

Questions About Judgment, Sheep and Goat

I hope I understand this pastor's line of reasoning correctly...

"The Lord returns and takes everyone that's saved to heaven...the wicked remaining on earth are destroyed...Satan is left by himself."

(When the Lord separates the sheep from the goats; where did the sheep and the goats come from?)

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

Matthew 25: 31-32 KJV

Answer:

Great question — and you're thinking deeply about how all these end-time events fit together! Let's unpack your message clearly and biblically, using the **Historicist view** and comparing key Scriptures to bring understanding.

Where Do the Sheep and Goats Come From?

In **Matthew 25:31–32**, Jesus describes a time when:

- The **Son of Man returns in His glory** with **all the holy angels**.
- **All nations** are gathered before Him.
- He **separates** the people **like a shepherd separates sheep from goats**.

So your question is right on point:

If the saved go to heaven and the wicked are destroyed at the Second Coming... then who are the sheep and goats being separated at this judgment?

Let's explore the timeline and views that clarify this.

Understanding the Timeline: Second Coming vs. Final Judgment

1. Second Coming of Christ (Revelation 19; 1 Thess. 4:16–17)

- The **righteous dead** are resurrected
- The **righteous living** are caught up
- The **wicked are slain** (2 Thess. 1:8–9; Revelation 19:21)
- **Satan is left alone on a desolate earth** (Revelation 20:1–3)

No “sheep and goats” are left on earth at this point.

2. Millennium (Revelation 20:4–6)

- The saints are in heaven **reigning with Christ** for 1,000 years
- The earth is **empty and desolate**
- Satan is “bound” because he has no one to tempt

3. Post-Millennium – The Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11–15)

- The **wicked are resurrected** at the end of the 1,000 years
- All are judged according to their works
- This is where the **final separation** takes place between those who accepted Christ (the “sheep”) and those who rejected Him (the “goats”)

This final judgment is what Matthew 25 is describing in symbolic language.

So Who Are the Sheep and Goats?

► **Sheep = All who truly accepted Christ’s grace and bore the fruit of love and compassion (Matt. 25:35–36)**

- These inherit eternal life
- They already went to heaven at the Second Coming
- This “judgment scene” publicly confirms their reward — often referred to as a **judicial review before the universe**

► **Goats = Those who rejected Christ, even if they claimed to know Him**

- These face eternal separation from God

- This includes the resurrected wicked at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:5, 13–15)

So while it may seem like “all nations” are gathered **on earth** at the Second Coming, in context, this is a **final judgment scene** — **after** the Second Coming, **after** the Millennium, as described in Revelation 20.

Bringing It Together With the Pastor’s Statement:

“The Lord returns and takes everyone that’s saved to heaven...the wicked remaining on earth are destroyed...Satan is left by himself.”

Correct — that describes the **Second Coming and the beginning of the Millennium**.

“When the Lord separates the sheep from the goats...”

This separation happens **at the end of the Millennium** — a **final, public judgment** before the wicked are destroyed permanently (Revelation 20:14–15).

So you’re not misunderstanding — you’re asking the right question at the right depth!

Summary:

Event	What Happens	Scripture
Second Coming	Righteous go to heaven; wicked are slain	1 Thess. 4:16–17, 2 Thess. 1:8
Millennium	Saints reign in heaven; earth is desolate	Revelation 20:1–6
Post-Millennium Judgment	Sheep and goats separated; wicked judged	Matthew 25:31–46; Revelation 20:11–15