judge not only the nation Israel (as in the Parable of the 10 Virgins [vv. 1–13] and the Parable of the Talents [vv. 14–30]) but also the Gentiles. This is not the same as the great white throne judgment, which involves only the wicked and which follows the Millennium (Rev. 20:13–15). The judgment of the Gentiles will occur 1,000 years earlier and will determine who will and will not enter the kingdom. 25:31–33. The words the nations (ta ethnē) should be translated “the Gentiles.” These are all people, other than Jews, who have lived through the Tribulation period (cf. Joel 3:2, 12). They will be judged individually, not as national groups. They are described as a mingling of sheep and goats, which the Lord will separate. 25:34–40.

Sheep - The King “on His throne” (v. 31) will extend an invitation to those on His right hand, the sheep, to enter the kingdom God had prepared ... since the Creation of the world. The basis of their entrance is seen in their actions, for they provided food, drink, clothing, and care for the King (vv. 35–36). The King’s statement will prompt the sheep to respond that they do not recall ever having ministered directly to the King (vv. 37–39). The King will answer that they performed these services for the least of these brothers of Mine, and by so doing were ministering to the King (v. 40). The expression “these brothers” must refer to a third group that is neither sheep nor goats. The only possible group would be Jews, physical brothers of the Lord. In view of the distress in the Tribulation period, any believing Jew will have a difficult time surviving (cf. 24:15–21). The forces of the world dictator will be doing everything possible to exterminate all Jews (cf. Rev. 12:17). A Gentile going out of his way to assist a Jew in the Tribulation will mean that Gentile has become a believer in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation. By such a stand and action, a believing Gentile will put his life in jeopardy. His works will not save him; but his works will reveal that he is redeemed. 25:41–46.

Goats To the goats on His left hand (cf. v. 33) the King will pronounce judgment. They will be told, depart ... into the eternal fire prepared not for men but for the devil and his angels (cf. “the kingdom prepared,” v. 34). The basis of their judgment will be their failure to extend mercy to the remnant of Jewish believers during the Tribulation. Their lack of righteous works will evidence their unconcern (vv. 42–44; cf. vv. 35–36). Such individuals will sympathize with the world dictator and support his cause. They will be removed from the earth and will be cast into “eternal fire” (v. 41) to undergo eternal punishment (v. 46). With all wickedness removed in the various judgments at the Second Advent, the kingdom will begin on earth with only saved individuals in physical bodies constituting the earthly kingdom as the King’s subjects. Glorified saints from Old Testament times and the church, the bride of Christ, will also be present to share in the reign of the King of kings.

In this extended prophetic sermon, Jesus answered His disciples' questions about the sign of His coming and the end of the Age (24:4–31). He also presented practical lessons for those who will be living at that time (24:32–51), encouraging them to faithfulness, watchfulness, and preparedness. By way of application these lessons are relevant to all believers of any Age. He concluded by pointing out the establishment of the kingdom and the judgment of Jews (25:1–30) and of Gentiles (vv. 31–46).

Louis A. Barbieri Jr., [“Matthew,”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 80–81.