

“THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE”

INTRODUCTION

In the Old Testament, the Israelites were considered to be God’s “sheep”. Sheep were probably the most popular and best known animals throughout the land, as they were used for food and sacrifices to God.

David was a shepherd before he became king of the Israelites, and an inspired writer of scripture. In the Psalms, he liked himself **to** a “sheep” under the Lord as a “shepherd”. Read Psa. 23:1; 100:3. In this last passage, David said we are “the sheep of his pasture,” and these last 5 words make up the title of our lesson at this time. In this lesson, we shall observe many things Jesus and the scriptures say about the sheep in the pasture of God today, as based on the scripture.

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, we learn that the sheep have ONLY ONE SHEPHERD. John 10:16

A. Christ is the “good shepherd.” John 10:11-16

1. As the “good” shepherd, He was the “good God”, the very best. Matt. 19:16-17
2. He was so “good” He would lay down His life to protect the sheep from danger.
John 10:15

B. Christ is the “great shepherd.” Heb. 13:20

1. What greater shepherd could there be than one from heaven?
2. He was thus able to bring man to the “perfect” state Paul mentions here.

C. Christ is the “shepherd and bishop of souls.” 1 Pet. 2:25

1. This shepherd welcomes us after we having gone astray.
2. He was like the father of the prodigal son who welcomed his son’s return.
3. Unlike earthly shepherds, Christ is the shepherd of SOULS—concerned about the spiritual welfare of human beings.

D. Christ is the “chief shepherd.” 1 Pet. 5:4,

1. Being the “chief” shepherd, He has under shepherd, who serve under him as elders or overseers in local congregations. Cf v. 1-4
2. He will reward His faithful under shepherds with a glorious crown. Cf 1:4

II. 2nd, we learn that the sheep make up only ONE FOLD. John 10:16

A. The sheep fold in New Testament times was an enclosure, usually with a rock wall around it, to protect the sheep at nights during the winter months.

1. It was to keep the sheep from getting scattered.
2. It was also used to keep the wolves and robbers away from the sheep.
3. It was usually near a well with a tower for one watching after the sheep.
4. It the place where ALL the sheep in an area stay together as “one.”

B. The fold is “one” in various ways.

1. God’s sheep are only ONE “**body**” of sheep. 1 Cor. 12:13
 - a. The sheepfold is not divided into sections, but all the sheep stay together as one, but the religious world today boasts of it’s many divisions, or denominations, to give man a choice as to what he wants to believe and practice.
 - b. The Lord is not pleased with such divisions. John 17:20-21

2. God's sheep today have only ONE proper **"name"**—the name "CHRISTIAN." John 10:3
 - a. It was foretold in the Old Testament that a "new name" would be given after the Gentiles would be admitted to the church. Isa. 62:1-2
 - 1) The church began with Jews **only** in Acts 2. cf Acts 2:5, 14, 42, 47 (Tie together)
 - 2) About 10 years later, God performed miraculous deeds to cause the Jews to fellowship Gentiles also, in the church. Acts 11:13-18
 - 3) THEN, the "new name" **CHRISTIAN**, was given, in which God is glorified. Eph. 3:21; 4:16
 - b. Christians ARE members of the body, believers, saints, disciples or brethren, BUT the only name they are to wear is the name "Christian."
 - 1) We should be nothing more and nothing less—than Christians.
 - 2) Can you imagine Jesus going to HIS "sheepfold" and calling HIS sheep, while using the name Catholic, Lutheran, Nazarene, Baptist, Methodist, Mormon or Adventist?
 - 3) Christ did not **give** such names to His sheep, so we should not wear them.
 - 4) A sign by a Baptist church building in Lamesa, Texas read, *"In heaven, no Baptists, Methodists or Catholics—Just Christians."* What is trying to say: (1) That no Baptists, Methodists or Catholics are not going to be there? Or, (2) Are they saying denominational names will be lost there? IF that is what is meant, we ask the question: IF denominational names and distinctions will be lost in heaven, WHY CAN'T THEY BE LOST HERE, AND DO AWAY WITH THE NAMES AS WELL AS THEIR DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES??
3. God's sheep only have ONE **"Shepherd"** or Lord. John 10:16
 - a. We are NOT to listen to ANY other shepherd, but Christ. John 10:1-5
 - b. We are warned to beware of strangers, who come as wolves in sheep's clothing (disguised as sheep), to devour with false teaching. Matt. 7:15; cf 1 John 4:1; Rom. 16:16-18
4. There is only ONE **"voice"** we are to hear, which is the voice of Jesus through His word. Matt. 17:5; Acts 3:22-23; Matt. 7:24; Luke 6:46; 1 Cor. 1:10; John 10:5
5. Then, there is only ONE **"door"** or entrance **into** the "one fold," which is CHRIST. John 10:1,9
 - a. We come **to** the door by believing in God and His Son, Jesus. Heb. 11:6; John 1:12
 - b. Upon repentance and a confession of our faith in Jesus, we **enter** into Christ, the door, in the act of baptism, or immersion in water. Acts 8:36-38; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:26-27

III. 3Rd, AS sheep, there are various THINGS THAT CAN OCCUR.

A, We can get "lost", as we were before becoming the Lord's sheep. Matt. 3:6; Luke 15:4

B. We can be "scattered" and lose our identity as the Lord's Sheep, as we begin wearing the name of another shepherd. Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27

1. The New Testament teaches that the flock would eventually become divided and many be separated from the Shepherd of souls. Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim. 4:1
2. The lost sheep need to **return** to the true Shepherd and the one fold, for His protection and care.
 - a. If one sheep is lost, that is one too many. Luke 15:4
 - b. A return of even one sheep is an occasion of joy. v. 5-7; Isa. 55:7
 - c. When a complete flock of sheep loses the way into denominationalism not named in the scripture, there needs to be a **return** to the teachings of the one true Shepherd, and become HIS “flock” once again. Luke 8:11
3. Some sheep are lost and without a shepherd, for they have never heard about the Shepherd, or are so concerned about other things that they do not care. Matt. 9:36

CONCLUSION

- I. The sheep will face the Great Shepherd in judgment in the last day. Matt. 25:31-32
 - A. We will be **separated** from the goats (those who were NOT His sheep on earth).
 1. The sheep of the Lord will enter into the eternal kingdom in heaven. Matt. 25:34
 2. The goats will be separated **from** the sheep, and from the Lord—forever and ever. Matt. 25:41, 46
 - B. The goats will be those who never became the sheep of the Lord, **or** those who were once His sheep, but have turned away.
- II. You can become the Lord’s sheep right now, if you will follow the Shepherd and His word.

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