

# G R A C E

## Reformed Baptist Church

Soli     ♦     Deo     ♦     Gloria

### THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

#### Sermon Notes

#### *The Good Shepherd*

John 10:1-18

October 30, 2005

#### Sheep and the Shepherd

- ❑ In first Century Palestine, the details of *shepherding* would have been very familiar to the readers of the Gospel of John.
- ❑ Throughout the Old Testament, the LORD refers to Himself as the Shepherd of His people (Genesis 48:15; 49:24; Psalm 23:1; 28:9; 78:52; 80:1; Isaiah 40:11; Jeremiah 31:10).
- ❑ Further, He often refers to the leaders of Israel as the shepherds over **His** sheep. Yet, the LORD also condemns the leaders/shepherds because of their failure to properly care for those entrusted to them (Isaiah 56:9-12; Jeremiah 23:1-4; 25:32-38; Zechariah 11).
- ❑ The passage which illustrates the truth the most is, no doubt, Ezekiel 34.
  - Read **Ezekiel 34:1-2; 10**
- ❑ In this chapter, the LORD uses the failure of the earthly “shepherds” to foretell of the Good Shepherd, who would perfectly fulfill the eternal Davidic Covenant.
  - Read **Ezekiel 34:23-24**
- ❑ Also, **Zechariah 13:7** is a prophecy that is applied to Jesus in **Matthew 26:31**.
- ❑ In other places in the New Testament, Jesus Christ is referred to as the “great shepherd” (Hebrews 13:20); “the chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:4); and “the Lamb...[who] will be their shepherd” (Revelation 7:17).

#### Verses 1 – 5

- ❑ In this parable, the sheep are in a sheep pen. It is quite possible that what John has in mind here is a rather large, enclosed area, where multiple families place their sheep [at night, for instance]. These families, then, hire an undershepherd to protect the multiple flocks by keeping watch over the door of the enclosed pen. Multiple shepherds would, therefore, keep their flocks in the enclosed area [each individual flock representing a family]. When it

was time for the shepherd to *lead* his flock out of the enclosed area, and into open fields, he would enter in through the door and lead his sheep out through the door.

- ❑ Therefore, anyone with an interest in harming the sheep would not enter in by way of the door; but, rather, they would climb over one of the walls.
- ❑ NOTICE: The sheep **hear** their shepherd. The shepherd calls **his own by name**. The shepherd **leads them** out.
  - There is a great deal of closeness between the sheep and their shepherd. He even knows their name, and they know his voice.
  - “Near-Eastern shepherds have been known to stand at different spots outside the enclosure and sound out their own peculiar calls, their own sheep responding and gathering around their shepherd. This shepherd goes further: he calls his own sheep *by name*, which at the least means that he calls them individually...The assumption is that they are in some way ‘his’ before he calls them.” D.A. Carson
  - Some have suggested that the fact that the shepherd leads his sheep out alludes to Numbers 27:15-17, where Moses asks the LORD for a successor to lead His people out, and bring them in. In the next Verse, 27:18, God calls Joshua to lead His people. In Greek, Joshua means, “Jesus,” which translated means, “The Lord is my salvation.”
  - Also, unlike shepherds in the West, who *drive* their sheep, often with sheep dogs, Near Eastern shepherds *lead* their sheep, using their voice to call them.
    - Throughout the Old and New Testaments, this is the very way the LORD deals with His people.
      - Read **Deuteronomy 1:30-31**
      - Read **John 1:43**

#### Verse 6

- ❑ Jesus was speaking in a figure of speech, essentially a parable, “but *they* did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.”
- ❑ The *they* is the Pharisees, His opponents (see John 9:40). The reason for their lack of understanding will be made clear later in this chapter.

#### Verse 7

- ❑ Jesus uses another *ego eimi*, *egw ei mi*, statement here: I AM the door.
- ❑ In Verses 1-5, Jesus, the shepherd, enters the enclosed area through the door; here, He **is** the door.
- ❑ Just as there was only one way into the sheep pen, the door; there is only one way to eternal life: through the door of Jesus.

- ❑ This statement is not too dissimilar from John 1:51, where Jesus is revealed as the “ladder” to heaven.
- ❑ This *ego eimi* statement has often fascinated me because of its parallel to Passover:
  - The Hebrews were commanded to place the blood of the Passover lamb on the door of their home on the night the death angel passed through Egypt. Families whose doors were covered with the blood of the lamb were spared. In the same way, Jesus Christ is our “door.” On the cross, He died for our sins, shedding His blood, so that His people would have eternal life.

### Verse 8

- ❑ This is yet another case in the New Testament where “all” certainly does not mean “all” without exception [Otherwise, He would be including the likes of Abraham, David, Isaiah, etc.]. Rather, contextually, Jesus is likely referring to the false shepherds of His day and before – the Jewish hierarchy.

### Verses 9-10

- ❑ This passage is possibly an allusion to **Psalm 118:20**.
- ❑ Let us not embrace such an overly humanistic and worldly interpretation of this text that we lose sight of its true meaning, in its proper context.
- ❑ “Life abundantly” is life without end...life eternal with the Good Shepherd. This is why, in Verse 9, Jesus states, “if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved.” The context here is salvation.
  - Further, the “abundant life” is life of knowing God. NO earthly pleasure or satisfaction can ever compare to a life marked by a growing relationship with the true and living God.

### Verse 11

- ❑ Jesus refers to Himself as the “good shepherd.” He, then, explains one of the characteristics of the Good Shepherd: He lays down His life for His sheep.
- ❑ Here, Jesus compares Himself with the hired hands who have no personal attachment to the sheep. Jesus, on the other hand, the Good Shepherd, loves His sheep to the point of laying down His life for them.
- ❑ This verse clearly refers to the sacrificial, substitutional, death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. Further, it presents several points that are worth noting.
  1. Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd. As in so many other places in Scripture, this Verse illustrates one of the greatest paradoxes in existence: the Creator of the entire universe is not only the All-powerful Transcendent God; but, as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ [who was fully God], He is the supremely Immanent God, who cares for His people and provides for our every need. Read **Psalm 23**. He is Immanuel – God with us.

2. The death of the Good Shepherd will NOT expose the sheep to the schemes and ravages of the enemy; rather, it will destroy the power of the enemy and draw His sheep to Himself.
3. Leviticus 17:11 states, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls...” God required the shedding of blood for the remission of sins; yet, no man could provide the perfect and holy sacrifice required by our perfect and holy God. Therefore, God, Himself, provided the sacrifice that He required in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.
4. The death of the Good Shepherd is intentional.
5. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd “is here presented as a sacrifice peculiarly directed to the redemption of His sheep... This emphasis on the intentionality of Jesus’ sacrifice is itself grounded on Jesus’ peculiar intimacy with His sheep...” Carson

Many object to the doctrine of “definite redemption,” “particular redemption,” or “limited atonement.” Yet, there can be little doubt that contextually, here, Jesus Christ is affirming that He lays down His life for those who are His own (v. 14).

NOTE: In the context of the Gospel of John, the sheep for whom Christ dies are those drawn to Him by the Father (John 6:44).

#### **Verse 12-13**

- ❑ Jesus Christ, now, contrasts Himself, as the Good Shepherd, with a “hired hand.”
- ❑ A hired hand has no personal ties to the sheep, so, when danger comes, the hired hand, unlike the Good Shepherd, flees.

#### **Verses 14-15**

- ❑ As the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ is not only the voluntary sacrifice for His sheep, but He knows them, and they know Him.
  - “It is clear that ‘know’ here, as so often in Scripture, means more than a mental grasp; it includes personal understanding and a commitment of will. To say that God ‘knows’ a person in this way refers to His gracious redemptive commitment to that individual.” *The Reformation Study Bible*
  - In this context, knowledge is “an intimate...relationship in which Jesus, the good shepherd, cares deeply for those in his charge.” Andreas Kostenberger
    - NOTE: This understanding of “know” can give us insight into other passages of Scripture, such as those using terms like “foreknew” and “foreknowledge.”
- ❑ The nature of the relationship between Jesus and His sheep parallels the intimacy between the Father and the Son.

- ❑ In this statement, Jesus makes it clearer that those for whom He lays His life down are those He knows – His own – His sheep.

#### Verse 16

- ❑ This verse refers back to Verses 1-5 where the sheep pen represents Judaism.
- ❑ Now, Jesus is stating that His flock is made up of not only the Jews, but sheep “which are not of this fold,” i.e. Gentiles.
- ❑ Therefore, Jesus will voluntarily lay down His life, and bring in all of His sheep, Jews and Gentiles, by the sound of His voice.

#### Verses 17-18

- ❑ Jesus then states, “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.”
  - This statement strongly parallels **Philippians 2:5-11**.
- ❑ The perfect love the Father has for the Son is **eternally linked** with the absolute obedience of the Son to the Father.
- ❑ Also, the very reason that the Son lays down His life is that he “may take it again.”
- ❑ He died in order to rise, in order to send the Holy Spirit, in order to save His sheep.
- ❑ Jesus, then, states, “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down...”
  - There is a very real sense that Jesus did not die because of the effects of His beating and crucifixion; rather, He gave up His Spirit voluntarily and in perfect accord with the will of His Father. In other words, it seems that He did not die of blood loss or asphyxiation; rather, He revealed His authority [as fully God] by surrendering His spirit immediately following His cry, “**tetel estai** ...It is finished!”
- ❑ Finally, Jesus states, “I have authority to take it up again.”
  - Many believe that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was a work, solely, of the Father. However, according to Scripture, the Resurrection was a work of all three Persons of the Trinity: The Father, the Son (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 4:10; Galatians 1:1) and the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:10-11).
- ❑ Read **Psalm 23**