

Sheep And The Goats

Introduction.

1. One of the most thought-provoking parables of Jesus is “The Parable Of The Sheep And The Goats.”
2. It is found in Matthew 25:31-46, and follows “The Parable of the Ten Virgins and “The Parable of the Talents.”
 - a. All three parables are found only in Matthew’s gospel.
 - b. All three parables set forth truths concerning the second coming of the Lord.
3. It actually concludes a series of seven parables going back to Matthew 21.
4. It is a powerful parable that teaches a number of vital lessons including the fact that many will unexpectedly be condemned in the judgment.
5. It echoes Matthew 7:21-23.

MAT 7:21 "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.

MAT 7:22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'

MAT 7:23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

- These viewed themselves as religious people and had done some amazing things in the Lord’s name.
- Jesus did not deny their claims, but said “I never knew you; depart from Me...”
- They were condemned because they had not done “the will” of God.
- It is possible to do good things and even miraculous things, but still be ignoring “the will” of God in some or many areas of our lives.
- Even having the power to “prophesy” and do miracles without doing “the will” of God was futile.

Lessons

1. It teaches that a day of judgment is coming, and it presents Jesus as the Judge. See Matt. 25:31, 32; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10.

MAT 25:31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and **all the angels** with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Jesus here speaks of “the Son of Man” as King.

MAT 25:32 "And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;

ACT 17:31 because He has fixed a day in which **He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man** whom He

has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. "

2CO 5:10 For we must all appear before **the judgment seat of Christ**, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

a. Jesus speaks of His coming with "all the angels. (Matt. 25:31).

1) See Matt. 13: 49, 50; 16:27

MAT 13:49 "So it will be at the end of the age; **the angels shall come forth**, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, The "field" is "the world (Matt. 13:38) - not the church.

MAT 13:50 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

MAT 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father **with His angels**; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.

2) See 1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 14.

1TH 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

JUD 1:14 And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "**Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones**, This verse shows the "all" of Matthew 25:31 is a hyperbole meaning a vast number of angels. Angels are innumerable. (Dan. 7:10; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11). The language of the verses suggest there are hundreds of millions of angels.

b. This will be a glorious time for Jesus.

1) He will come "in his glory." (Matt. 26:64; 16:27; 19:28). See Matt. 24:30, 31.

2) His life of humiliation is over. (Phil. 2:5-11).

PHI 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

PHI 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

PHI 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

PHI 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

PHI 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

PHI 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,

PHI 2:11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Jesus will never again experience suffering and pain.

- Jesus will never again suffer humiliation and death.

3) He comes "in His glory" and He comes as "King". (Matt. 25:34).

MAT 25:34 "**Then the King** will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

4) He is coming to take home the faithful who have trusted in Him and His blood. They will ascend to be with

Him forever. (1 Thess. 4:18; Matt. 25:46; Tit. 1:2; Rev. 22:5).

c. “He will sit on His glorious throne.” - He will sit on His “glorious throne” as Ruler and as Judge. This is a judgment scene.

1) He is now reigning at the right hand of God. (Acts 2:33, 34; Heb. 1:3).

2) This “glorious throne” is the same throne as the “the judgment seat of Christ.” (2 Cor. 5:10).

3) Jesus is a glorious King, and He is also the Judge.

4) All must appear before Christ when He comes again.

Note on Matthew 25:32:

MAT 25:32 "And **all the nations** will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;

- “all the nations” shows the gospel and Christianity will be widespread, universal.

1) Some view the word “nations” to be describing **Gentiles only**, but this suggests that Gentiles will be saved or lost on the basis of how they have treated Christians. This ignores the fact that Gentiles had to obey Christ and the gospel to be saved. (Jn. 14:6; Rom. 1:16). Jesus is not giving Gentiles another way to be saved.

2) Others view the word “nations” to be a reference to **all humanity**, but the weakness of this view will be pointed out in detail later in this lesson.

- This suggests that men will be saved on the basis of how they have treated Christians and ignores Christ and the gospel.
- Unbelievers will be condemned because of their rejection of Christ.
- Benevolence to non-Christians or to Christians will not substitute for obedience to Christ. (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:9).

3) Others view the word “nations” to be, in this context, a **reference to believers**, Christians from “all the nations.”

- This includes both Jews and Gentiles. (Acts 10:34, 35; Heb. 2:9).
- This appears to be the correct view.

4) Jesus is stressing to believers how important it is to help believers. It is not an option, but is absolutely essential.

- Christ will not come again until the gospel has been preached to all nations. (Matt. 24:14).
- This does not mean that the gospel will only once be preached to all nations.
- The gospel was preached to the known world in Paul’s day. See Col. 1:23. **These words were written about A.D. 62.**
- There is nothing to prevent Christ from coming now. There is nothing to keep the gospel from being preached to all the nations today.

- Christ expects every generation to fulfill the Great Commission. (Matt. 28:19,20; Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8-11; Col. 1:23).

MAR 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

MAT 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

MAT 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. "

ACT 1:8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. "

COL 1:23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. NIV "every creature under heaven." The Greek has "in all creation under the heaven." The Greek has the preposition "in" before "all." We cannot be absolutely sure, but the meaning is probably that the gospel had been preached to the known world.

- Matthew 25:31-46 shows it is individuals that are separated, and not the nations.
- "Nations" are not judged as a group, but it is individual who is judged. (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 2:16).

2. Christians, in this chapter, are referred to as sheep and goats. (Matt. 25:33).

MAT 25:33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

- a. The sheep are on the right hand of Jesus - a place of favor and blessing.
- b. The goats are on the left hand of Jesus - a place of disfavor and condemnation.

Note:

- Sheep and goats were often pastured together, but were easily separated.
- Sheep were usually white and the goats were dark brown or black.
- Sheep were often a figure for God's sheep. (Psa. 100:3; Zech. 10:3; Jn. 10:1-14).
- The good and the bad mingle together in the world until the end. (Matt. 13:24-30).
- This has nothing to do with the responsibility of the church to discipline. Those guilty of the sins Paul listed in 1 Cor. 5:9-13 were not to be fellowshiped, but all bad conduct was not a matter of dis-fellowship.
- No scripture declares that those who failed to help the poor were to be dis-fellowshipped, but this passage reveals how serious it is to neglect brethren.
- It is a matter of salvation to have lustful thoughts and committing adultery in the heart (Matt. 5:27, 28), but this may not reveal itself to the church and be a matter of dis-fellowship.
- The church cannot know thoughts or motives unless they reveal themselves in actions, but God knows.

2. Both sheep and goats are believing Christians.

- a. This is not a picture of all humanity standing before the judgment seat.
- b. All humanity will be judged by Jesus (Acts 17:30,31; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10), but we here have a preview of the judgment of the righteous who are divided into two groups.
- c. It is a picture of Christians standing before the judgment seat of Christ and refutes the fact that Christians do not have accountability.
- d.. Those who are not Christian will not enter heaven because they have rejected the Savior of the world. (Jn. 3:16, 36; 14:6; Heb. 5:9).
- e. **The text sets forth that this is a judgment of those claiming to know Jesus. It is like Matthew 7:21-23.**

Note:

- The Bible teaches us that all men will appear before the judgment seat of Christ following the universal resurrection. (Jn. 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12; Acts 17:30, 31).
- Paul focused only on the resurrection of the righteous in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

1TH 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope.

1TH 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

1TH 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.

1TH 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

1TH 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1TH 4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- He did this because there was a problem in that some thought the living Christians would have an advantage over the dead Christians.
- Paul pointed out that the “the dead in Christ” would “rise first” and then they along with those alive in Christ would ascend to meet Jesus in the air. There is no advantage to being dead or alive in Christ when He comes. All will ascend to be with Him at the same time and “shall be with the Lord.”
- He is not teaching the resurrection of the wicked would not occur at the same time, but is correcting a problem that existed among believers. See Jn. 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15.

3. Jesus says to those on His right. (Matt. 25:34-40).

MAT 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

MAT 25:35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;

MAT 25:36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

MAT 25:37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty,

and give You drink?

MAT 25:38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?

MAT 25:39 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

MAT 25:40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

- The “kingdom” is reference to the eternal kingdom (heaven).
- “inherit” means to enter eternal bliss. The righteous enter the eternal kingdom, but the wicked do not “inherit” it. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21).
- The “kingdom” has been prepared “from the foundation of the world.”
- Here are some things they had done for Jesus without realizing it.

They had fed the Lord.	They had clothed Him.
They had given drink to the thirsty Lord. See Matt. 10:42.	They had visited Him when sick.
They had taken Him in as a stranger. See Heb. 13:2	They had visited Him in prison.

- Those who are on the right hand have helped Jesus by helping the “brethren.”
- “Brethren,” in this context, are referring to Christians.
- Jesus had taught brethren are those who do His will. (Matt. 12:46-50).

MAT 12:46 While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.

MAT 12:47 And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."

MAT 12:48 But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

MAT 12:49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers!

MAT 12:50 "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

- The Bible teaches us to do good to brethren - “the household of faith.” (Gal. 2:10; 6:10; 1 Jn. 3:17, 18).

GAL 2:10 They only asked us to remember the poor-- the very thing I also was eager to do.

GAL 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, **and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**

1JO 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

1JO 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

- Jesus taught we would be known by the way we love [treat] one another. (Jn. 13:34, 35).

JOH 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

JOH 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

f. Jesus taught it was blessed to give a disciple even “a cup of cold water.” (Matt. 10:42).

MAT 10:42 "And whoever in the name of a disciple [because he is a disciple] gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward." NASB

g. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 shows that we are to help our brethren.

h. See Acts 4:34, 35; 6:1-7. See 1Tim.5:9-16.

4. Those who are on the left hand had failed to help Jesus by failing to help the “brethren.” (Matt. 25:41-45).

MAT 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

MAT 25:42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink;

MAT 25:43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'

MAT 25:44 "Then they themselves also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'

MAT 25:45 "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

- Those on the left hand are condemned for not doing the things those on the right hand had done.
 - They are cast into the “eternal fire” - Matt. 13:40, 42, 50; 18:8; Rev. 20:10, 14; 21:8.
- a. These did not seem to realize the seriousness of failing to help brethren.
 - b. They recognized Jesus as “Lord,” and seek to leave the impression they had not neglected Jesus. (Matt. 25:44).
 - 1) Jesus emphasized that neglecting brethren was and is neglecting Him
 - 2) When Saul persecuted Christians he persecuted the Lord.

ACT 9:4 and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

- c. Their funds were spent on other things, and they closed their hearts to the needy. (Jas. 2:15, 16; 1 Jn. 3:17).
 - 1) It is important to note the harsh language James and John used to describe those who neglect to help poor brethren.
 - 2) James says their faith is “dead” and John contends that the love of God does not abide in them.
- d. They may have been able to boast about many good works and magnificent buildings and gymnasiums, but they had neglected an important duty God has given Christians.
- e. We are a family [brothers and sisters], and we must not neglect the needy in our family.
 - 1) There are exceptions in regard to helping Christians.
 - 2) We are not to help the lazy. (2 Thess. 3:10). We must not help brethren pursue “the works of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:19-21).

- 3) We are not to neglect our own family. (1 Tim. 5:8).
 - 4) We must not help brethren to continue in sinful and foolish practices.
 - 5) Such a practice encourages sin and creates an unnecessary dependance on the church.
 - 6) Such a practice keeps the church from helping the truly needy.
- f. We must also remember that our family is not limited to the local congregation. (1 Pet. 2:17).

1PE 2:17 Honor all men; **love the brotherhood**, fear God, honor the king.

- 1) The churches of the 1st century were helping brethren near and far.
- 2) We must also do the same to be pleasing to our Lord.
- 3) A local congregation may or may not have a lot of needy members, but there are countless needy brethren else where in the nation and the world.

Sheep And Goats

Part 2

Additional Lessons

- 1. Jesus gives us a preview of the judgment to come, and He shows us what is of foremost importance to Him.
 - a. It is care of the brethren.
 - b. If we do not take care of our brothers and sister, who else will do it? The world is not interested in helping Christians. Most often Christians are persecuted - not helped.
 - c. Failure to take care of the brethren is failure to take care of Him. (Matt. 25:45).

MAT 25:45 "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

- 2. This does not mean other things are not important, but it does mean this one thing can keep us out of heaven.
 - a. Jesus did not accuse these brethren of false doctrine or immoral behavior. They evidently were not lacking in these areas.
 - b. He condemns them because of their neglect of brethren. Those who neglected even the least of brethren were condemned.
 - c. We will also be judged on our obedience to the Lord. (Matt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46).
 - d. We will be judged on the way we have used our tongues. (Matt. 12:36, 37).
 - e. We will be judged on the basis of evil thoughts - late, lust, etc. (1 Jn. 3:15, 16; Matt. 5:27, 28).
 - f. We must be poor in spirit, meek, mournful over sin, peacemakers, pure in heaven, merciful, forgiving, etc. (Matt. 5:3-12; 6:14,15).

g. We must produce “the fruit of the Spirit” and avoid “the works of the flesh” to stand approved in the judgment. (Gal. 5:19-23).

h. See also these passages teaching judgment will involve every aspect of our lives. (Eccles. 12:13, 14; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 4:13).

ECC 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

ECC 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

MAT 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.

ROM 2:6 who will render to every man according to his deeds:

2CO 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

HEB 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

3. Jesus is not teaching that we should never help outsiders (unbelievers) as some have falsely taught.

a. We are to “do good to all men,” but especially (above all) “to the household of faith.” (Gal. 6:10).

b. We must not neglect the brethren to help the world.

1) We should help non-Christians if the opportunity presents itself.

2) But we have a special obligation to help our brothers and sisters in Christ. (1 Jn. 3:16-18).

c. In doing good “to the household of faith,” there would be unbelievers in those households that should not be neglected.

1) Some marriages had an unbelieving spouse

2) Some families had children who had not obeyed the gospel.

3) There likely be other family members who might be living in that household. and perhaps elderly parents or other dependent or destitute people.

4) One cannot imagine food being taken to a needy family and someone saying to the various members of the household “You can eat, but you cannot eat. You are not a Christian.”

4. The Christian has an obligation to help his own household that may or may not be Christians. (1 Tim. 5:8).

1TI 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

a. The words “own” and “household” would not always include all Christians. Very few families are 100% Christian.

b. Most would have some or many family members who were not Christians.

5. The Christians must help orphans and widows. (Jas. 1:27).

JAM 1:27 This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

a. Orphans might be Christians, members of the church.

b. Some orphans are not Christians and some are not old enough to become Christians.

c. Some may be old enough, but for some reason have not yet come to Christ.

d. Needy Christian widows were also to be helped. See Acts 6:1-6.

6. The parable of “The Good Samaritan” teaches we are to “do good to all men.” (Lk. 10:25-37).

a. Jesus showed that a “neighbor” had a wider definition than the Jews taught.

b. We have a Samaritan, a man hated by the Jews, helping a wounded Jew.

c. We are even to do good to our enemies. (Rom. 12:18-21). See Matt. 5:43-45.

ROM 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

ROM 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

ROM 12:20 "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

ROM 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

MAT 5:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.'

MAT 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you

MAT 5:45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

7. James emphasized we are to help one another. (Jas. 2:14-17).

JAM 2:14 What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

JAM 2:15 **If a brother or sister** is without clothing and in need of daily food,

JAM 2:16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

JAM 2:17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

8. Our help must be extended to “the least of these My brethren.”

a. Jesus is talking about those in His spiritual family.

b. We may be tempted to look down on those in need (especially those who have a continual need), but Jesus teaches we are to help them.

c. To do less is to be a “goat” Christian.

9. Emphasis, in this parable, is placed on Christians at the judgment.
 - a. This does not mean the wicked , unbelievers will not stand in the judgment and give account for themselves.
 - b. See Jno. 5:28, 29; Acts 17:30, 31; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12.
10. Jesus teaches that the result of not helping brethren is condemnation.
 - a. Those who have failed to help needy brethren will be cast into hell. (Matt. 25:46).
 - b. Note “hell” (gehenna) is described as a place of “eternal” or “everlasting” punishment.

MAT 25:46 "And these will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life."

- The same verdict was pronounced in Matthew 25:41.
- Wicked Christians and wicked non-Christians will suffer the same horrible fate. If “once saved always saved is true” this could not happen. See 1 Cor. 10:12; Heb. 3:12; Heb. 6:4-6.
- Hell is not annihilation. It is a place of conscious and unending suffering. See Matt. 25:30
- It is a place of “eternal fire.” (Matt. 25:41).
- Annihilation is not frightening to most, but an eternity of suffering is.
- Jesus did not teach annihilation, but warned that we must fear hell.

MAT 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. The word “destroy” means “to devote to destruction.” “apollumi” [ah **pahl** loo mee] does not mean annihilation. Matthew 25:41, 46 confirm hell is a place of suffering.

Note: Matthew records a number of two-fold divisions uttered by John or Jesus

Wheat and chaff (Matt. 3:12)	Two sons (Matt. 21:28-31).
Broad and narrow (Matt. 7:13, 14)	Prepared and unprepared. guests (Matt. 22:1-14)
Wise and foolish builders (Matt. 7:24-27)	Wise and unwise girls. (Matt. 25:1-13).
Wheat and tares (Matt. 13)	Using talents and not using them (Matt. 25:14-30).
Good and bad fish (Matt. 13:48)	Sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31-46).

- These illustrations seem to put emphasis on those who accept Christ and live a life of righteousness versus those who reject Christ and live a life of wickedness.
- Many of these illustrations could also be applicable to those claiming to follow Christ. Some Christians make a decision to leave the narrow road and to follow broad way, some choose to do their own will, some turn from righteousness to evil and even become corrupt, some are making complete preparation and are ready for Christ’s coming and others do not take preparation for eternity very seriously, some have no interest in helping brethren, etc.

Other Passages

1. James makes reference to “poor” brethren in James 2:1-9.

JAM 2:1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

JAM 2:2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and **there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,**

JAM 2:3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,"

JAM 2:4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

JAM 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

JAM 2:6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?

JAM 2:7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

JAM 2:8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

JAM 2:9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

- a. Some Christians were dishonoring the poor brother by showing “favoritism” to the rich.
- b. James 2:5 shows, in this context, he is talking about a brother in Christ.
- c. See James 2:14-17 - James emphasize the poor are not to be dishonored nor are they to be neglected.

2. Jesus gave us the attitude we should have to brethren. (Matt. 20:25-27).

MAT 20:25 But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.

MAT 20:26 "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,

MAT 20:27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;

- a. This passage is not talking about aid as such, but neither does it exclude it.
- b. We are to be servants of all and this certainly includes the poor and attending to their needs.
- c. The passage primarily teaches we are to render humble service to one another.

3. Paul gave us some reasons for working in Ephesians 4:28.

EPH 4:28 Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with **him who has need.**

- a. This passage does not identify “him who has need.”
- b. Other scriptures teach the needy brother should have priority in our help.
- c. Even a casual study of the New Testament reveals this is what the first century Christians were doing. (Acts 2:44,45; 4:32-35).

ACT 2:44 And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common;

ACT 2:45 and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

ACT 4:32 And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them.

ACT 4:33 And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.

ACT 4:34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales,

ACT 4:35 and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need.

- d. Once again this is not a rule that we can never personally or out of the church treasury help an outsider (unbeliever)
- e. We are to put first things first and this means we help our brothers and sisters in Christ and do not over spend and make excuses so this becomes impossible.
- f. Many modern churches and individual Christians have spent so much money on themselves that it is impossible to do much for needy brethren or outsiders.

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)