

**Introduction:**

- This is part three in a series on judgment.
  - Jesus is presented as Judge in Matthew 25:31-ff. He separates the goats from the sheep.
  - Each is judged according to what they had done. Revelation 20:12
  - At the judgment is announced the sentence. The dead who were guilty have already been judged.
  - The Bible is clear on the last judgment. But where is the first? When light came into the our dark world. *"And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed."* (John 3:19-20, ESV)
- Tonight I want to examine the place prepared by God for 'the goats.'
  - *"Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.'" (Matthew 25:41, NLT)*
  - *"Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."* (Matthew 25:45-46, ESV)
  - *"The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side."* (Luke 16:22-23, ESV)

**I. Last Word For Believers**

- A. Believers should look forward to the last judgment!
  1. All who belong to Christ, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, should look forward to the day that all evil will be banished from the presence of righteousness. Can you imagine a world, a place like that?
  2. All who belong to Christ should be thrilled that the Righteous Judge seated on the throne is Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord!
  3. All who belong to Christ, who have been faithful, will receive their long anticipated rewards from the Master Himself.
  4. All who belong to Christ will participate in the greatest event of all times...the revealing of the New Heaven and the New Earth. To be there to see that will be the event of an eternal life time!
- B. Believers should live differently.
  1. *"And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."* (1 John 3:3, ESV)
  2. *"And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" (Matthew 7:23, ESV)*
  3. The lawless, those who practice sinning will not enter. 2 Corinthians 6:10
- C. Believers should live in the fear of the Lord but not fear the Lord's judgment.

**II. The Place Prepared For The Goats, The Lost**

- A. There are basically two words used to describe the fate of the lost.

1. Darkness

- a) The centurions servant is healed and Jesus praises the man for his great faith. *"while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* (Matthew 8:12, ESV) sons of kingdom are unbelieving Jews.
- b) *"If light means potentiality, going into the dark means death. The realm of the dead is a dark realm."* Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 1049). W.B. Eerdmans.
- c) Exodus 10:21-23 speaks of a darkness that could be felt and it lasted for three days... all while Israel had light.
- d) *"Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"* (Matthew 22:13, ESV) The lack of wedding garment signifies this man was not prepared or repentant before God. Matthew 25:30 man who buys his talent.
  - (1) Note to self: It is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.
    - (a) Weeping - This word, meaning "to cry" or "bemoan," expresses grief at parting, remorse, sorrow...all over the reality of lostness! Knowing there is no other outcome.
    - (b) Gnashing - it is the clenching of the teeth in despairing rage, severe pain or extreme remorse.
  - (2) Man is already lost, and lives in darkness. Where believers are delivered from the dominion of darkness. Colossians 1:13. Peter describes God's people as called out of darkness and into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9. It is clear if you do not come out of darkness you will stay eternally in darkness.
- e) What these and other passages are saying is that the situation of the lost is one of continuing darkness from this life into the next. This darkness is not just a physical reality it is to be totally removed from Christ. John 8:12, Matthew 7:23, Revelation 22:15.

2. Fire - Just as Jesus spoke of darkness and the fate of the lost. He also uses the term fire when speaking of the lost. *"...You fool! you will be liable to the hell of fire."* (Matthew 5:22, ESV) Hell of fire.

- a) *"Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."* (Matthew 13:40-43, ESV)
- b) *"So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* (Matthew 13:49-50, ESV)
- c) Mark 9:44, 48 describe the fire as unquenchable...it will not ever go out. It is a place where the worm does not die. When Jesus says, "Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (ESV), He is quoting from Isaiah 66:24: *"And they shall go out*

- and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh ."* In both texts the word translated as "worm" literally means "grub" or "maggot." A maggot would have an obvious association with a dump like Gehenna where dead bodies are thrown; however, the maggot Christ speaks of "will not die." IE. Gehenna - hell. Also a dump on the south side of Jerusalem. It always had a fire burning in it.
- d) Matthew 25:41 speaks of the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Revelation 14:9-11 states that this fire never goes out. *"And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night..."* (Revelation 14:11, ESV)
- e) Eternal is both for believers and sinners. *"And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."* (Matthew 25:46, ESV)
- B. Get your name in the Book! *"And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."* (Revelation 20:15, ESV)
1. This is what is known as or called the second death.
  2. The fire is constantly burning like a third world dump and signifies burning and torment.
  3. Darkness and fire thus become the final state of the lost.
  4. The weeping and gnashing that we saw earlier comes from the torment of those who are most despairing and suffering.
  5. This is the last and final situation of those who die without Christ.

### III. Love God and Love Each Other

- A. Matthew 25:31-ff speaks of the sheep and goats. It almost appeared that our good deeds mean much to God. But it is not good deeds based on its own merits. The good deeds come from a heart of love that comes from the heart of God. My relationship with Him makes all the difference.
- B. Luke 16. Rich man and Lazarus / rich man and poor man. Almost parallel stories.
- C. The key to both:
1. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.
  2. Love your neighbor as yourself.
- D. The real question when we cross over from this life to that one: How well did you love?...How well did you love God...and how well did you love others?

### Conclusion:

- There is a heaven to be gained and a hell to be shunned. The choice is ours.
- Believe it or not, you are already judged. So the question is, are you in the Light? Or, does darkness still fill your soul?
- Do you think souls matter to God? How much?