

# **I Am the Good Shepherd**

## **(John 10:11-21)**

Expository Lessons from the Gospel of John

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### **I. Background**

- a. **John chapters 9 and 10** are the story of Jesus healing a man born blind, and the discussions and teaching that ensued after the miracle.
- b. Jesus tells the parable of the Good Shepherd to the young man who was healed of blindness (who then believes in Jesus and recognizes Him as the Son of God), and to the antagonistic Pharisees who were aware of the miracle.
- c. In this passage, Jesus speaks of a sheepfold (a walled pen for holding sheep to protect them), a shepherd, a doorkeeper, a door and sheep belonging to the shepherd.
  - i. Jesus says, "I am the door for the sheep...if anyone enters by Me, he will be saved."
  - ii. He also promised "abundant life" or "life to the full", an expression often taken out of context today and mistakenly equated to providing a nice life here in the world (wealth, health, nice family, etc.).

### **II. Jesus Says He is the Good Shepherd (Read John 10:11-21)**

- a. In this short passage is a summary of the entire gospel.
- b. Here is summary of the points in this passage:
  - i. Jesus says He is the good shepherd. (**John 10:11**)
  - ii. This shepherd knows his own sheep, and His sheep also know him.
    - 1. He had previously said that He calls each of his own sheep by name. (**John 10:3**)
  - iii. This good shepherd lays down (gives up, sacrifices) his life for the sheep. This is unlike the hired hand, who runs away when the wolf threatens the sheep.
  - iv. Jesus, as the good shepherd, "has other sheep which are not of this fold." They also will hear His voice, and all the sheep will be combined into *one flock* (including these other sheep), with one shepherd over them all.

- v. The good shepherd has the power to *take up His life again*, after laying it down.
- vi. These statements made by Jesus cause great division among the Jews who hear them.
  - 1. Some insist that He must be demon-possessed.
  - 2. Others point out that the fact He opened the eyes of the blind man, which someone demon-possessed would be unable to do (suggesting that He is from God). This is similar to what was said by His defenders in **John 9:32-33**.
- c. Outline of this lesson:
  - i. The significance of the term “good shepherd” and why Jesus’ claim to be “the Good Shepherd” was so controversial and profound.
  - ii. Things concerning the wolf, and death of the good shepherd.
  - iii. The other sheep, the first sheepfold and the one flock to be formed.
- d. In our next lesson, we will dive into some implications of all this for us, including:
  - i. How we view Jesus and his mission;
  - ii. How we view the Christian life; and
  - iii. The model for church leaders: good shepherds.

### III. What is the Significance of Jesus’ claim to be “the Good Shepherd”?

- a. When Jesus said “I am the door” *we asked two questions* in our previous lesson.
  - i. **The first question we asked:** Can we think of any prophecies regarding a future “door” to come, in the Old Testament?
  - ii. **The second question we asked:** Are there any examples of important doors in the Old Testament stories that are related to people being saved from destruction, which might foreshadow what Jesus is saying in **John 10**?
- b. In this case, where Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd”, we will ask similar questions, but in reverse order.
- c. **Question:** Are there any examples of “good shepherds” in the Old Testament?
  - i. **Answer:** I can think of five men.

- ii. Let's examine each of them in order, exploring what characteristics of their shepherding were "good", and if these might be foreshadowing some aspect of Jesus, the ultimate Good Shepherd.

d. **Five Good Shepherds from the Old Testament**

i. **Abel**

1. "Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering...." (**Genesis 4:2-4**, NKJV)
2. Abel was a shepherd; he was "good" in that he brought the best of his flocks as a sacrifice to the Lord, one that was pleasing to the Lord.

ii. **Jacob**

1. The account of how Jacob built a large flock from out of his uncle Laban's flock, despite the deceit and trickery of his uncle (from **Genesis chapters 30-31**).
  - a. After Jacob had served as a shepherd for his deceitful uncle Laban for 14 years to obtain Rachel and Leah for wives, Jacob asked for wages to build up a flock for himself.
  - b. The agreement was that Laban would give Jacob all the grey sheep and all the spotted and speckled goats among the flock.
    - i. Then that day Laban removes all the grey sheep and speckled and spotted goats, and hands them to his sons, and has them relocated far away from the rest of the flock!
    - ii. Jacob prevails anyway, using an unusual approach (see **Genesis 30:37-43**).
      1. He takes branches, peels the bark in strips and puts them into the watering troughs.
      2. When the flocks came to drink, they mated by the rods, and their offspring came out speckled, spotted, grey.

3. When Laban realized that Jacob was gaining a large flock with many sheep and goats, he changed the arrangement (instead of spotted, he would get all the all-white sheep, etc.). In fact, Laban changed Jacob's wages ten times!
4. However, God and Jacob prevailed; the sheep and goats produced the right kind of offspring for Jacob anyway.
- iii. Jacob became a very wealthy man, with a large flock exhibiting a great variety of colors and outward markings.
- c. Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 AD) a philosopher who converted to the Christian faith, discussed this episode in Jacob's life as foreshadowing Christ. He wrote:
  - i. "Jacob served Laban for speckled and many-spotted sheep; and Christ served, even to the slavery of the cross, for the various and many-formed races of mankind, acquiring them by the blood and mystery of the cross."
    1. (Source: Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew* in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 267. See also p. 242 for a similar reference connecting the wood in the water troughs to the cross.)
  - ii. Similar observations were by other early Christian writers: Origen (ANF vol. 4, p. 517) and Hippolytus (ANF vol. 5, p. 171).
2. After Jacob departs from his uncle Laban's service, his uncle chases him down. Jacob offers a defense of his service as a devoted shepherd to Laban:
  - a. "These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. Thus, I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for

your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night.” (**Genesis 31:38-42**, NKJV)

3. The ways in which Jacob proved himself to be a *good* shepherd:
  - a. He was a hard worker, serving faithfully in heat and cold, in drought and sleeplessness, for 20 years.
  - b. He had very high integrity. He did not eat any of his uncle’s sheep. He personally covered any losses, whether due to theft or wild animals.
  - c. The Lord helped him to build his own strong flock from the larger flock controlled by a master deceiver, through faith and wisdom. It was a varied flock that had many different kinds of sheep, *established through a miracle involving faith, wood and water*.

### iii. Joseph

1. “This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.” (**Genesis 37:2**, NKJV)
  - a. How did Joseph’s brothers respond?
  - b. They hated Joseph and wanted to kill him (but decided instead to only to sell their brother into slavery)!
2. After revealing himself to his brothers in Egypt (who years before had sold him into slavery), he treats them kindly and arranges with Pharaoh for them to live in Goshen. There, they can pasture their flocks in the best of the land of Egypt. (**Genesis 46:31-47:12**)
3. The ways that Joseph demonstrated he was a *good* shepherd:
  - a. Joseph was an honest and faithful shepherd, even telling his father about the unrighteousness of two of his brothers, who also were serving as shepherds.

- b. He was more concerned about being faithful to his father who sent him, than being popular with his unrighteous brothers. He was willing to risk being persecuted for standing up for his father.
- c. He forgives his brothers who had sinned against him; and provides good land for them to pasture their sheep and cattle.

#### iv. **Moses**

1. He helped the daughters of Reuel, protecting them from the bad shepherds and watering their flocks at the well in Midian, right after he fled Egypt (**Exodus 2:15-19**)
2. He was tending the sheep of his father-in-law at Mt. Horeb when the Lord spoke to him from the burning bush (**Exodus 3:1-3**)
3. When Moses is told he will die and not be able to enter the Promised Land, his response is not for himself, but instead he shows great concern for the people, “the sheep” he has been leading the past 40 years through the Wilderness:
  - a. He makes a request of the Lord: “Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.’ And the Lord said to Moses: ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him...’” (**Numbers 27:16-18, NKJV**)
    - i. Note that the Greek rendering of Joshua (Hebrew) is “Jesus”. In the Septuagint (Old Testament in Greek, quoted by the apostles and Jesus in the New Testament), it is the exact same name as the New Testament “Jesus”.
      1. The successor to Moses was originally named Hoshea, the son of Nun, but his name was changed to “Jesus” (**Numbers 12:8-16**)
    - ii. This statement made by Moses foreshadowed something said over 1,000 years later regarding another Jesus, the Son of God.

1. "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." (**Matthew 9:36**, NKJV)
2. Like Jesus, Moses had great concern for God's people.

v. **David** (perhaps my favorite example of the five)

1. David is out tending the sheep when Samuel finds and anoints him.
  - a. "Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The LORD has not chosen these.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all the young men here?' Then he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.' So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, 'Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!'" (**1 Samuel 16:10-12**, NKJV)
2. When David was questioned how he, a young man, could stand against the mighty Philistine warrior Goliath, David points back to his experience as a shepherd.
  - a. "But David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.'" (**1 Samuel 17:34-36**, NKJV; comparable to **1 Kingdoms 17:14-17** in LXX, OSB)
    - i. Let us truly picture what is happening here. David goes after the lion and bear all by himself, snatches the poor little lamb from its mouth, at which time the lion (or bear) turns on David, who then strikes and kills the vicious animal.
    - ii. David is laying down his life to rescue a single sheep! A tremendous example for us.

- b. Later, facing the feared warrior Goliath, David has no soldier's sword and nor armor. He approaches the fateful battle arrayed as a *shepherd*, bearing only a staff and five smooth stones in his shepherd's pouch. (See **1 Samuel 17:37-40** NKJV; comparable to **1 Kingdoms 17:18-20** in LXX, OSB)
- 3. After David sinned by numbering the fighting men in Israel, God announces through a prophet that one of three punishments will fall on the nation of Israel, as a result. David has compassion for the people; he offers to take the consequences personally, to spare others.
  - a. "And David said to God, 'Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued.'" (**1 Chronicles 21:17**, NKJV)
- 4. It speaks of David as a good shepherd in a fascinating context, at the end of **Psalms 78** (designated **Psalms 77** in the LXX).
  - a. That psalm of Asaph begins with the mysterious statement, "I shall open my mouth in *parables*; I shall speak of things *hidden from of old*." (**Psalms 78:2**)
  - b. Jesus quotes from this statement in **Matthew 13:34-35**, explaining that this is one of the reasons why *He* spoke in parables.
  - c. After opening by saying "I will speak in *parables*... things *hidden of old*", Asaph proceed to devote the rest of this psalm to retelling two stories:
    - i. He retells the story of the Exodus from Egypt (from **Exodus**, **Numbers** and **Deuteronomy**). These events really happened, but we later find out that they also served to foreshadow the Christian life. (See Paul's comments in **1 Corinthians 10:1-13**, which we discussed at length in a lesson we had on 9/18/2018, "*The Exodus Map a Parable of the Christian Life*")
    - ii. The second most significant thing Asaph discusses (also with a hidden parable or



allegorical significance, perhaps?) is the story of David. Consider what he says there:

1. Read **Psalm 78:67-72** (**Psalm 77:67-72** in the LXX).
  2. Keep in mind that this psalm was written after David had died.
  3. Was David's life, described here as the shepherd of shepherded God's people, also intended to be a parable that foreshadowed a future shepherd who was *yet to come*?
5. Ways in which David demonstrated that he was a good shepherd:
- a. He risked his life to save his sheep.
  - b. He was strong and courageous, unafraid in the face of a powerful enemy in order to protect others.
  - c. He took responsibility as the shepherd, offering to take the punishment himself in order to spare the sheep.
  - d. He shepherded God's people with integrity and skill.
- e. **Question:** Are there any direct prophecies about a "good shepherd" who would come in the future?
- i. **Answer:** There are several prophecies about a good shepherd to come, in the Old Testament. Let's review some prominent ones.
- f. **Old Testament Prophecies about a Good Shepherd Who Would Come**
- i. Consider **Psalm 23**, perhaps the most well-known psalm in the Bible.
    1. It begins, "The Lord is my shepherd..."
    2. This loving, protecting shepherd provides for my needs, restores my soul and leads me into paths of righteousness.
    3. When He is with me, even "in the valley of the shadow of death" I will fear no evil.
    4. His shepherd's rod and staff comfort me.

- ii. Consider **Micah 5**, which includes an important prophecy quoted to Herod when the Magi came to Jerusalem looking for the one born King of the Jews.
  - 1. “When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.”’” (**Matthew 2:3-6**, NKJV)
    - a. Here “the prophet” being quoted in **Matthew 2** is Micah, from **Micah 5:1-4**. In that prophecy it speaks of one ruler who will “shepherd His flock”.
    - b. This “shepherd” prophecy from **Micah 5** points to the birth of the Christ in Bethlehem, the city of David.
    - c. This prophecy also points to the divinity and pre-existence of Christ, “whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”
- iii. In **Psalms 2**, the great messianic psalm that speaks of the Christ, the Anointed One to come as King, described also as the Son of God.
  - 1. “Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for Your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall shepherd them with an iron staff; you shall shatter them like a potter’s vessel.” (**Psalms 2:8-9**, LXX, OSB)
    - a. Most modern translations of **Psalms 2**, based on the Masoretic Text (MT), say “You shall break them with a rod of iron.” (NKJV, NASB, NIV, RSV, etc.) However, in the LXX it says, “You shall shepherd/rule them with a rod of iron”.
    - b. How do we resolve this discrepancy?
      - i. Fortunately, we have it on the highest authority that it is to be rendered, “shepherd with a rod of iron”.
      - ii. See what Jesus Himself says when He quotes this prophecy in **Revelation 2:26-27**, following the LXX, and applies a lesson to the Christians. His point: if they remain faithful to the end, they also

will rule over (not “break/ shatter”) the nations,  
just as it says about Him in **Psalm 2**.

2. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215 AD), a Christian teacher from Alexandria, Egypt commented on this unusual shepherd’s staff/rod in a work called *The Instructor* (with the title of that work referring to Jesus, our great Instructor):
  - a. “Wherefore prophecy invests Him with a rod, a rod of discipline, of rule of authority; that those whom the persuasive word heals not, the threatening may heal; and whom the threatening heals not, the rod may heal; and whom the rod heals not, the fire may devour. ‘There shall come forth,’ it is said, ‘a rod out of the root of Jesse.’ [Isaiah 11:1]
  - b. “See the care, and wisdom, and power of the Instructor: ‘He shall not judge according to opinion, nor according to report; but He shall dispense judgment to the humble and reprove the sinners of the earth.’ [Isaiah 11:3-4] And by David: ‘The Lord instructing, has instructed me, and not given me over to death.’ [Psalm 118:18] For to be chastised of the Lord, and instructed, is deliverance from death.
  - c. “And by the same prophet He says: ‘You shall rule them with a rod of iron.’ [Psalm 2:9, LXX] Thus also the apostle, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, being moved, says, ‘What will you have? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, in the spirit of meekness?’ [1 Corinthians 4:21] Also, ‘The Lord shall send the rod of strength out of Zion,’ [Psalm 110:2] He says by another prophet. And this same rod of instruction, ‘Your rod and staff have comforted me,’ [Psalm 23:4] said someone else. Such is the power of the Instructor—sacred, soothing, saving.”
    - i. (Source: Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 2, pp. 224–225)
3. What can we learn about this Shepherd who will come with an iron rod as promised in **Psalm 2**?
  - a. The Son of God will return to rule the nations as a shepherd, armed with an iron rod.

- b. Clement suggests that Jesus uses “progressive discipline” with us, to bring us to repentance and salvation.
      - i. Persuasive words come first; but if we don’t heed that, then...
      - ii. Threatening words; but if we don’t heed that, then...
      - iii. **A rod**; and finally, if we refuse to heed even that, then...
      - iv. Fire that will devour.
    - c. This iron rod is a rod of discipline and comfort (**Psalm 23**) used to instruct us, to bring about God’s wisdom, and to save us from death.
  - iv. Jesus pointed to the prophecy in **Zechariah 13** about the Shepherd, when speaking to his disciples on the night he was to be betrayed.
    - 1. “Then Jesus said to them, ‘All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: “I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.” But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.’ Peter answered and said to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’ And so said all the disciples.” (**Matthew 26:31–35**, NKJV)
      - a. Here, after Jesus said, “it has been written”, He quotes from **Zechariah 13:7**, “I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”
        - i. *(Technical Note: For those interested, at the end of this lesson is a post-script that discusses the text of **Zechariah 13:7** as quoted in **Matthew 26**)*
      - b. The context of this passage quoted is that it is within a longer discussion featuring prophecies of the Messiah, the Christ, in **Zechariah chapters 9-13**. That includes discussion about the bad shepherds in Israel, in contrast with the good shepherd/king who will come.
    - v. Perhaps the greatest prophecies regarding the one Good Shepherd who will come are found in **Ezekiel 34 & 37:22-28**.

1. These passages clearly describe the qualities of both good and bad shepherds.
  - a. These show us the heart of God and the kind of Shepherd He is to us.
  - b. These passages also give us a very clear picture and understanding of how to be great shepherds ourselves, including great husbands, great fathers, and great church leaders.
  - c. These passages are worthy of our study and meditation!
2. Read **Ezekiel 34:1-19**
  - a. God recognizes that His people are suffering under corrupt leadership.
  - b. These leaders were just taking care of themselves and abusing the sheep.
  - c. The Lord defines what a good shepherd should be doing:
    - i. Feeding the sheep;
    - ii. Strengthening the weak;
    - iii. Reviving the sick;
    - iv. Bandaging the broken; and
    - v. Going out to find the misled and the lost, and bringing them back.
  - d. The Lord is upset and will take matters into His own hands.
    - i. He will personally attend to His sheep.
3. Read **Ezekiel 34:20-24**
  - a. The Lord will judge between sheep; against those who muddied the water with their feet and butted the weak.
  - b. The Lord will raise up One Shepherd to shepherd His flock (**Ezekiel 34:23**)
    - i. When Jesus says "I am the Good Shepherd" he is claiming to be the One who would come to God said would come to lead His people!

- ii. This one to come is described as “my servant David”, the one who would be their Shepherd and Ruler.
  - 1. Keep in mind that Ezekiel is writing c. 590-570 BC, while David was around 1000 BC. Therefore, this was written a long time after David’s death.
  - 2. Must be talking about the Son of David, the one promised to David who would inherit the eternal kingdom (**2 Samuel 7, 1 Chronicles 17**)
- iii. The same word “raise up” in **Ezekiel 34:23** in the LXX is also used in the gospels to refer to Jesus being (literally) “raised up”.
  - 1. From the Septuagint, in Greek: “I will raise up” = ἀναστήσω (from **Ezekiel 34:23**)
  - 2. The same word translated “to raise up” is one of the two Greek words used throughout the New Testament to refer to the resurrection of Jesus. As in the English equivalent, it can mean “to raise up” either in a figurative sense (for example, to *raise up* leaders) or literally (*raise up* from a seated position; or *raise up* from the dead).
- iv. We see in the Old Testament that God intended to “raise up” (using same words in the LXX as used in the Greek NT for resurrection):
  - 1. A Prophet “like Moses” (**Deuteronomy 18:15-19**);
  - 2. A King over the eternal kingdom (**2 Samuel 7:12-17**, designated **2 Kingdoms 7:12-17** in the LXX; also see **1 Chronicles 17:11-15**);
  - 3. A faithful Priest (**1 Samuel 2:34-35**, designated **1 Kingdoms 2:34-35** in the LXX); and

4. One Shepherd and Ruler over God's people (**Ezekiel 34:23-24**).
5. Jesus fulfilled all four roles at once, confirmed by the resurrection: He is the promised Prophet, Priest, King and Shepherd!

4. Read **Ezekiel 37:22-28**

- a. This one Shepherd will rule God's people forever.

vi. Conclusions regarding prophecies about the Shepherd who was to come.

1. Jesus fulfilled several specific prophecies regarding one Good Shepherd who would be sent by God to shepherd His people.
2. Only by knowing the Old Testament can we appreciate the significance of what Jesus was saying in **John 10** when He said I am the Good Shepherd.
3. Jesus' claim that he was "the Good Shepherd" was tremendously significant and highly controversial. Some saw it as blasphemous and worthy of death; while others recognizing the coming of God's promised Ruler and Shepherd, foretold of old.

**IV. Other Elements of the Shepherd Parable: The Wolf, Death of the Shepherd, etc.**

a. Re-read **John 10:11-18**.

- i. We have just discussed the "good shepherd" part of this parable; now let's look at the other elements, and how they all fit together.

b. On the wolf. **Question:** In the story about the shepherd in **John 10**, who is the wolf?

- i. **Answer:** Obviously, this is referring to Satan.

1. The message of the gospel is not just about getting out of our personal problem with God. It must include the third party: Satan, the wolf who is out to destroy us. Paul explains this to King Agrippa in **Acts 26**.

- a. Paul recounts that Jesus had told him, "I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins

and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” (**Acts 26:17-18**, NKJV)

- b. Essential to the gospel message is the role Satan plays in a story involving three parties: God, man and Satan. Jesus explains this in **John 10**, a short parable that summarizes virtually the *entire gospel*.
  2. From the beginning with Eve’s temptation, Satan has posed as our “friend”, who wants to elevate us and give us what we want now, as opposed to God who Satan portrays as trying to keep us down (**Genesis 3:1-5**). Jesus portrays Satan as he really is: a wolf out to devour us.
  3. **Question:** What are some of the other animals used to portray the character and mission of Satan?
    - a. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (**1 Peter 5:8**, NKJV)
    - b. “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (**Revelation 12:9**, NKJV)
    - c. Let’s see Satan for who he really is.
- c. **Question:** Why does the shepherd (Jesus) *have to die*?
  - i. Laying down his life for the sheep is a sign that He is the good shepherd
  - ii. This shows the great love of the shepherd, and how he cares for each of the sheep, individually.
  - iii. Understanding the role of the wolf in this parable may help answer the question (sometimes referred to as “the reason for the Atonement”).
    1. Some say it was necessary for Jesus to die, in order to satisfy God’s wrath against us.
      - a. The logic is that death is the penalty for sin, and we sinned, therefore justice can only be satisfied if the sentence is carried out.
      - b. Therefore, Jesus died in our place to satisfy the wrath of God.



2. Others point to passages like this one in **John 10** and come to a different answer. They would say that Jesus died *on a rescue mission*: to redeem us from Satan, who had taken us captive. (This would be similar to David rescuing the lamb trapped in the mouth of a lion or bear.)
  - a. This points to the love of Jesus for us, and it puts the blame for the death of Jesus on *Satan*, to whom Jesus paid the ransom (of His life) to liberate us.
    - i. We got ourselves into a bad situation of enslavement to Satan as a result of our own sin; so we bear responsibility for getting ourselves in a perilous situation from which Jesus rescued us.
    - ii. This is similar to the allegory presented in the C.S. Lewis classic, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where the witch demands the life of Aslan to ransom the children who had gotten themselves enslaved to the witch through their own sin.
3. Perhaps there are elements of truth in both perspectives? I encourage you to think about it, as you read the Bible on your own. It could impact how you view God, Satan and the mission of Jesus.
  - a. (For more on this topic, I encourage you to listen to two lessons by David Bercot: *What the Early Christians Believed about the Atonement*, and *Questions on the Atonement*, available through Scroll Publishing.)
  - d. **Question:** Who are the hirelings? (Perhaps we can touch on this in the next lesson.)
  - e. **Question:** What does it mean that the shepherd *can take up his life again*?
    - i. **Answer:** Here Jesus is stating before the fact that He will be resurrected after He dies. The apostles did not fake or just imagine the resurrection: Jesus spoke about it many times in advance, and it fulfilled numerous prophecies as well.

## V. The Shepherd's Other Sheep Not of That Fold, and the One Flock

- a. **Question:** What is the first sheepfold that Jesus is referring to in his parable?
  - i. **Answer:** The Jews

1. Jesus' initial message was focused on the Jews.
  2. "These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'" (**Matthew 10:5-6**, NKJV)
  3. Jesus told the Canaanite woman, a Gentile, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (**Matthew 15:24**, NKJV)
- b. **Question:** What is the one flock that will be formed?
- i. **Answer:** The church, which will be comprised of both Jews and Gentiles.
  - ii. Paul explains in **Ephesians 2** that the two (Gentiles and Jews) have been brought together and made one, through the blood of Christ.
  - iii. Paul uses the analogy of branches being grafted in to an olive tree to make the same point, in **Romans 11**.

## VI. Conclusion

- a. The parable of the good shepherd provides a wonderful summary of the entire gospel.
- b. We see Jesus as a loving, good shepherd.
  - i. He embodies the best characteristics of all the good shepherd who came before Him.
    1. He offers the sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God, like **Abel**.
    2. He suffers to build a strong flock from all types taken from the bigger flock of a great deceiver, like **Jacob**.
    3. He was more concerned with pleasing his Father than with pleasing his corrupt brothers, and paid the price for that, like **Joseph**.
    4. He leads and is concerned that the people not be left "like sheep without a shepherd", like **Moses**.
    5. He is willing to lay down his life to snatch us from the beast who has us in his teeth, like **David**.
  - ii. He fulfills the great prophecies about the Good Shepherd who would come.

1. He was born in Bethlehem, but with origins in eternity, as prophesied by **Micah**.
  2. After he was “struck”, the sheep were scattered, as prophesied by **Zechariah**.
  3. He was the one true Shepherd in the line of David, who was “raised up” by God, as prophesied by **Ezekiel**.
  4. He bears the iron staff, with which he will lead and comfort the righteous but smash the nations, as prophesied by **David** in **Psalms 2** and **23**.
- c. Let us see Satan for who he really is: the wolf who is looking to devour God’s sheep.
  - d. And let us see our role as protected sheep who are called to *follow behind* Jesus, our Good Shepherd.
    - i. In our next lesson, will look at how Jesus’ model of being the Good Shepherd has practical implications for our own lives: especially for parents, husbands and church leaders.

## **VII. End Notes: The Text of Zechariah 13:7, and the Septuagint**

- a. Some have claimed that, unlike most places in the New Testament, in **Matthew 26:31** Jesus is *quoting from the Hebrew text* of **Zechariah 13:7**, rather than from the Septuagint (LXX).
  - i. For example, in the ESV (where OT is based on the Masoretic Text) **Zechariah 13:7** reads “Strike the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered”.
  - ii. This is in contrast to Brenton’s translation and the OSB, which are based on the Septuagint (LXX). In the OSB, **Zechariah 13:7** reads, “Smite the shepherds and draw out the sheep”). Note the singular “shepherd” in the **Matthew 26:31** quote, versus the plural “shepherds” in the OSB and Brenton.
- b. However, a strong case can be made that Jesus was in fact following the LXX; but from a different manuscript than the ones that Brenton and the OSB translators were using.
  - i. The three oldest, most complete Codices of the LXX are known as Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus. The first two are generally dated from the mid 300’s, with Alexandrinus dated from the 400’s. The oldest manuscripts of most translations of the LXX (OSB,

Brenton's, etc.) rely heavily on Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Note that these three LXX codices are about 600 years earlier than the oldest copies of the Masoretic Text (MT). The MT, which is in Hebrew, is the Old Testament text behind most Bible translations used today.

- ii. Actually, the text of Alexandrinus version of the LXX lines up extremely well with what Jesus quoted in **Matthew 26:31** ("Strike the shepherd..."). For those familiar with Greek, you can see this for yourself in the footnotes (regarding the Alexandrinus text, abbreviated "A") in *Septuaginta*, ed. Rahlfs and Hanhart.
- iii. Also consider the evidence of early Christian writers. Justin Martyr, a Christian philosopher writing around the year 150 AD, writing to Trypho, a Jew, gives a slightly longer quote from **Zechariah 13:7** than the limited statement by Jesus in **Matthew 26:31**. Justin was a strong proponent of relying on the LXX, and he quoted extensively from it. Here his quote lines up with both the passage Jesus quoted, and also what with what we find in the Alexandrinus version of the LXX. Justin writes:
  1. "Moreover, the prophet Zechariah foretold that this same Christ would be smitten, and His disciples scattered: which also took place. For after His crucifixion, the disciples that accompanied Him were dispersed, until He rose from the dead, and persuaded them that so it had been prophesied concerning Him, that He would suffer; and being thus persuaded, they went into all the world, and taught these truths. Hence also we are strong in His faith and doctrine, since we have [this our] persuasion both from the prophets, and from those who throughout the world are seen to be worshippers of God in the name of that crucified One. The following is said, too, by Zechariah: 'O sword, rise up against My Shepherd, and against the man of My people, says the Lord of hosts. Smite the Shepherd, and His flock shall be scattered.'"
  - a. (Source: Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chapter 53; in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 222)
  2. If you are able to read this section of *Dialogue with Trypho* in the original Greek and compare with Alexandrinus and with the Greek text of **Matthew 26:31**, the connection between what Jesus is saying and the LXX should be evident.