

# Ezekiel 34:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats.

## Analysis

"And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats." God promises to judge within the flock, distinguishing true believers from mere professors. The sheep and goats separation anticipates Jesus' parable (Matthew 25:31-46). External covenant membership doesn't guarantee salvation; God discerns hearts. This warns against presuming on religious identity while lacking genuine faith. The Reformed distinction between visible and invisible church appears: not all in the visible church belong to the elect. Final judgment will separate wheat from tares.

## Historical Context

Within exiled Israel (586 BC), some genuinely mourned sin while others maintained external religiosity without heart transformation. God promises to distinguish between them—preserving the faithful remnant while judging hypocrites. This principle appears throughout Scripture: God knows His own (2 Timothy 2:19) and will separate genuine believers from false professors. The early church wrestled with this reality: not all professing Christians proved genuine (1 John 2:19). The promise assures both judgment of hypocrisy and preservation of true faith.

## Related Passages

## **John 3:16 — God's love and salvation**

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

1. How does God's promise to judge within the flock challenge presumption on external religious identity?
2. What distinguishes genuine sheep from goats within the visible church?

## Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה נָה	אַדְנֵי	צָאן י	כְ ה	אַמְרֵי	וְהִנֵּה י	וְאַתָּה נָה
<b>And as for you</b>	<b>O my flock</b>	H3541	<b>thus saith</b>	<b>the Lord</b>	<b>GOD</b>	H2005
H859	H6629		H559	H136	H3069	
שְׁפֵט	בֵין	לְשֵׁה	לְשֵׁה	לְאַיִל יָם	לְאַיִל יָם	וְלְעַתּוֹדִים:
<b>Behold I judge</b>	H996	<b>and cattle</b>	<b>and cattle</b>	<b>between the rams</b>	<b>and the he goats</b>	
H8199		H7716	H7716	H352		H6260

## Additional Cross-References

**Zechariah 10:3** (References Lord): Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.

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