

# Short Stories that Speak Volumes for Our Lives



## Facing Final Judgment

*Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 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. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left” (Matthew 25:31-33).*

No one likes to be called a goat. It usually means that someone has made a mistake costing his team a game or his company lots of money. Feeling like a goat is an uncomfortable situation.

Yet that’s exactly where many people will find themselves on the Last Day—among the goats. This is what Jesus taught in a short story that speaks volumes for our lives. He described what will take place in the final judgment at the end of the world.

What is the meaning of Jesus’ story? Let me illustrate. When I was a child, my family owned a pygmy goat. It was my brother’s pet. He was a cute little guy complete with six-inch horns. He certainly showed the usual and expected characteristics of goats in that he was often stubborn, sometimes almost arrogant, and enjoyed being alone. I think it made him feel like the king of the farmyard.

Sheep, on the other hand, enjoy being together in flocks, and they listen and follow when the farmer calls them. Gathered together in the flock, sheep find safety from the dangers that threaten them. They enjoy the peace of

grazing in the meadow. If a sheep happens to wander from the flock, the farmer must go after it.

Jesus uses the distinction of sheep and goats as a picture of those who will join him in heaven for all eternity and those who will not. The picture is stark. Goats, those who turn away from the voice of the farmer stubbornly, follow their own will and desires, and whose pursuits are set on worldly things, have no part in the peace of heaven.

Sheep, those who love the peace and safety the shepherd provides, will enjoy that peace and safety forever. That’s a peace and safety found not in the absence of hardships in this life. It’s a peace and safety found not in the desires of wealth. It is a peace and safety that comes from the knowledge and acceptance of sins forgiven through Jesus’ own blood.

Trusting our Good Shepherd, Jesus, we have no fear of facing the final judgment. We are corralled by his love and rest safely in his arms. Wonderfully, he leads us to life with God forever.