*The nations will be judged according to how they respond to the gospel and its messengers.* The *nations* or "Gentiles" in Jewish literature would be judged according to how they treated Israel (4 Ezra 7:37; Klausner 1979:200). As in other parables, here they are *gathered* (compare 13:40; Is 2:4; Rev 16:16) and separated (Mt 13:30, 49), in this instance the way a shepherd would separate *sheep* from *goats* (compare Ezek 34:17), to keep the goats warm at night while keeping the sheep in open air as they preferred (Jeremias 1972:206). Sheep cost more than goats (Jeremias 1972:206) and because of their greater utility and value were nearly always more numerous on a farm (N. Lewis 1983:131-32).