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Charity in the ministry of Jesus

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judgment of the Nation's

Often called The Judgment of the Nations, have also been called The Parable of the Sheep and Goats because of its parabolic twists and turns. Just as a parable surprises us with a sudden curve as it comes across the plate, Jesus surprises the righteous and the unrighteous with his judgment. The Judgment Seat of Christ, a time of review and reward for believers only, takes place after the Rapture. The Judgment of the Great White Throne take place in eternity after the Millennium. The wicked dead will be judged and consigned to the Lake of Fire.

Matthew 25: 31 to 46 talks about three classes of individuals, the sheep, goats, and Christ's brethren. The first two classes, over whom Christ sits in judgement, are Gentiles living during the Tribulation. The third classes Christ's faithful Jewish brethren who refuse to deny His Name during the Tribulation in spite of towering persecution. The King places the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. He then invites the sheep to enter his glorious Kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world. The reason given is that they fed Him when He was hungry, gave Him drink when thirsty, welcomed Him when a stranger, clothed Him when ill, visited Him in sickness, and went to Him in prison. The righteous sheep profess ignorance of ever showing such kindness to the King; He had not even been on earth in their

generation. He explains that in befriending one of the least of His brethren, they befriended Him. whatever is done for one of His disciples is rewarded as being done to Himself.

The unrighteous goats are told to depart from him into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels because they failed to care for Him during the terrible Time of Jacob's Trouble. When they excuse themselves by saying they had never seen Him, He reminds them that their neglect of his followers constituted neglect of Himself. Thus the goats go away into everlasting punishment, but the sheep into eternal life. But this raises two problems, First, the passage seems to teach that nations are saved or lost. This narrative creates the impression that the sheep are saved by good works, and the goats are condemned through failure to do good. As to the first difficulty, it must be remembered that God does deal with nations as such. OT history abounds with instances of nations punished because of sin. It is not unreasonable to believe that nations will continue to experience divine retribution. This does not mean that every single individual in the nation will be involved in the outcome, but that the principles of divine justice will be applied on a national, as well as individual basis.

The uniform testimony of the Bible is that salvation is by faith and not works. But the Bible is just as emphatic in teaching that true faith produces good works. If there is no good works, it is an indication that the person was never saved. So we must understand that the Gentiles are not saved by befriending the Jewish remnant, but that this kindness reflects their love for the Lord. First, the Kingdom is said to have been prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world, whereas hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. God's desire is that men should be blessed; hell was not originally intended for the human race. But if people willfully refuse life, they necessarily choose death.

Jesus taught eternal life and taught eternal punishment. Since the same word for eternal is used to describe each, it is inconsistent to accept one without the other. The word eternal means everlasting, but we do know it means everlasting because it is used to describe the eternity of God.

Finally, the Judgment of the Gentiles reminds us forcefully that Christ and His people are one; what affects them affects Him. We have vast potential for showing kindness to Him by showing kindness to Him.