

JESUS – THE “GOOD SHEPHERD,” THE “DOOR KEEPER,” AND THE “DOORWAY”

In these days that we are in, we can all truly look around and declare that we are living in troubling times. Actually, it is not just today's world, but if we take a look throughout all of the histories of all the different peoples, countries and nations

throughout the world, we cannot help but recognize that this world, from the beginning, was always in various “times of trouble.” We see this in the history books of the nations and of the world but more importantly, we see it in our Bibles.

As believers in Jesus and then, therefore, as believers in the Word of God, we know that the reason for all of these difficulties that we see throughout the history of this world was caused by one simple action. This action is stated for us in the beginning of the Bible as found in the Book of Genesis in chapter 3. I am referring to the passage that we read of concerning the “sin” of Adam and Eve.

We know that their actions led to the re-instituting of sin throughout this earth. If we look at Genesis 3:1-8, We see that it was the “sin of disobedience” to the will of God that allowed sin and its affects to re-enter into this world. This sin allowed for the ultimate result of sin to take place – death, both physically and more importantly, spiritually.

We know that the sin of Adam and Eve was actually a combination of things. It tells us in 1John 2:16 that their sin actually was a combination of incorrect thoughts which then ultimately led to their falling away from their God. 1John 2:16 tells us, *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”* These are the things which basically the devil fed Adam and Eve through his lies and deceitfulness causing them to ultimately sin and disobey God. Man has been disobeying God ever since.

The biggest, and I think the most prevalent of these three areas mentioned in 1John 2:16, is the area of sin referred to as, *“the pride of life.”* We know that the devil tempted Adam and Eve. The most tempting thing that he tempted both of them with was that they would become as or like God, Himself and that they would even become a “god onto themselves.”

If we look throughout history, we can see that this is where practically all the problems and wars throughout mankind's history were, and still are, rooted in. People were lied to by the enemy, the devil and his forces of darkness, and they thought they would become either like God or be His "chosen vessel" or they would simply be a "god unto themselves."

Unfortunately, it is getting even stronger in today's world. What that means is that two things are taking shape. The first is that the sin of this earth is ramping up and getting even greater in many varying ways. I don't think I need to go into that. I am sure that you all can see these things taking place.

However, because of the rise and increase of sin in this world, the second thing that is happening is that there is a "move of God" that is taking place. It is a move that is bringing people who truly want to know the truth to come to the realization that they need to be saved from these horrible and lurid things that are taking place.

Yes, believers are being used to evangelize people, which they should. However, there is also a sovereign move of God throughout the earth where He, Himself, through the power of the Holy Spirit is supernaturally coming to people and revealing Himself to them.

We do not hear too much of that. This is because the enemy does not want that to get out. The enemy just wants to continue to pervert the truth and continues to tell us that belief in God and in Jesus is fading away. If you think about it, this reminds us of many old movies, where certain leaders or certain countries would feed their people misinformation to keep them from knowing the truth and keeping their constituents "under their control." This is really happening in this very hour. However, the use of the internet and other social media outlets is allowing the Good News to go forth. Unfortunately, that window is beginning to close.

The bottom line is that we are getting closer and closer to the end of this age. I do not believe that we are there yet but we are getting closer and closer. We must be on the alert and we must truly know the Word of God. As we read John 10:1-18, we must truly understand the concept that Jesus was speaking about. Unfortunately, sometimes we simply just read these scriptures, which is good, however, we sometimes miss what they are actually telling us to the fullest.

As we read these scriptures we must understand that Jesus is stating three very specific things to His listeners. Jesus teaches us that He is the Shepherd, He is the “porter,” and He is “the door” of salvation. Jesus is not only the “Shepherd” who leads us into the “sheepfold,” but He is the “porter” or “keeper of the sheepfold” and He is the only “door” or entrance way that will allow any of us into the “sheepfold.” Jesus is referring to those that truly follow after Him. He tells the true believers that they are as “sheep.” This is so important for us as believers to truly understand and take hold of.

We must realize that, of all domesticated animals, sheep are the **most helpless and they are actually considered not very smart**. Sheep will spend their entire day grazing, wandering from place to place, never looking up. As a result, they often become lost. Sheep have no “homing instinct” as other animals do. They are totally incapable of finding their way to their sheepfold even when it is in plain sight. We see that by nature then, sheep are followers. If the lead sheep steps off a cliff, the others will follow because they are not really looking where they are going. That is why they need a shepherd.

Yes, sheep are not the smartest animals but yet Jesus and the Bible constantly reminds God’s people that they are to be as “sheep” – they are God’s sheep. This may come as a surprise to many, especially leadership in the Body of Christ. That is why many successful leaders and pastors never started out nor did they ever want to become leaders in the Body of Christ. It was all God. They were just good sheep. Hmmm.....

We see this in the life of David. He started out as a shepherd. He was literally, the outcast of the family. He was sent out to the fields and was told to tend and guard his father, Jesse’s, sheep. He grew in the role of being a shepherd. This allowed him to grow into becoming the God ordained, king of Israel. He was led by the wisdom and courage that God had given him as he was growing. However, we see in his later years that David sometimes got a little big headed or he did not do what God was calling him to do.

We see this with Bathsheba. We see this when he counted his army. And we see this when he wanted to build a Temple for the Lord. God told David that a Temple was not what He wanted. However, David continued to tell God that he wanted to build God a Temple. We see

that God relented. David was allowed to get the material for the Temple but his son Solomon would ultimately build it because David's hands were "bloody."

If we actually really read the scriptures, we see that David was an imperfect person. Yes, the Messiah, Jesus, would come from his line **BUT** Jesus was not at all like David. We must remember that the scriptures are clear in this. Jesus "always was" - because He is God. He was always there - because He is God. Jesus has no beginning or end - because He is God. We see this all in Psalm 110:1 where it states, "*My LORD (Yahweh- the Father) said to my Lord (Adonai - Jesus) sit at my right hand...*"

It was only through the "lineage" of David that the Messiah would come to this earth as a man and then die for mans' sin. We must remember that Messiah was never thought to be God. He was to be sent by God but he would be totally human. However, Jesus was both. He was 100% Messiah (man) and 100% Son of God (spirit). Yes, Jesus died for all our sins as a man (the Son of Man), but as the Son of God, He was the first to rise again from the dead. All the Gospel accounts tell us this very fact.

To be a true child of God on this earth we must be His sheep. We must all realize that we are nothing without Him. He is the Good Shepard who leads us to "*green pastures*" and He leads us to "*still waters.*" Though we walk through the "*valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil;*" for our Good Shepherd is always with us. (Read Psalm 23)

Yes, we will fear no evil. Sheep are easily susceptible to injuries and are utterly helpless against predators. If a wolf comes into the sheepfold, they won't defend themselves. They won't try to run away or spread out. Instead they huddle together and therefore, they are easily slaughtered - en masse.

This is why Jesus is not only our Good Shepherd. He is is also the "door" to the sheepfold. In those days and in places today, we will find that there were two "kinds" of sheepfolds or pens that would hold the sheep during the night. One kind was a "public sheepfold" found in the cities and villages. It would be large enough to hold several flocks of sheep.

This sheepfold or pen, would be in the care of a "porter" or doorkeeper. The porter's duty was to guard and protect the entrance to the sheepfold during the night. In the morning, the porter

would only admit the shepherds whose sheep were in that sheepfold. The shepherds would call their sheep, each of which knew its own shepherd's voice, and he would lead his sheep out to pasture. Jesus was telling the people, and us today, that He was not only their Good Shepherd but He was also the one who will guard, keep and protect them.

We read in John 10:6 that the listeners did not really understand what He was trying to tell them. So, Jesus tells them again. This time, a little differently. This tells us that we must truly listen so that we can truly grasp the things that the Word of God is telling us. Why? It is because sometimes we don't get it. At least the people were honest with Jesus.

Jesus tells them again using a similar but yet different example. He tells them of the second kind of "sheep pen" which would be found and used out in the fields. The people and His disciples would have known about this type of "sheep pen," as well. It was a place out in the fields and not in the cities or villages. It was where the shepherd would keep their flock at night during good weather, instead of bringing them back into the town. It was small and it would be just for that shepherd's flock.

This type of "sheep pen" was nothing more than a rough circle of rocks piled up making a small circular wall with a small opening to enter. The shepherd would bring the sheep in at nightfall through that opening and into the "sheepfold." Since there was no gate to close, just an opening, and there was no porter, the shepherd himself would keep the sheep in and wild animals out by lying across the opening. He would sleep there literally becoming "the door."

We read that Jesus was and is the "Good Shepherd" who would lead His flock, His people, to rest and be fed by the Word of God. He was also the "doorway" to enter into the Kingdom of God where people could come into and rest and be in peace. Those sheep were and are under the protection of the "porter" who was actually, the Good Shepherd, Himself – Jesus.

Jesus contrasted Himself with the religious leaders of His time. He described those religious leaders as "thieves and robbers" who were there to steal the sheep (the people) away from their true Shepherd – Jesus. (John 10:8) The same can be true today. We need to watch!!!

When Jesus says, "*I am the door,*" He is reiterating the fact that only through Him is salvation possible. Jesus makes it clear that any religious leader and any other teaching that offers

salvation through or by any other way other than Jesus is a “thief” and a “robber.” They are trying to steal the sheep, you and I, away from our Good Shepherd, Jesus.

Jesus goes on to say in John 10:16, “*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*” He is referring to the Gentiles that would one day soon hear the Good News and come to believe in Him. Jesus came for everyone even though they did not understand what He truly was saying at that time.

Jesus then declares the concluding statement to all of what He just taught. He tells them that for all of that to happen – for Him to be the “Good Shepherd;” for Him to be the “porter” to watch over the sheep; for Him to be the “doorway” into the sheepfold (heaven); He must first, surely die. Yes, He said that He would willingly, and on His own accord, die for the sins of all mankind. As the “Good Shepherd,” He would do this willingly because it was commanded by the Father for Him to die for the sin of every person in the world.

Jesus is, “...*the Way, the Truth and the Life,*” for me and for anyone who believes in all that He did and all that He is. He is the “...*the Way, the Truth and the Life*” to eternal life and to have a relationship with the Living God. However, it would come with a tremendous price. It would come by the shedding of His blood and the giving of Jesus’ life for every person who believed and even now, believes and remains faithful to the one true God.

I think that is the most telling portion of this whole section of scripture. Yes, Jesus is the “Good Shepherd,” He is the “porter” and He is the “doorway” for entrance into the “sheepfold,” into Eternal life. However, in order for all that to happen, Jesus knew what needed to take place first. He needed to become “like us.” He knew that He needed to become the “sacrificial lamb,” the sacrificial, spotless lamb/sheep that would take the place of all of mankind.

Jesus knew that as the Son of Man, He must die on that cross for the sins of the world. However, as the Son of God, He knew that He would rise again, defeating death and all the forces of darkness. He would ascend to Heaven and wait for the appointed time that He would soon and very soon return to this earth as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We say, “***Come, Lord Jesus, come....***”