

## **Lighthouse Bible Church**

**October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**John 10: 1 – 16**      *Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 23: 1 - 4*

**‘The Shepherd and His sheep’**

### **Stand – Read – Pray**

Remember last week we just began to introduce this Chapter by looking at Jesus as the Good Shepherd that will give His life for the sheep as Verse 11 says and that He will lay down His life for the sheep as Verse 15 says.

We looked at that perspective because we were celebrating the Lord’s table last week and wanted to be reminded and to remember what Jesus has done for us in the giving of His body and the shedding of His blood for us.

We also began to look at the fact that Jesus is the Good Shepherd as opposed to those who were the false shepherds that were currently leading the nation of Israel, the Pharisees. We saw briefly that they had no concern for the sheep that they were supposedly shepherding and we looked at the Old Testament in Ezekiel 34 and in the New Testament in Matthew 24 that gave us examples of those false shepherds and their concern only for themselves.

We ended by looking at the One True Shepherd and that is Jesus Christ and how that analogy of the Shepherd and His sheep were all throughout the Old and New Testament and how they applied directly to God and His tender care toward the nation of Israel and Jesus towards His own chosen ones, the church.

This analogy in Chapter 10 of a shepherd and his sheep would have been very familiar to the people to whom Jesus is talking. The life and experience and work of a shepherd and the response of his sheep were a common scene in Israel.

And a shepherd had a difficult job in caring for his sheep. There were wild animals, wolves, that wanted to kill the sheep. There were robbers and thieves who wanted to take the sheep, the sheep might wander away, they were prone to diseases and so a shepherd had to constantly watch out for his flock.

So Jesus is about to share this illustration of a shepherd and his sheep to contrast the difference between the true shepherd, Jesus, and the false shepherds that He will describe as thieves and robbers, the Pharisees, who by the way are in this crowd listening to Jesus, along with the blind man and others who were following.

Part of the reason that Jesus uses this illustration is to show the unbelieving Jews that they are truly blind. What He says in this illustration He has been saying all along in plain understanding and they didn't understand it then. So, in a sense, this is God's divine judgment on their unbelieving hearts by sharing an illustration that they CAN NOT understand. As a matter of fact, Verse 6 says they don't understand and Verse 20 says they conclude that 'He is demon possessed'.

At the same time, there are those whose eyes have been opened and hear and understand the truth behind this illustration. So in one sense this illustration is meant to expose the blindness of some and reveal the truth to those who believe. So let's look at it starting in Verse one.

**Verses One and Two: Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.**

Jesus immediately launches in to an illustration of the life of a shepherd and his sheep to show them that He is the true Shepherd and that the Pharisees are the false shepherds that He will call thieves and robbers.

In order to understand the spiritual application to what Jesus is saying here, we need to understand the physical aspects and meaning of these objects He is describing.

First of all He says **most assuredly I say to you**. Your versions may say truly, truly or verily, verily. What Jesus is about to say is of absolute importance so that is why He starts out with the emphasis and then He launches into a whole shepherd and sheep ranching scenario.

This is the scene; you have in Palestine cities and villages where shepherds tended to their flock of sheep. Sometimes they had their own sheepfold in a field near where the sheep grazed or where the owner lived. But most places had a common sheepfold where several shepherds could keep their sheep together.

A sheepfold was a type of holding place for the sheep that the shepherds would lead them into at night for protection from wild animals or thieves wanting to steal them. These sheepfolds had only one door and only one way in and out for the shepherd and the sheep.

They may have been made of different material but typically they were made of stones piled up to form four walls and a single **door** and no roof. The shepherds would lead their sheep in there and then go home for the night leaving a **doorkeeper** (*door – thura, doorkeeper – thuroros*) to watch and guard over the sheep and protect them from wild animals and robbers and thieves who try to get in **some other way**, like climbing over the wall.

But we see in Verses 12 and 13 where this doorkeeper, this **hireling**, someone paid to watch over the sheep in the sheepfold doesn't always do his job right. It says *Read Verses 12 - 13*

The **thief** which is *kleptace* is where we get our English word klepto or klepto-maniac. He would come in stealthily trying not to be spotted. The **robber** on the other hand, such as Barabbas in **John 18: 40** was a person who may try to be stealthy but in their thievery they would often be violent in their crime by killing the sheep and then throwing it over the wall because he just wanted the meat.

Many times before a shepherd would bring his flock into the sheepfold he would stop them at the door and place his shepherds rod at the bottom of the door not allowing the sheep to pass through until he has checked each one over for any injuries or diseases. And if they were all right he would lift the rod and they would pass under it and go into the sheepfold.

There is a beautiful illustration here in the shepherds rod, listen to this in **Ezekiel 20: 37** God, through the prophet Ezekiel, tells His people that He will gather all of His chosen people, the nation of Israel, and, Verse 37 says, **I will make you pass under the rod and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.**

The interesting thing is, that several shepherds may bring their flocks to a single sheepfold; Then the shepherds would come back in the morning **and enter by the door** to get their sheep and take them back out to pasture. Only the shepherd could go through the door so the thieves and robbers tried to get in some other way and that was usually climbing the wall. **To him, to that shepherd, the doorkeeper opens,** Verse 3 says. You say, that might be confusing to the shepherds and the sheep. Not so. Then look at Verses 3 – 5.

**Verses 3 – 5 to him the doorkeeper opens and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him for they do not know the voice of strangers.**

Isn't that great? These shepherds, who have spent so much time with their sheep become so familiar with him as he does with them that all he has to do is speak and they begin to follow him. And by the way, some of what I read said that many of these shepherds had names for their individual sheep and would call them by name and they would respond.

So this shepherd stands inside the door of the sheepfold and calls his sheep by name and then notice that verse 4 says **he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice.**

The shepherd begins to walk out the sheepfold door and all of his sheep follow him. He leads them, he doesn't herd them. They follow him and as Verse 5 says, they will not follow a stranger because they don't recognize any other voice but that of his own shepherd.

Now the people standing there listening to this would have knowing exactly what Jesus was saying in the physical sense because they have seen it over and over again in the lives of the shepherd and his sheep. But this wasn't a lesson in shepherding 101, there was a spiritual truth here that Jesus veiled in the illustration of the shepherd and sheep and sheepfold and the thief and the robber and the doorkeeper. And notice Verse 6, they didn't get it.

**Verse 6 Jesus used this illustration but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.**

They didn't understand because, as we have said before, this is God's judgment against their hearts of unbelief and rejection of Jesus. **He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts** as we saw in **John 12: 40**. Look at **Matthew 13: 10 – 15** *Read*

So what is the spiritual application to this illustration? Well, let's look at it. I read a lot of different commentaries and historical writers and theologians who came up with different conclusions to what Jesus was saying here. Some said the sheepfold is the church or heaven and the door is the word of God and the shepherd are the pastors and teachers and when the door opens it is a reference to the Holy Spirit and on and on.

Remember, Jesus is specifically addressing the unbelieving Jewish leaders, the so called shepherds of God's people, and contrasting them with the true Shepherd, Himself. And when we look at it that way then we can see that the sheep are the Jews and the sheepfold is the nation of Israel and Judaism.

As we read in Ezekiel and Jeremiah, there have been false leaders, false shepherds trying to take the sheep and destroy the sheep, the Jewish people, with their false religious system and keeping of the laws and traditions. They were the ones climbing up some other way, the thieves and robbers.

And only the true Shepherd, the Messiah, the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, can come in through the door and take His own elect out of Judaism and to **find pasture** or salvation as Verse 9 says.

The **door** is Jesus Himself, that is what He says in **Verse 7** and **9**. He is the only one to lead His elect sheep out of Israel's fold into Christianity. He is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, the only One who had the right to go into the sheepfold and take out His own sheep. He was the One sent from the Father, as we have seen, to seek and save that which was lost.

The **thieves and robbers** are those Jewish religious leaders, in particular the Pharisees, to whom He is addressing here, who, as we saw in Matthew 23, were doing the work of their father the devil and climbed the walls of the sheepfold to spiritually steal, kill and destroy the people of God.

They were the ones destroying the people through their false religious systems of human achievement and tradition and liturgy, binding heavy burdens too hard to bare as **Matthew 23: 4** says. Remember what **Matthew 23: 13** said of these Pharisees, these thieves and robbers. **You shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.** Then in **Verse 15** you travel land and sea to win one proselyte and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

You know the same thing is still happening today. Systems of religion, denominations, religious traditions, false doctrines, different gospels and so on. Remember what Jesus said in **Matthew 7: 15** **beware of false prophets who come to you in (what) sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.**

Paul told the church at Ephesus in **Acts 20: 29** **for I know this that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock.**

Peter said in **2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2: 1 - 2** **but there were also false prophets among the people even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them and bring on themselves swift destruction.** Then listen to this in Verse 2. **And many will follow their destructive ways...**

And as we have seen before, we know why this is all possible. **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11: 13 – 15** *Read*

These false shepherds were stealing the sheep, they were slaughtering the sheep and Jesus says I am the shepherd that comes in through the door because I am the door and I lead My elect out of that system of religion and oppression and slaughter and destruction.

Remember in **Ezekiel 34: 14** where God said **I will feed my sheep 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.** And that is exactly what He is doing through Jesus, the Messiah, the true Shepherd, providing the good pasture of a new covenant provided by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself.

Remember Jesus illustration that **the sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name.** Well, Jesus as the Shepherd makes this a wonderful illustration. First of all He calls us **by name.** How does He know our individual names? No problem for God. But did you know that your name was written in His book long before you were born and saved?

**Psalm 139: 16** says **Your eyes saw my substance being yet unformed and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.** Then in **Revelation 13: 8** and **Revelation 17: 8** it says our names were written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world. The Shepherd, Jesus, knows us and we hear Him and follow Him as Verse 4 says. That is why **Verse 14** says **I know My sheep and am known by My own.**

How do we hear Jesus today, How do we know Him today? How do we follow Him today? Through His word; we hear and we obey. We hear Him speak through His word and we recognize His voice and follow Him. When someone else speaks through a different word, or book, or experience, philosophy or religion. **Yet we will by no means follow** as Verse 5 says. Because we recognize that word, as a stranger as verse 5 says, as a false doctrine, a deceitful teaching, or a different gospel. **Matthew 24: 24** says **false Christ and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.**

By the way, because this is specific to the Jews and those called by Jesus, and we certainly find application for us today, what about us.



Well, look at **Verse 16 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.** If the sheep of the first sheepfold is Israel then who are the sheep mentioned here? The Gentiles, us, the non-Jews to whom, after Israel rejected, Jesus formed His church.

And by the way, Jesus as the Shepherd Verses 3 and 4 say **leads them and goes before them and the sheep follow.** The shepherd always went first, saw the danger, checked out the trail, found the place to pasture, always went out front. And every place the sheep went, he'd already been.

Think about that. No matter where you are or what you are going through, Jesus has already been there. He understands the anxiety of your heart because He has been there, yet without sin. Isn't that what **Hebrews 4: 15** says **for we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin.** Earlier in **Hebrews 2: 18** he said **for in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.**

Something else I want to draw your attention to before we close. Verse 7 begins a new illustration that Jesus is giving. Now He says that He is **the door of the sheep.** Earlier, He said He was the Shepherd who went through the door. This is the difference.

With this new illustration Jesus gives another analogy familiar to the people. Sometimes a shepherd would lead his sheep and they would go far away to come back to the sheepfold. So what the shepherd would do is make his own sheepfold of rock or a fence of some type but he didn't have an actual door. So what the shepherd would do is lay in front of the only opening to the sheepfold and be the only access, the only way, the only door in and out.

Think about this; Jesus is the door to salvation in which no one can enter without going through Him first. Isn't that what the scriptures say **Acts 4: 12 neither is their salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven... John 14: 6 I am the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Me.**

Jesus says in **Verse 10 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.**

False shepherds want to deceive and destroy the sheep. Jesus says I am the true Shepherd, I am the Good Shepherd and I will provide a rich new pasture in a new sheepfold with new purposes, desires and direction ad purposes in a more abundant life.

Are you one of His sheep, if so are following Him and obeying Him.

If you are not one of His sheep, you can be by putting your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior from sin.

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Introduction and Review:

Verses 1 – 2:

The life of the sheep and the shepherd  
John 18: 40, Ezekiel 20: 37

Verses 3 – 5:

The shepherd calls his own by name

Verse 6:

John 12: 40, Matthew 13: 10 – 15

The Interpretation and Application

The Sheepfold

The Door – Verses 7 – 9

Thieves and Robbers

Matthew 23: 4, 13, 15, 7: 15, Acts 20: 29  
2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2: 1 – 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11: 13-15

The Pasture

Ezekiel 34: 14, Acts 4: 12, John 14: 6

The sheep know, hear and follow

Psalm 139: 16, Revelation 13: 8, 17: 8  
Matthew 24: 24, Hebrews 4: 15, 2: 18

Verse 16: Sheep of another fold

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