

## Christians Ignore Jesus

### Sheep and Goats

Matthew 25:31-33:

**“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.**

Who were the sheep and who were the goats? It wasn't a simple matter of Jews vs Gentiles. We can see that because Jesus healed Gentiles who demonstrated great faith, as in the case of the Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7:24-30). And he frequently rebuked Jewish leaders for their ostentatious displays of piety while their hearts were not in tune with the spirit of Jewish law.

Once again, all we need to do is listen to Jesus himself. He provides the answer.

Matthew 25:34-46:

**Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me**

**nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just 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.”**

Notice that the judgment is all about behavior. Jesus did not teach Paul's doctrine of salvation by faith. Jesus taught salvation by good works. Throughout the synoptics, Jesus instructs people about how they should behave. The Jewish Law was all about how people should behave. Paul never met Jesus, and he deliberately avoided contact with the other apostles. So, Paul's teachings came from Paul. They did not come from Jesus. Paul and Jesus were at odds on many points, including circumcision. Jesus was circumcised, as demanded by Jewish Law. Jesus didn't tell Jews they no longer needed to be circumcised. Paul said that, but it wasn't based on Jesus' teaching. It was strictly Paul's idea.

The beatitudes are all about behavior. The parables are all about behavior. It was personal conduct that separated the sheep from the goats.

## Is Divorce a Sin?

Jesus says yes, it is. It seems to be remarriage that is the sin more than the divorce itself, but it's pretty clear that Jesus took a pretty tough stance on divorce.

Where does that leave Christians? Living in sin, it seems to me. I know there are millions of Christians who got divorced and then remarried. Surely they have read the Bible, and therefore they must know the following passages quite well. That doesn't seem to stop them, though. Why is that? Christians think their faith is such a wonderful thing. But when it gets right down to it, that isn't what motivates them. Believers and non-believers are motivated by the same things. Were that not so, Christian divorce and remarriage would be a rare event. Were that not so, Christians wouldn't fight like cats and dogs over Church issues. Don't bother trying to deny it. I've seen it all my life. Were that not so, there would have been no Crusades or Inquisition or Protestantism (because there would have been no need for it).

Mark 10:2-12:

Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.” But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

Matthew 19:3-9:

Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” They said to him, “Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?” He said to them, “It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery.”

Matthew 5:31-32:

“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

I’m aware that there is a passage in the Old Testament that also deals with divorce, but I don’t think it has much relevance to today. However, here it is so you can make of it what you will.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4:

Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; she then leaves his house and goes off to become another man's wife. Then suppose the second man dislikes her, writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house (or the second man who married her dies); her first husband, who sent her away, is not permitted to take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that would be abhorrent to the Lord, and you shall not bring guilt on the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession.