

# Jesus the Good Shepherd

Sometimes, very often in fact, we just need to rest in the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Shepherd of Psalm 23 who supplies for our needs, provide for our protection, and keeps us in line.

Sometimes we need rather than to analyze we need to just rest in what the Scriptures say is true. Sometimes we just need to say with David, and just rest in the truth that indeed, "The LORD is *my* shepherd"

But what happens when we do dig a little deeper, is that the truth that we rest in becomes an even greater comfort after we come to understand more of what the Scriptures teach about Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

While the Lord's teaching on Himself as the good shepherd comes specifically from John chapter 10, it doesn't begin there. John's Gospel, as many have noticed, is considerably different than what is presented in the other three known as the Synoptic Gospels. The truth is that John just follows different details, noting as he brings his Gospel to a close that "*many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book*" (John 20:30). In the very last verse of the book, he says "*And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*" (John 21:25), ending with a hearty AMEN.

All this to say then, that it should not be surprising to find differences. In the first verse that I cited from John 20, the following verse says this:

*"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name"* (John 20:31).

"That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ" brings us to understand that we are on prophetic and Messianic ground. This is where some generalizations fall apart. It is often said that Matthew is the Gospel written for Jews, Mark for Romans, Luke for Greeks, and John for everyone without distinction. This is sometimes asserted another way, that Matthew is for the sons of Shem, Mark for the sons of Ham, and Luke for the sons of Japeth, while again, John is for everyone. Personally, I think both of these generalizations are placed on the books, rather than being from the books.

In the first chapter of John, we have Andrew coming to his brother Simon saying "*We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ*" (John 1:41). Here we have an explicit relation in the Scriptures themselves that "Messias" or "Messiah", and "Christ", are identical in

meaning. A few verses later in this chapter, we have Nathanael with his astonished confession, *"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel"* (John 1:49).

These are at the beginning of this document. At the end we have the goal — that ye may believe — that which these disciples acknowledged at the beginning.

So as we proceed through John's gospel, we come to chapter 10, regarding Jesus, the good shepherd. *"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep"* (John 10:11).

This has its root in the Scriptures of the Prophets. Most notably to me, in Ezekiel chapter 34. But before we go there, let's make a stop in Jeremiah.

*Jeremiah 23:1–6 — "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

The kings and the priesthood had been a disappointment (to say the least) and a disaster. That would be who is spoken of as the pastors. Pastor is another word for shepherd. Notice what is said here about those that the LORD put to keep and feed the sheep. They have done the opposite. It should also be noticed that these shepherds would be replaced. In Matthew 19:28 we find who will replace them:

*Matthew 19:28 — "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

It should also bring to mind when the Lord told Peter *"Feed my sheep"* (John 21:15-17), and when Peter later told the recipients of his first epistle *"Feed the flock of God which is among you"* (1 Peter 5:2).

Verses 5 and 6 of Jeremiah 23 then bring us to that chief shepherd. It shouldn't then be any wonder that the disciples on the day that the Lord ascended to Heaven said to Him, *"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel"* (Acts 1:6). This was not a foolish and

unlearned question as so many of the so-called wise and learned have said. This was a question with roots in the prophets, that the Lord just showed to them were concerning Himself, Luke 24:44-45, and which He had opened their minds to understand.

Without further ado, let's go to Ezekiel 34, and let's get a contrast of Jesus the Good Shepherd to the faithless shepherds that precede Him.

As I read here Ezekiel chapter 34, hear the contrast.

After reading all that, now let's go to the words of the Lord Jesus in John 10:

***"I am the good shepherd"***

How so many can reduce this all to the *destruction* of Jerusalem and the rise of an imperial "church", which incidentally has had its own share of faithless shepherds is beyond even human reason.

He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. While we're waiting, "the just shall live by faith" (Hebrews 10:37-38).

How does all this of the Shepherd who will restore Israel and "feed His flock like a shepherd" (Isaiah 40:11) affect us now?

The same Good Shepherd who gave His life for His sheep gave it for us. He is that same "great shepherd of the sheep" (Hebrews 13:20) to us now who are His ambassadors on earth now, who He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

While ambassadors now, and good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we are on mission. But let us not forget who we are on mission for: The Good Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep of His pasture. That we now are "*fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel*" (Ephesians 3:6) should make us love that Great Shepherd even more now that we are forever united to Him.

That same Good Shepherd who purchased His flock with His own blood is the same to whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is indeed Lord of all (Philippians 2:9-11). The same gentle Shepherd who gave His life for His sheep is the same one that provides for the needs of His flock, leads us, guides us, protects us, corrects us, and has secured us the place in His house.

And He has excluded none from the saving grace that He offers — that He offers freely, through the redemption that He secured with His own blood, while we were yet sinners. I can say to anyone without a doubt, that Jesus, God's Christ, the Good Shepherd, died for your sins, and He rose from the dead in victory over death and through death, and you can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.