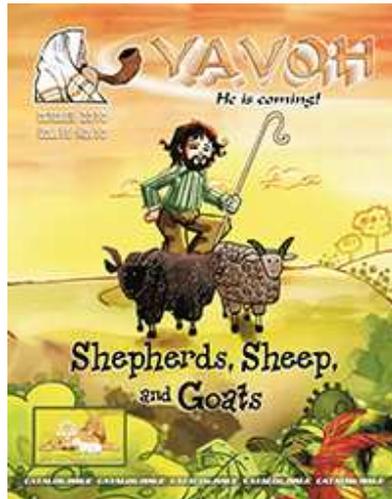


## Shepherds, Sheep, and Goats



The modern Messianic Movement is filled with a wide spectrum of believers in Messiah Yeshua. It is truly a multi-national group with many diverse Jewish and Christian backgrounds. It is not surprising to find ex-Catholics sitting side by side with the staunchest of ex-Protestants and a place where Jews by birth (secular and religious) join with the same assembly. The common ground for this assembly is not ethnicity or culture but a shared belief in the God of Israel and Messiah Yeshua. They come together, turning to the Torah and finding themselves keeping the same Sabbath and Festivals. While this unity demonstrates the evidence of God's Spirit gathering His remnant in these last days, we still behave like our ancestors mumbling and grumbling in the camp. In fact, we are as cooperative with one another as were the children of Israel when they left Egypt. Not all of us in the camp have our hearts right before God as many brethren carry emotional baggage from the past and controlling agendas. Consequently, our Messianic Movement is sometimes "messy."

Having been in the Messianic Movement for the past 30 years, I have experienced both good and bad brethren in the movement. I have seen the evidence of God gathering His remnant from the remotest parts of the Earth. I have also seen erring shepherds and brethren doing everything in their power to scatter the gathered sheep because they have sidestepped applying Torah to their personal lives. Yeshua, knowing what we would experience in these last days, spoke in a stern manner to us about our behavior in this regard, relating in parable form the story of a King receiving His kingdom and then judging the brethren of that kingdom based on how they treated one another and ultimately Him.

*But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King*

*will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" And the King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." Then He will also say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me." Then they themselves also will answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see 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, saying, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that 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.*

### **Matthew 25:31-46**

Yeshua's story of the King should send shivers into your soul. He speaks of all believers being accountable to the Master, particularly concerning our behavior with one another. He even speaks in terms of eternal judgment.

Whoa, wait a minute! Most of us believe that simply being in the congregation of the LORD (or a church) is a guarantee for making it to the kingdom. We believe theologically that we are saved by grace through faith in the Messiah, but we also believe that the guys who are actually members of a congregation the day the LORD returns will definitely be in the kingdom. We hold to this despite the Messiah's earlier warning.

*Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."*

### **Matthew 7:21-23**

There are some members of the flock who are not in the will of God nor have His salvation. How can you tell them apart from Spirit led believers? Yeshua referred to the believers as *sheep* and those to receive judgment as *goats*. Sheep and goats are creatures of the domestic flock, so what is the difference between a sheep and a goat? How can you tell the difference between a Spirit led believer and a person who is not?

When I take tours to Israel and we see a shepherd with a flock, I always ask the folks to point out which are the sheep and which are goats. Most cannot tell the difference because Israeli sheep and goats do not look like the domestic flocks we have in America; Israeli flocks all look mangy and shaggy. But in a short while and with a little explanation the goats become visible. Goats like to butt the sheep and one another. They want to be first to eat and drink. In their zeal they appear unkind to the rest of the flock. These behaviors generated the comparison made by the Messiah.

Yeshua's story of the sheep and the goats is not unique. He was referring to a much stronger teaching of erring shepherds, sheep, and goats given by the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel speaks of a time when God will gather His flock in the latter days in preparation for the kingdom; however, erring shepherds are not helping in the gathering process. They scatter the flock by mistreating and abusing them. Ezekiel first speaks of these shepherds who use the flock for their own personal enrichment.

*Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the LORD God, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock. Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. And they were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill, and My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth; and there was no one to search or seek for them."'"*

### **Ezekiel 34:1-6**

Shepherds are part of the flock also, but sometimes shepherds misbehave. Sometimes they forget whose flock they care for. Instead of remembering that the Messiah is the Good Shepherd and that they are under-shepherds to Him, they believe that the members of the flock are there for them and their pleasure and status. We have all seen and heard examples of abusive shepherds. They use their position and authority oppressing and exhorting others to "lord it over" the flock.

They make false charges and then take punitive steps against their own brethren. Sadly, this happens in the Messianic Movement as well. I wish I could tell you that the Messianic Movement deals with these shepherds but that would not be true. Some of these shepherds, after having been exposed, move on and continue to mislead other brethren. Actually, there is very little that can be done about them. Only their followers have the power to slow this abuse by ceasing to be a part of their ministries.

But we should take heart. The Messiah knows about these particular shepherds and He has a lot more to say about them.

*Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: "As I live," declares the LORD God, "surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but rather the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock;" therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: Thus says the LORD God, "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I shall demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I shall deliver My flock from their mouth, that they may not be food for them."*

### **Ezekiel 34:7-10**

One of the eternal truths about the character of our God is simply that God is not mocked and the guilty do not go unpunished. Furthermore, kindness and the heart's intent is critical in His judgments. Erring shepherds, i.e., leaders, are not led by the Holy Spirit; they are led by their own self-will and ego. Instead of leading by love and patience, they strike with the staff of leadership causing pain and dismay. In its worst form, these leaders actually break the spirit of the sheep/brethren causing them to separate completely from all brethren and the LORD. If God has punished nations for their unkindness toward Israel, then surely He will exact judgment against those who do likewise with the weak and poor of the brethren and those who trusted them. When God promised Abram that He would bless those that bless and curse those that curse, it applies to all of Abraham's descendants. Mistreating any believer evokes this promise of God for judgment. This promise applies equally brother to brother.

Yeshua addressed this part of Ezekiel's teaching. It was a few chapters earlier in Matthew 23.

*Then Yeshua spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them. And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they*

*themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels of their garments. And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi.”*

### **Matthew 23:1-7**

This is a scathing rebuke by Yeshua of the religious leaders in His day. The same words could be used today to describe erring Messianic leaders of congregations and ministries. Those who exalt themselves claim to know God’s laws better than others; they then prove how much they do not know by their self-righteousness.

*But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.*

### **Matthew 23:11-12**

The Good Shepherd seeks out those sheep that have been abused and who are separated from the flock. All of those who are fat and strong (erring shepherds and goats) should be alarmed by how the Messiah tenderly and mercifully gathers those who were abused by them. This foretells of judgment on the other end of the scales of justice for those shepherds.

*For thus says the LORD God, “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down in good grazing ground, and they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,” declares the LORD God. “I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment.”*

### **Ezekiel 34:11-16**

The erring shepherds will be judged. They will give an account for their management of the Master’s flock. But what about those who joined with the erring

shepherd? An erring shepherd usually has like-minded helpers. Others in the flock have joined them seeking the erring shepherd's favor while devaluing the other brethren. The lesson of the sheep and goats now comes front and center. This is the part in Ezekiel's writings that the Messiah specifically spoke of in Matthew 25.

*And as for you, My flock, thus says the LORD God, "Behold, I will judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and the male goats. Is it too slight a thing for you that you should feed in the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pastures? Or that you should drink of the clear waters, that you must foul the rest with your feet? And as for My flock, they must eat what you tread down with your feet, and they must drink what you foul with your feet!"*

### **Ezekiel 34:17-19**

Treading down the grass and muddying the waters is a good word picture of brethren who promote discord among brethren and the separating of fellowship. These are the willing participants who run with a rumor and spread unconfirmed accusations. They don't realize that a false shepherd uses them to do his dirty work.

I have seen the discouragement of other brethren, those who must witness this misbehavior. If you want to seek how many false brethren are in your congregation you have only to throw a negative word about another member into the group. It is like a piece of bloody meat thrown into the group. Sheep don't eat meat, they eat grass. But the wolves in sheep's clothing will drop everything to get their piece of the meat. The ensuing scuffle will definitely tread down the grass and muddy the waters for everyone else.

*Therefore, thus says the LORD God to them, "Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and with shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, until you have scattered them abroad, therefore, I will deliver My flock, and they will no longer be a prey; and I will judge between one sheep and another. Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken."*

### **Ezekiel 34:20-24**

Yeshua warned that He would personally deal with the goats in the flock. This is as the prophet Ezekiel has said. Having witnessed the behavior of those who push others around, who batter others with their egos, I have come to a conclusion about why they do exactly the opposite of the leading of the Holy Spirit in such an unkind manner—they are truly deceived. They really believe they are right and doing what

they think is right. However, it is a version of self-righteousness, jealousy, selfish ambition, and self-deception. The Apostle James spoke of this kind of activity within the congregation or fellowship and made this additional observation.

*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.*

### **James 3:16**

Essentially, Satan has a field day with the brethren when the goats are having their way with the sheep, but the Messiah has another plan for the future of the sheep. His plan is for them to be part of His flock in the kingdom.

*“And I will make a covenant of peace with them [the sheep] and eliminate harmful beasts from the land, so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing. And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing. Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit, and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on their land. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they will no longer be a prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live securely, and no one will make them afraid. And I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore. Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people,” declares the LORD God. “As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God,” declares the LORD God.*

### **Ezekiel 34:25-31**

God desires us to be His sheep and to be part of His flock; however, in this time just before the Messiah’s kingdom is established, we must contend with erring shepherds and some goats in our midst. What are we to do about that?

Consider what else the Apostle James said concerning this matter.

*What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not*

*ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

### **James 4:1-3**

Did you know that if you slander a brother it is the same as murder because slander is used to kill a person's name, striking at the very soul of the person slandered. When it is done by a brother in the faith it is just like the betrayal of Judas against the Messiah.

Goats are out for themselves. They really do not care if the rest of the flock has food or water. They want what they want to the harm of others. Their motives are not for the benefit of the LORD's kingdom.

*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it [Scripture] says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

### **James 4:4-7**

Did you know that when you use the wisdom of the world to manipulate, lie, and spread false information in a conflict that you are practicing witchcraft, i.e., witchcraft uses half-truths and manipulates the wants and desires of others. This is the devil's workshop. This is also spiritual adultery. Haughtiness, or pride, is like the match strike that sets off the explosion of a quarrel. Goats are pushy and demanding, the opposite of humility and meekness.

*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

### **James 4:8-10**

A contrite heart which seeks forgiveness and true repentance stops conflict between brothers. A sheep will seek this path, a goat will not. The Apostle James concludes this instruction by reminding us that none of us have authority over one another. Only God has the authority to judge another brother.

*Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?*

### **James 4:11-12**

To sum up, the Messianic Movement will one day see the Lord coming with power and glory. Those who are the sheep of His flock will enter His kingdom. Those shepherds who fleeced the flock and used them for their own gain and pleasure have received their reward already and only judgment awaits them now. Those goats who pushed and shoved their way to the front will find they are first in line for judgment.

---

*YAVOH - He is Coming* is a monthly newsletter published as an outreach ministry of Lion and Lamb Ministries.

The ministry is a non-profit organization with an end time prophetic message in a Messianic Jewish context.

Subscription to *YAVOH - He is Coming* is without cost and supported only by donation.

Permission is granted to reprint any article in *YAVOH - He is Coming* with attribution given to *YAVOH - He is Coming*.

Editor - Monte Judah  
Electronic Editor - Ephraim Judah

Lion and Lamb Ministries  
PO Box 720968  
Norman, OK 73070  
Phone: (405) 447 4429  
Fax: (405) 447 3775  
E-mail: [info@lionlamb.net](mailto:info@lionlamb.net)  
Web: [lionlamb.net](http://lionlamb.net)