

**Lesson 5****“I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD”**

John 10:11 &amp; 14

**v. 11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”****v. 14 “I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.”**

Seeing a shepherd leading sheep in our semi-urban culture is cause for one to pause, which was my experience recently. Near the street where I live is a 20 acre field covered with lush, newly grown grass. Imagine my surprise when I saw a large flock of sheep grazing in that field which, by the month of June, here in sunny Southern California, is brown! The shepherd was standing, with a typical shepherd’s staff, watching over his sheep.

So pleasantly surprised was I that, stopping the car, I walked out into the field to talk with the shepherd only to be challenged by two sheep dogs. The shepherd blew a whistle and the dogs retreated and I relaxed. Approaching the shepherd I smiled, extended my hand and said, “I too am a shepherd”, to which he replied, after looking me up and down in my business suit and neck-tie, “Where are your sheep?” I said, “They are scattered all over this valley.” You can imagine his reaction, he laughed! I explained that I was a Pastor and that my principal activity was telling people about the Good Shepherd. I asked him, “Are you a good shepherd?” to which he replied hastily and with gusto, “Yes!”

There were those in Jesus time on earth that thought He was anything but a good Shepherd. The Jewish religious leaders, the scribes and the Pharisees especially, had a running battle with Him. To say that they were “anti-Jesus” would be an understatement. In John chapter 8 there is a heated exchange between unbelieving Jews and Jesus. He sensed their hatred and twice said to them, “you seek to kill me” (v.37,40). Furthermore, they said to Him, “you have a devil” (v.48). Chapter 8 closes with the Jewish leaders throwing rocks at Jesus, “they took up stones to cast at him.” (v.59)

When we come to chapter nine the animosity against Jesus continues. In this chapter we have the record of Jesus healing a blind man and the antagonistic Jewish leaders threw the healed man out of the synagogue (John 9:22,34) and called Jesus a sinner (9:24).

These Jewish leaders were certainly not good shepherds. Chapter 10 opens with Jesus comparing these religious leaders to thieves and robbers (v.1), those who mistreated the sheep for their own selfish gain. Jesus says that He is the true, caring, Good Shepherd.

The word “Shepherd” is found 6 times in John 10 and the word “sheep” 17 times. In John 10:7 & 9, Jesus said, “I Am the door”, the door to safety, security and sufficiency for God’s sheep. Not only does He say, “I am the door” two times, but He says, “I am the good Shepherd” two times as well, v.11 & 14.

John 10 contains three different “shepherd” stories.

Story #1 – The Sheep And The Sheepfold. vs. 1-10.

Story #2 - The Sheep And The Shepherd. vs. 11-18

Story #3 – The Sheep And Their Salvation. vs. 22-30

Let us now focus on Jesus' statement, "I am the Good Shepherd" found in vs. 11 & 14. As "The Door" He is the only way into the sheepfold. As the Good Shepherd, He is seen as the Owner and Overseer of the sheep. What can we learn from the term, "Good Shepherd" and what is the meaning for us? We must get some scriptural background to understand the term from God's perspective.

## I. THE PROPHECIES AND THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Who is Jesus claiming to be when He announces that He is the "Good Shepherd"? Why the vehement reaction of the Pharisees to Jesus claiming to be the Good Shepherd?

### A. God, The Father, Pictured As Shepherd.

John 10 is the "Good Shepherd" chapter; Ezekiel 34 is the "Bad Shepherd" chapter. In Ezekiel 34 God severely condemns the spiritual leaders of Israel for not being good shepherds. In scathing denunciation He says, ""Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock." (vs.2,3)

He continues, "For thus says the Lord GOD: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD. I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick..." (vs.11-16) "I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken." (vs.23-24)

When Jesus announced that He was the Good Shepherd in contradistinction to evil shepherds, the Pharisees knew full well that He was referring to Ezekiel's condemnation of them. Isaiah had previously prophesied saying, "Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young." (vs.10-11)

David's pearl of Psalms emphasizes the same truth: **Ps. 23:1** "The LORD (Jehovah) is my Shepherd." (Psalm 23:1) And Psalm 80:1 reads: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Is-

rael... You who dwell between the cherubim.” These Jews knew what Ezekiel, Isaiah and the Psalm writers had written and that Jesus was identifying Himself as God, the Good Shepherd.

## **B. God, The Son, Prophesied As Shepherd.**

Matt 2:6 “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.”

”The Pharisees and the Sadducees usurped the authority of shepherds over the nation and demanded that the people follow them. But in our Lord’s judgment the Pharisees were false shepherds who led the people astray. They were convinced that Jesus was a false Messiah, and they were seeking to persuade the people to reject Him.” Here in John 10 Jesus “demonstrated that He was the true shepherd promised by God in the Prophets. He was the One for whom Israel had been waiting.” (Above paragraph quoted from *The Words And Works Of Jesus Christ* by J. Dwight Pentecost, Zondervan, p.293-294).

How did the Jewish leaders respond to Jesus’ declaration that He was the Good Shepherd? Let us see:

## **II. THE PROTESTORS AND THE GOOD SHEPHERD.**

Remember the setting for this chapter - Jesus is talking to the Pharisees, religious leaders who were a very proud and elite group. They saw Jesus as a threat to them and to their teachings. Therefore they rebelled against Him. They were infuriated at the title of Good Shepherd that Jesus claimed. Their response revealed their hatred of Him:

- Jesus’ words resulted in a division among His hearers - “Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.” (John 10:19)
- They said He was demon possessed and a madman - “many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad.” (John 10:20)
- They tried to kill Him - “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.”(John 10:31)
- They charged Him with blasphemy - “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.” (John 10:33)
- They tried to take Him prisoner – “Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.” (John 10:39)

They vilified Him, they were vicious and they were violent. It is therefore understandable that John wrote in chapter 1 of his Gospel, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.” (John 1:11)

Moving on, we come to look at the unique and unequalled Person Who said, “I am the good shepherd.”

### III. THE PERSON OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

“I am the good shepherd”. (John 10:11)

#### A. His Shepherd Titles.

The Savior’s Shepherdhood is depicted in a three-fold way:

1. “Good Shepherd” (John 10:11) – saves His sheep.
2. “Great Shepherd” (Heb. 13:20-21) – cares for His sheep.

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will.....”

“Complete” is translated “equip” or “perfected” in some versions. The Greek word used here is “ka-tar-tizoo” and means “to make fully ready; to put in full order; to fully furnish.” It was used to describe a ship that had been rigged, fully outfitted and ready to sail.

3. “Chief Shepherd” (I Peter 5:4) – comes for His sheep.

“When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

The three shepherd titles applied to the Lord Jesus could be looked at as follows although He is all three simultaneously:

- Good Shepherd – denotes His past ministry
- Great Shepherd - denotes His present ministry
- Chief Shepherd - denotes His Future ministry

#### B. His Shepherd Traits.

He knows His sheep individually - John 10:3 “he calls his own sheep by name.”  
John 10:14 “I know My sheep.”

On one trip to Jerusalem I visited the Sheep Market on market day, located just outside the Sheep Gate (Nehemiah refers to it) and near the Pool of Bethesda. It had been there for 2,500 years, until it was moved several years ago. The market was a large enclosure with many flocks mixed together. The auctioneer was shouting, the shepherds bargaining, the sheep milling about, the air profuse and pungent with dust and smells. To me it was a scene of bedlam. I wondered how those shepherds would ever separate their sheep from all the other sheep. But at the end of the auction, I witnessed an amazing development. Each shepherd repeatedly uttered a distinct call and flocks began to separate themselves from other flocks

and move toward the shepherd with whose call they were familiar. In a matter of minutes, the shepherds moved in different directions, their own flocks following. No sheep were left behind, no sheep followed the wrong shepherd. Soon the market was empty.

Dumb animals know their shepherd's voice and follow him. Jesus call His sheep by name and "the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." (John 10:4) He has proven that He is trustworthy; He takes good care of the sheep; He is the personification of all the admirable qualities of the shepherd seen in Psalm 23. He is the One True, loving, kind, trustworthy and faithful Shepherd. Are we listening to His voice and following Him?

#### IV. THE PURPOSES OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

There are more blessed truths in John 10 than we could ever extract in one study, but we must not miss some of the purposes of the Good Shepherd stated therein. Let us briefly emphasize two precious principles as follows:

##### A. His Purpose Is To Give His Life For The Sheep.

Five times He says He is willing to lay down His life for the sheep:

- John 10:11 "*The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*"
- John 10:15 "*I lay down my life for the sheep*"
- John 10:17 "*I lay down my life-only to take it up again.*"
- John 10:18 "*I lay it down of my own accord.*"
- John 10:18 "*I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.*"

Rarely would a merely human shepherd die for his sheep. However, The Divine Shepherd gave Himself as the supreme and sufficient sacrifice *for* His sheep.

##### B. His Purpose Is To Give His Life To The Sheep.

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10,11) He came to give life *to* His sheep by giving His life *for* the sheep. He is here forecasting His death.

#### V. THE POSITION OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"And when he brings out his own sheep, *he goes before them*; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." (John 10:4)

##### A. He Is Before Us To Guide Us.

- Psalm 23:2 "*He leads me beside the still waters*"
- Psalm 23:3 "*He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake*"
- John 10:3 "*He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out*"

- John 10:4 *“He goes before them”*
- John 10:27 *“they follow me.”*

It is inherent in the very name and nature of a shepherd that he leads. Sheep never lead the shepherd, whether the sheep are literal sheep or spiritual sheep. One of my favorite hymns contains these words, “Savior like a shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care”.

## **B. He Beside Us To Guard Us.**

There are dangerous places and dangerous persons and He guards against both. John 10:10a “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” “But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.” (John 10:12-14)

Then follows Jesus’ statement: “I am the good shepherd.” The Inference? He will guard His sheep, will not run away like hireling.

- “For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion.” (Psalm 27:5);
- “He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.” (Isa. 40:11)
- “You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me...” Psalm 139:5,6)

What a comfort to know that He guides and guards us! But that is not all, for the Good Shepherd informs us of something else:

## **VI. THE PROGRAM OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD. V. 16**

“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.” (John 10:16) The Good Shepherd’s Program is two-fold:

### **A. His Program Is To Seek The Lost Sheep.**

John 10:16a “other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring.” What does He mean? Who are the “other” sheep? Here is the answer: In Matt. 10:6 Jesus said to His 12 disciples, “Go ... to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” In Matt. 15:24 He said, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” However, in Jn. 10:16 He talks about “other sheep”. Again, who are the other sheep? Follow closely here:

In Acts 9:15 when Paul was saved on the Damascus road, Jesus said, “He is a chosen vessel to me, to bear my name before the Gentiles”; John 3:16 says, “whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”; in John chapter 4 a

woman in Samaria and many other Samaritans believed (Samaritans were not Jews); in John 7:37 Jesus said, "If anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink."

Those referenced in the above verses are "other sheep". Who are the "other sheep"? Gentiles are the "other sheep"! If you are not Jewish and are born again, you are one of the "other sheep"! The Gospel is the message everyone needs to hear, that is why the Apostle Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (that is, the Gentiles). Question: Why does He seek His sheep? He seeks in order to save His sheep.

### **B. His Program Is To Save The Lost Sheep.**

The shepherd seeks in order to save! His program has been describes as: find them; forgive them; fetch them; feed them and fold them forever! Matt. 18 & Luke 15 record the story Jesus told about the shepherd who had 100 sheep and one of them was lost. In Matthew's recounting of the story, he prefaces it with this statement by Jesus: "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt.18:11) and then he tells the story of the lost sheep and the seeking shepherd. Additionally, Luke quotes Jesus Who said, "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10) And John quotes Jesus saying, "them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd." (John 10:16)

The Good Shepherd's Program is to be carried on by His church. His program remains His major concern – the seeking and the saving of lost sheep.

## **CONCLUSION**

Let us never become more occupied with what the Good Shepherd does for us than we are with Who The Good Shepherd is. He is God, our Lord, Savior and Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd has human "Undershepherds." Webster's Dictionary defines the Under-shepherd or "Pastor" as: "A shepherd or minister in charge of a congregation." He is to lead the church to seek the lost and serve the Lord's flock modeling his ministry after that of the Good Shepherd. It is the flock's responsibility to follow the Undershepherd as he follows the Good Shepherd.

The picture we have of the Lord Jesus in the Book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ is not a picture of Him as the Shepherd but as the Lamb! He is called "The Lamb" at least 25 times in the last book of the Bible. Only when we trust Him as our sacrificial Savior-Lamb does He become our Savior-Shepherd, and He is **The Good Shepherd!**

**JdonJ**