



Daily Verse and Comment

Matthew 25:32-33

(32) All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. (33) He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

New International Version

Christ concludes His interpretation of the parable in verse 46, where He indicates that the sheep are given eternal life, but the goats are cast into the Lake of Fire. It is clear from this section of Scripture that we want the attributes of sheep and not those of goats!

What is it about goats that causes God to use them in such a negative light? Goats are capricious. They are impulsive and unpredictable, devious and contrary. If they are not poking their heads through fences, they may be standing on their hind legs, stretching for those tender leaves just out of reach. Goats are never content with what they have.

They are experts in opening gates and squeezing through small gaps because they hate to be confined. Fences that will handle sheep, cattle, and horses will not hold goats. They will work tirelessly to spring themselves from any situation they deem inhibiting.

Consequently, goats are not very good followers. "Gregarious behavior" is a term that refers to the flocking or herding instinct which is found strongly in sheep, cattle, and horses. Again, this quality is rather weak in goats; they prefer leading or going off on their own. Meat packers use this instinct in sheep and goats to their advantage. They will train an old goat, appropriately called a "Judas," to lead sheep to the pens for slaughter. A well-trained Judas will lead group after group of sheep to the slaughter all day long.

A sheep follows its Shepherd, peacefully moving forward with the flock. He is content to be led because he has [faith](#) in Him. A sheep responds to his Shepherd's voice and goes where He directs. On the other hand, a goat follows only its own lead, creating disunity when he comes in contact with others in the flock. Because of his independent nature, he often finds himself in contention with the Shepherd for leadership of the flock, leading some astray. A goat often eats things—a symbol of ingesting spiritual instruction—sheep would avoid because they have no real value and cause sickness.

Goats are not inherently evil, but some of their traits could be deadly—spiritually—if found in a Christian. A Christian who is unpredictable, who thinks he is above it all, who independently does his own thing, who wants to take over, has trouble functioning in a group, or does not want to be led, is exhibiting the characteristics of a goat—one Christ says will be cast into the Lake of Fire!

— Mike Ford

To learn more, see:
[Goats on the Left](#)

Related Topics:
[Goat as Metaphor](#)
[Goats, Characteristics of Independent Christians](#)
[Parable of the Sheep and the Goats](#)
[Rebellion](#)