

John 10:14-16

“One Flock, One Shepherd”

JOH 10:14-16 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."

This passage is in the context of Jesus explaining how the Pharisees of Israel have neglected their duties to God in shepherding the people of Israel as they were to feed them and tend to them with the express purpose of bringing them into the presence of their Savior. The Pharisees have acted like hired hands who only have their own best interests in mind rather than the interest of Israel.

Remember that the only reason Israel exists is because God has gathered them together. They were gathered together by the Lord when Jacob's family was brought into Egypt by his son Joseph who, at the time, was second in command under Pharaoh. It was Jacob, whose name was changed by God to Israel, (which means governed by God), who is credited with the namesake for that nation.

That relatively small clan of people grew to an enormous size in Egypt as they spent some 400 years in that land, much of the time being oppressed by the Pharaoh's. As the people cried out to God, the Lord finally responded by bringing them out from under the bondage of Egypt.

The Lord has always shepherded His people. But He always expected those in authority in Israel to be His faithful leaders as they were instructed to lift up the name of their God and Savior as they directed them to the only One who can save.

And so, what Jesus is doing in our text is reminding these Jewish leaders that they're acting like mercenaries instead of acting like shepherds who love the sheep, as Jesus is doing by coming into this world as the Son of God, who has taken on flesh with the express purpose of redeeming His sheep.

This contrast is made clear by Jesus in the verses we looked at last week.

JOH 10:10-13 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

These leaders of Israel cared nothing for the sheep. Jesus, on the other hand, cared for the sheep to the degree that He is going to give His life for the sheep. And as we come to our text this morning He repeats in verses fourteen and fifteen what He said in verse eleven.

JOH 10:14-15 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep.

The first thing we notice here is that Jesus repeats the phrase, "I am the good shepherd." What Jesus is pointing out here for these Pharisees is that He is distinguishing Himself as the only Shepherd in Israel who could be considered good.

When you and I use the word "good" we usually use it as sort of a vanilla adjective. "What did you think of that movie?" "It was good." "So, did you go to that restaurant I recommended to you?" "Yeah." "What did you think of their special?" "It was good."

In most cases when we use the word good, we mean it was okay. If that movie or restaurant was better than good we would have expressed it with words like, outstanding, great, killer steak.

The word good that Jesus uses in our text was a word in those days which meant beautiful, excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable, admirable.

It was an adjective which, when placed in front of a noun, like the word shepherd, was meant to distinguish it from the common shepherd. And so, by inference what Jesus was saying to these Pharisees was that He was a shepherd among shepherds in Israel. And there was only one such shepherd who could be distinguished in that way.

PSA 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

PSA 80:1-3 Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth 2 before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us. 3 Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

This is the shepherd Jesus is making Himself out to be. And in fact, this is the Shepherd He is; the God who saves us.

The Pharisees would have understood the implications of such a statement by Jesus when He refers to Himself as the good shepherd and thus the contrast our Lord makes between hirelings and the good shepherd would have been clear to these thieves and robbers who call themselves leaders of God's flock.

They weren't willing to lift their fingers for Israel unless there was something in it for them. Jesus on the other hand was willing to die for the sheep of Israel.

But notice what the good Shepherd says in verses 14 and 15 regarding the relationship He has with His sheep, or His people.

JOH 10:14-15 "... I know my sheep and my sheep know me - 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep."

This is a tremendous truth that you and I in Christ ought to rejoice in everyday of our lives. Listen again to what He says.

"... I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father."

The first thing we see is that Jesus speaks in the present tense. I know My sheep; not I will know them, or I long to know them, but, I know them. And when He uses this word *know* it is not like knowing about someone.

If someone from another country were to ask you, "do you know who your President is," you could say, of course I do, I know exactly who he is.

But the chances of you knowing him as a friend, for example, are pretty slim. Jesus is using the word know in the sense of expressing a relationship He has with us. We know this because of the way this word is used in the context.

Notice that Jesus says He knows His sheep in the exact same way that He knows His Father. Well, in what way does He know His

Father in heaven? In a similar way that we know our own fathers; in a special relational way.

JOH 10:30 I and the Father are one.

JOH 10:38 But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

JOH 14:10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

This is tremendous because what our Lord is saying is that He personally knows you and me in Christ in such a way where He knows us by name because we are united to Him. Isn't that what He just got through saying to the Pharisees in verse three?

JOH 10:3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

It's not like the government where we're known by a number. To them we're a faceless cog in the wheel of America.

But to Jesus we are personally known to Him as a friend and as a child of the Father in heaven. And to further explain how this can be Jesus uses language which demonstrates how close this relationship is as He equates it to the same kind of relationship He has with the Father.

Now, obviously their relationship with each other is unique in that both the Father and the Son, together with the Holy Spirit, are none other than the one true God. We cannot claim that kind of relationship with God. But we can claim to know God in the same way that Jesus has fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

In fact, we can express our relationship with our God in the same way that Jesus can say that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. He points this out in this very gospel of John.

JOH 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

JOH 14:19-21 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and

I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

Later in John's first epistle to the church we read this.

1JO 4:13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

Our relationship with God is such that we have become united to Him by faith in Christ, which means that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Why? Because He knows us by name, we are a child of God in Christ and we are in Him and He is in us.

Jesus makes this clear earlier in this gospel.

JOH 6:38-40 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that ***I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.*** 40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and ***I will raise him up at the last day.***"

And it is precisely because of this truth that Paul writes to the Ephesians the way he does.

EPH 2:19-22 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

What a special and wonderful relationship we have with the living Almighty God and creator we have in Christ.

Do you see why it's so important never to take this relationship for granted? It's not like we're on some mailing list of God's where His only relationship with us is to send out spam messages on our computers that we end up deleting when we see them.

To God we're not seen as a sea of humanity that He shakes hands with in some line at the airport like the President when he comes to town. To God we are seen on an individual basis. He knows you by name and He calls you out to be with Him forever.

And the most amazing thing about this relationship is that He has adopted us into His family only by sending His Son into this world to die for the penalty of our sin. Without us being reconciled back to the Father through the shed blood of Christ on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead, we would still be in our sin and lost forever.

We've got to move on.

JOH 10:16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Now keep in mind that Jesus is speaking to the Jews. The particular sheep pen He refers to in this verse is a reference to Israel. And so, when Jesus says, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also," He is referring to those who are not associated with Israel.

The question is, who are these other sheep that are not of this sheep pen that Jesus must bring? Well, if you were a Mormon, or as they like to be called, the church of Jesus Christ of latter day saints, you would identify yourself as these sheep, exclusively.

The web site, "Wrested Scriptures," takes a quote from LeGrand Richards of the Mormon church who wrote the book, "A marvelous work and a Wonder. Richards says this about the other sheep in John 10:16.

"It should be noted that Jesus did not minister unto the Gentiles although he did send his apostles unto them after his crucifixion. This leaves us with the question unanswered, so far as the bible is concerned: Who were the other sheep he promised to visit? For this information we must look to the restoration of the gospel and the coming forth of the book of Mormon."

By the way, the book of Mormon, found by Joseph Smith Jr., is nothing short of a fictional compilation of his fertile imagination. He explains how America had two ancient civilizations; the latter, made up of Jews who left Jerusalem as they crossed the Pacific to this country around 600 B.C.

According to the late Dr. Walter Martin, in his book Kingdom of the Cults, these Jews were supposedly known as the Nephites and the Lamenites who warred against each other.

The Lamenites were punished by God because of their evil deeds and were then cursed with dark skin. These Lamenites turned out to be what we know today as Native Americans, or American Indians.

The Lamenites defeated and annihilated the Nephites at the great battle near the hill Cumorah in Palmyra, New York, approximately A.D. 428. Some 1,400 years later in the early 1800's, Joseph Smith Jr. supposedly found gold plates written in Egyptian hieroglyphics and translated them into English. It was supposedly the prophet Mormon who authored this book Smith translated.

The book of Mormon which was taken from these alleged gold plates Smith found reads like some bad fairytale with no semblance of reality. But the Mormons use these gold plates, which by the way, don't exist, as evidence to their claim to be the other sheep spoken of by Christ in our text, and thus the true sheep of Christ, as opposed to the church you and I are a part of world-wide which follows the word of God alone.

I bring this up only to show how easy it is to take something out of context and create any sort of doctrine or fairy tale you want and to start what has become one of the fastest growing cults in the world.

The reality is that when you do a proper exegesis of the Scriptures you come up with an entirely different interpretation of this passage.

JOH 10:16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

As I said earlier Jesus has been speaking to the Jews and so the other sheep referred to in this passage would be speaking to those outside of Israel. As far as the Jews were concerned they believed that they were the only ones who were to be part of God's Kingdom.

The fact is that God has always made it clear in the Scriptures that His intention was to bring all men to Himself. If this were not the case then what do we do with those believers who lived before the days of Israel, from Adam and Eve to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?

We know for example that Abraham was called out by God to be the father of Israel in that his physical descendants would form the nation of Israel. But the promise of God wasn't limited to one nation but many nations, and by inference the whole world.

GEN 22:17-18 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and ***through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed***, because you have obeyed me.

The apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives us the sense of what this promise entails when he wrote to the Galatians.

GAL 3:6-9 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." 7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. 8 ***The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."*** 9 ***So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.***

The other sheep Jesus speaks of in our text are undoubtedly the Gentiles who have been outside the blessings of Israel and will soon be gathered in by such apostles and shepherds as Paul who was the apostle to the Gentiles.

But it's really the second part of verse 16 of our text which tells us who the other sheep are.

JOH 10:16 there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

If Christ came into this world to die for the world then it necessarily means that His sheep who are taken out of Israel were not the only one's intended to receive mercy from Christ.

But what could be construed as more than one flock by Israel would suggest that God had two different plans of salvation: one for the Jews and one for the Gentiles.

This simply is not the case. And yet, even Paul acknowledges that the tension and hostility between Jew and Gentile must be reconciled as we are all reconciled to the Father by Christ, because there can only be one flock with one shepherd.

EPH 2:11-16 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men) - 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the

world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

It is clear that Christ had in mind the Gentiles when referring to the other sheep that He must bring in as well, not some mythical group of people a former treasure hunter by the name of Joseph Smith had in mind when he concocted his book of Mormon.

The reason this is important is because in the eyes of God, “there is neither Jew nor [Gentile], slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

This doesn't mean that there aren't distinctions among these groups, it simply means that all people, without exception have access to Christ and that everyone in Christ are all part of the same flock, the same body of Christ. One flock, one shepherd.

What this also means is that all of the blessings that were promised to Israel by the Shepherd of Israel was necessarily pointing to this one flock over which the Good Shepherd would rule and reign as He reconciles all groups, Jew and Gentile into one body, what Jesus calls the church, and which Paul calls the Israel of God.

Galatians 6:15-16 ¹⁵ For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

The Israel of God's Shepherd, Jesus Christ, is the same Shepherd that was proclaimed to the nation of Israel.

Micah 7:14-15 ¹⁴ Shepherd Your people with Your scepter, The flock of Your possession Which dwells by itself in the woodland, In the midst of a fruitful field. Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead As in the days of old. ¹⁵ "As in the days when you came out from the land of Egypt, I will show you miracles."

The Shepherd of Israel, as Micah states, is the same Shepherd over the same people; those who have faith in the promises given first to Adam and Eve and later proclaimed to Abraham, who would be the spiritual father of all nations.

The one flock Jesus speaks of are true believers everywhere who have trusted Him as Lord and Savior. But the one flock of Christ is also found in the local flock that we've touched on over the last couple of weeks. On a local level we are part of the same flock that Christ has put in place in any particular locale.

And if we belong to a local flock then we need to work with each other as though we are on the same team, the same flock, and encourage each other to love and good deeds to the glory of God as we use our gifts in this local body as we serve each other. This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to a local body in Ephesus.

EPH 4:15-16 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

By the way, you'll notice that Paul speaks of the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament which transcends just the local body, but includes everybody in Christ world-wide, which is to say, that though we may be saved and given life in one locale we are still connected in what is called the visible and invisible church (one body), and can and should be able and willing to use our gifts to encourage saints anywhere in the world.

Paul said something similar to another local body in Colossae.

COL 3:11-17 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as *members of one body* you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

You and I are part of the one body of Christ world-wide and we should pray for each other as we pray for saints in other parts of the world. And if given the opportunity we should try and encourage all saints everywhere.

But we should also remember that it was Christ who formed this one universal body into local living organisms called the church. We are in this together and as Paul says, “from him [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

May we work together in our own community and join with the rest of the body world-wide to worship and thank our great God and Savior that one day the body of Christ will be localized in the very presence of God around His throne where will see Him face to face on the new earth in the midst of the new heavens.

Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!