

JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

The healing of the blind man by Jesus offers many spiritual lessons. Three truths are clearly applicable today. First, notice the radical change which the blind man experienced: once he was blind, but after Jesus healed him he could see (9:1, 9, 25). So it is when a person is born again: once he was blinded by sin, but now he can see the light and understand the truth of the Gospel (Rom 15:20, 21; 2 Cor 5:17). Second, consider the hardening of the heart which the Pharisees experienced: the more Jesus revealed Himself to them by His works and words, the more they hardened their hearts. They were like the pupil of the eye: the more light it receives, the more it closes (9:39-41). So it is with any man who rejects what he hears about Jesus (Acts 28:25-27; 1 Cor 2:14). Third, think about the persecution which the blind man received when he defended the work of Jesus for being physically healed: he was challenged by his neighbors (9:8-9), forsaken by his parents (9:18-23), interrogated by the Pharisees (9:15-17, 24-33), and cast out of the synagogue (9:34). The same is true of those who are spiritually healed and defend Christ. Throughout church history, many followers of Christ have suffered severe persecutions, even the loss of life, because they received the miracle of the "new birth" (Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:12).

Jesus' parable about the true "Shepherd" and His discourse concerning the "Good Shepherd" arose directly from the healing of the blind man (cf. 9:39-41; 10:1). Jesus used the common occupation of a shepherd to reveal Who He is. The "fold" (10:1) referred to Judaism, the religious system in which God's people were kept until Christ came. Jesus had the proper Scriptural credentials so He was allowed to enter by the door into the sheepfold (10:1-2). He was not an imposter, but was the true Shepherd who would lead His sheep out of the fold (10:3).

Then Jesus said He is the door of the sheep: He is the only way to obtain salvation (10:9). "Other sheep" refer to Gentiles who would accept Jesus Christ as their Shepherd (10:16). Because of Jesus' sayings there was another division among the people (10:19-21; cf 7:43). The Jews continued to question Him concerning His claim to be the Messiah (10:24), because they were overcome with unbelief. They rejected Him to the point of almost stoning Him (10:31), and later desired to seize Him (10:39). They did not understand Him because of their unbelief. They were the thieves, the robbers, the hirelings, the false shepherds that hurt and kill the sheep, but Jesus was the true and Good Shepherd that would give His sheep life and do so more abundantly.

I. The Blind Man Healed Physically — 9:1-34

A. The Circumstances — 9:1-7

9:1 — The man: Jesus and His disciples passed by a man who had been born blind.

9:2 — The question: the disciples connected sickness with sin and asked whether this man had sinned or his parents had sinned - cf. Ex 20:5.

9:3-5 — The reply: neither had sinned. Ultimately, all sickness is the result of sin and the curse God put on mankind in Eden, but this is not what Jesus had in mind. He told His disciples that his sickness would provide an opportunity for the work of God to be demonstrated. Jesus was the Light of the world and would open this blind man's eyes.

9:6-7 — Acting as the Good Shepherd that would seek and save the lost children of Israel, Jesus put clay on the blind man's eyes and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. Jesus may

have used clay on the man's eyes so that he would have to demonstrate his obedience by washing in the pool.

"Siloam" — means "sent one." Jesus Christ was the "Sent One" from God, and He sent the blind man to the pool with this name. John saw this interesting relationship and so he gave us the meaning of the pool's name. When the blind man obeyed the One that God had sent, he was healed.

B. The Reactions — 9:8-34

1. The neighbors — 9:8-13

9:8-9 — Their question: they asked among themselves if this man was not the blind beggar that they had known. Some thought he was, but others figured he only looked like him.

9:10-13 — Their challenge: they wanted to know how his eyes had been opened, and when he told them, they wanted to know where his Healer was, but he did not know.

2. The Pharisees — 9:14-17

9:14 — Their concern: this miracle had taken place on the Sabbath and according to their traditions, it was unlawful to make clay on the Sabbath. How restrictive their traditions were! They even forbade deeds of mercy to others. They went beyond the force of the Law of God (cf. Isa 58:4-8).

9:15 — Their question: they asked him how he had been healed and he explained it to them.

9:16-17 — Their dilemma: they did not believe a man of God would heal on the Sabbath; but on the other hand, they did not believe a sinner could do such miracles. Their traditions blinded their minds to the truth.

3. The parents — 9:18-23

9:18-19 — Their interrogation: The Pharisees interrogated the blind man's parents because they did not believe their son had been born blind.

9:20-23 — Their fear: They acknowledged him to be their son who had been born blind, but they would not answer beyond that, because they feared that they would be put out of the synagogue. Being put out of the synagogue would involve social and economic hardships.

4. The blind man — 9:24-34

9:24 — His predicament: the Pharisees in their frustration told him to "give God the praise." This has the idea of "tell the truth" (cf. Josh 7:19). This, of course, is what he had been doing.

9:25-27 — His certainty: he had been blind, but now he could see. Facts like that are stubborn things to deal with and cannot be changed by traditions and false teachers.

9:28-29 — His persecution: the Pharisees reviled him and claimed they were Moses' disciples, but in reality they were not (cf. Jn 5:45-47).

9:30-33 — His theology: he logically formed his conclusion that a miracle had been performed, and since God does not hear sinners, but only those that worship Him, and since such a miracle had never before been done, this man must be of God.

9:34 — His excommunication: the Pharisees were furious and frustrated with his conclusion, and so they cast him out of the synagogue.

II. The Blind Man Healed Spiritually — 9:35-41

A. His Ignorance — 9:35-36

9:35-36 — Jesus heard the man that He had healed of his blindness had been cast out of the synagogue. Jesus sought him as the Good Shepherd and found him. He asked him if he believed on the Son of God, but he confessed that he did not know who He was.

B. His Interest — 9:36-37

9:36-37 — The man said he would like to know who the Son of God is so he could believe on Him. Jesus told him that he had seen Him and it was He that was speaking to him.

C. His Belief — 9:38

9:38 — At once he believed and his spiritual eyes were opened. Immediately he worshipped Jesus. He was a lost sheep in the nation of Israel that Jesus rescued and saved. Now he could see with both his physical and spiritual eyes.

D. His Outreach — 9:39-41

9:39 — Jesus spoke plainly to the Pharisees about their blindness.

9:40-41 — The Pharisees' estimate of themselves was, "We see," therefore, Jesus said that their sin remained. If they had admitted their spiritual blindness, Jesus would have healed them (cf. Lk 5:32).

III. The Parable of the True Shepherd — 10:1-6

The healing of the blind man gave rise to Jesus' lesson about the Good Shepherd. This parable would be helpful for the man that had been cast out of the synagogue, but it was meant for the Pharisees to expose their sins, but their dull minds did not understand it.

A. The Shepherd's Credentials — 10:1-2

10:1-2 — Jesus is the true Shepherd Who entered the sheepfold through the door. The "sheepfold" is Judaism. The "door" of the sheepfold is the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah (cf. Gen 49:10; Isa 7:14; Micah 5:2; etc). The true Shepherd fulfilled the OT prophecies about the Messiah. The Sadducees and Pharisees were false shepherds that did not fulfill the OT prophecies. They were the "thieves and robbers" that climbed into the sheepfold by some other way.

B. The Shepherd's Recognition — 10:3a

10:3a — Jesus was known by the "porter or doorkeeper" as the legitimate Shepherd to enter the sheepfold of Judaism to call out His sheep. These sheep were the first constituents of Christ's church (Acts 2). Those that were not His sheep remained in Judaism and vehemently opposed those that left it. The doorkeeper seems to be John the Baptist, who preached, "Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17). He prepared the people to follow Jesus. However, some say the doorkeeper is the Holy Spirit who opened the door for Him to lead His sheep out of the sheepfold of Judaism. A case can be made for the Holy Spirit to be the doorkeeper, but John the Baptist is more likely.

C. The Shepherd's Leading — 10:3b-6

Jesus called for His sheep by name, they heard Him, and He led them out of Judaism. Notice, He did not force them out of Judaism, nor did He choose certain ones to come out without their consent, but He called those that He foreknew would accept His invitation to follow Him. In Romans 8:29-30, God's foreknowledge precedes His predestination (election) and calling. Jesus knew everything that His Father knew. He foreknew the decisions of the Pharisees, who would reject Him, as well as the decision of the man born blind, who would

receive Him (9:3). He knows personally all those that will believe on Him and calls them by name. He knew the blind man would hear His voice and come out of Judaism along with many others where John the Baptist preached (9:35-38; 10:40-42). The sheep refused to follow the false teaching of the Pharisees.

IV. The Door of the Sheep — 10:7-10

The door of the sheep (v. 7) is different from the door of the sheepfold (v. 1). Jesus Christ is the door of the sheep. When a person enters that door, they are saved (v.9a). Those that enter are free to go in and out of that door to find pasture and be fed (10:9b; cf. 1 Tim 4:6; 1 Pet 2:2). The thieves and robbers, (Sadducees and Pharisees) steal, kill and destroy the sheep, but Jesus gives them life and He gives life more abundantly.

V. The Redemptive Work of the Good Shepherd — 10:11-21

10:11-15 — Jesus begins His discourse to the Pharisees by saying, "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (10:11). He compares Himself with the Pharisee. He is the Good Shepherd; the Pharisee is the hired shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life to protect His sheep when they are in danger; the hired shepherd runs away when the sheep are in danger to protect his own life. Under the law, the sheep gave their lives for the shepherds and all sinners, but the Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep and all sinners (10:11, 15, 17, 18; Rom 3:23). Also, the Good Shepherd knew His sheep and His sheep knew Him. No doubt Jesus said this because the Pharisees did not have a personal interest in the people.

10:16 — Up to this point, the sheep are Jewish believers, but now Jesus refers to "other sheep" that He must bring into His flock that are not of this fold, that is, the nation of Israel. These sheep are among the Gentiles. They would hear His voice and be brought into His flock (not fold; a different word than the one used earlier). The flock of the Good Shepherd would consist of Jews and Gentiles of equal importance, which was inconceivable for the Pharisee.

10:17-18 — The obedient sacrifice of the Good Shepherd for the sheep earned the love of His Father. He willingly laid down His life and He had power to raise it again. He received this power from His Father. He allowed the Jews to seek His crucifixion by the Romans so He could pay for the sins of all people (1 Jn 2:2). But He did not allow them to keep Him in the grave. He arose to give life, abundant life, to all believers. However, only believers in His sacrifice for their sins and in His resurrection for their life will benefit from His work of redemption.

10:19-21 — There was a division among the Jews over the words, works, and Person of Jesus. Some said He was possessed by a demon and was a madman. Others said His words were not that of a demonized person and how could such a person open the eyes of a blind person?

VI. The Controversy about Jesus' Deity — 10:22-42

A. The Occasion — 10:22-23

10:22 — Time: this was in December during the feast of dedication, two months after the feast of tabernacles. The feast of dedication was begun to commemorate the cleansing of the temple after its defilement by Antiochus Epiphanes (164 B.C.).

10:23 — Place: Solomon's porch, which was a covered colonnade along the east side of the

temple area.

B. The Question — 10:24

10:24 — The Jews wanted Jesus to tell them plainly if He truly was the Messiah (the "Christ").

C. The Answer — 10:25-30

10:25 — Jesus' testimony: the works that He did in His Father's name were proof that He was the Messiah.

10:26 — Jews' problem: they were not believers, so they were not His sheep. They could not hear His voice and understand what He was saying (v. 6).

10:27-29 — Jesus' promise: His sheep would hear His voice and follow Him. Jesus knew who would believe and be His sheep before He created the world. Peter learned this truth and put it in his first epistle (1 Pet 1:2). Jesus gives His sheep eternal life and no thief or robber is able to take them out of His hand (cf vv. 1, 8). If that promise was not strong enough, Jesus went on to say that His Father gave these sheep to Him. He is greater in every aspect to angels and people, including knowledge and power, so no one is able to take them out of His hand. Jesus' sheep are safe forever under His watchful care and protection.

10:30 — Jesus' personal being: He was eternal and of the very essence of His Father, so they are one. They are more than one in purpose; they are one in nature and always existed together in the Godhead (cf Col 2:9).

D. The Response — 10:31

10:31 — The Jewish leaders knew that Jesus claimed to be God with His Father, so they wanted to stone Him for blasphemy. Jesus did not make a wrong claim; it was the Jewish leaders that made a wrong conclusion because they refused to believe He was the Son of God.

E. The Argument — 10:32-38

10:32 — Jesus' question: for which of His good works were they planning to stone Him?

10:33 — Jews' reply: They charged Him with blasphemy for making Himself equal with God (cf. Jn 19:7).

10:34-38 — Jesus' response: Jesus reminded them that the Scriptures called certain people "gods" (Ps 82:6), and since that was so, how could they charge Him with blasphemy when He literally was the Son of God and called Himself such. Proof for His claim was His works which demonstrated the Father was in Him and He was in the Father.

F. The Escape — 10:39-42

10:39 — The Jews sought to kill Him once again (cf. 5:16; 7:19, 25, 32, 45; 8:37, 59; 10:31).

10:40-42 — Jesus went on the east side of the Jordan where it was relatively safe from the Jews and there many believed on Him. This is where He had begun His ministry. Notice the effectiveness of John the Baptist's ministry. He planted the seed and Jesus reaped the harvest. The people recognized that John the Baptist's message about Jesus Christ was true.