

The Church of the Servant King

Survey of the Bible Series – The Gospel of John (SB_JN10A_The Good Shepherd)

John 10:1-21

Introduction

John 10 really consists of two separate discourses of Jesus. The first discourse (vv. 1-21) is the subject of this study and is merely a continuation of the events of chapters 7-9, especially Jesus' dialogue with the Pharisees after healing the blind man. The second discourse of chapter 10 was given at least three months later at the "Feast of Dedication" and is also related to controversy and questions from the Jews (vv. 22-39). The chapter concludes with verses 40-42 which note Jesus' brief trip to an area east of the Jordan river.

One of the most striking things about this section of Scripture is the subject matter in contrast to all that has preceded it. The contrast: after all that has transpired in the previous chapters that perhaps covers a period of approximately 48 hours and that has included virulent opposition and hatred toward Jesus by the Pharisees, Jesus enters into a discourse with the Pharisees in this chapter which He illustrates the compassion that He will show toward His own. The Pharisees had just excommunicated a man to whom Jesus had given sight.

The Pharisees should have acted as shepherds, but instead treated the blind man as if he were a criminal or outcast. They robbed him of his rightful privilege of being a part of the community of faith (9:22, 34). Also, the man did not listen to the Pharisees and go along with their misguided direction because in Jesus' analogy, they were the "stranger" (9:25-34 cf. 10:5) whose voice the sheep did not recognize. The uneducated man of the lowest status with no worldly position knew the voice of the true Shepherd.

The Shepherd in Scripture and in Israel

Shepherds and sheep were very prominent in the history and day-to-day life of Israel. It is not surprising that Jesus would have used a parable involving the shepherd and the sheep at some point in His ministry. Sheep have perhaps the greatest herd mentality of any of God's creatures. I have heard that if sheep are being moved and one sheep jumps to avoid stepping in a hole or to get over a fallen branch, all the other sheep behind that sheep will jump to avoid that same obstacle even if the first sheep was mistaken and the obstacle was not really there. They are easily frightened and they are totally dependent upon the shepherd to get them to green pastures where they can find food and water.

The Theme of the Shepherd in the Old Testament

Genesis 49:22-24 – Perhaps the earliest reference in Hebrew Scripture to the Messiah as the Shepherd is found in the following passage which we have studied in our prophecy series.

Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (***from there is the Shepherd***, the Stone of Israel). (Ge 49:22-24)

In this passage, there are several allusions that need to be explained in order for us to appreciate the significance of this passage, especially the reference to the shepherd as it relates to our subject:

- Jacob took up the promise of **fruitfulness** from the name of Joseph's son *Ephraim* (which means *fruitful*) and "lavished the promise of victory (Gen. 49:23-24a) and

- prosperity (v. 25b) on Joseph's two tribes."¹ "In the branches running over the wall we see the blessing reaching out to include the Gentles, outside the Jewish wall."² "Joseph is the type of our Lord as the One who was grieved and hated (Gen. 49:23) but who withstood every attack made upon Him."³
- ❑ The imagery of **archers** who shot at Joseph also had a more immediate allusion to Joseph's personal experience at the hands of his brothers and then the Egyptians.
 - ❑ The "**bow**" (v. 24) is another reference to the Messiah. He is referred to in this manner in Zechariah 10:4. With regard to Joseph, it is a reference to his strong character – a good strong bow is true, honest and shoots straight.
 - ❑ *The phrase – "the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" (v. 24) – is another reference to the Messiah. The term "shepherd" would have had great significance for a family such as Jacob's. A shepherd was despised in Egypt, but had great nobility of character in caring for his flock. David, Jesus' kingly predecessor, would later be selected from the obscurity of the fields tending the flock. A shepherd learned the principles of benevolent, self-sacrificial care.*⁴
 - ❑ The phrase – "the Stone of Israel" (v. 24) – is full of Messianic significance to Jacob and writers after Jacob in Israel's history.

Psalm 23 – Yahweh is pictured as the shepherd of David who cares for him and is the basis of his comfort, strength and provision.

Psalm 77:20 – Yahweh is described as leading His people "like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" as the Psalmist recounted the redemptive works of the Lord throughout Israel's history.

Isaiah 40:11 – the prophesied Messiah was pictured as a true Shepherd of those who belonged to Him – "He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young."

Jeremiah 23:1-4 and Ezekiel 34:1-10 – true and false shepherds of Israel are compared and the prophets warn Israel against following after the false shepherds.

'Woe to the *shepherds* who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!' says the Lord. Therefore, thus says the Lord God of Israel against the *shepherds* who feed My people: 'You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings,' says the Lord. 'But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. I will set up *shepherds* over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,' says the Lord. (Jer 23:1-4)

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Son of man, prophesy against the *shepherds* of Israel, prophesy and say to them, "'Thus says the Lord God to the *shepherds*: 'Woe to the *shepherds* of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the *shepherds* feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not

¹ John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1985), 99.

² Carl Armerding, "The Last Words of Jacob: Genesis 49," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 112:448 (October, 1955): 327.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Earl D. Radmacher, general editor, *The Nelson Study Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), footnote, 93.

strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no *shepherd*; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. *My sheep* wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, *My flock* was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.” Therefore, you *shepherds*, hear the word of the Lord: “As I live,” says the Lord God, “surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no *shepherd*, nor did My *shepherds* search for My flock, but the *shepherds* fed themselves and did not feed My flock” therefore, O *shepherds*, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against the *shepherds*, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the *sheep*, and the *shepherds* shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.” (Ezek 34:1-10)

Jeremiah 50:6 – On the eve of the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah attributed the state of the nation to the false shepherds who had gained authority over Gods’ flock.

My people have been lost sheep. Their *shepherds* have led them astray; they have turned them away on the mountains. (Jer 50:6)

Zechariah 11:10-17 – the Anti-Christ to come is pictured as a worthless *shepherd* in contrast to the true *Shepherd* Who was to be sold for thirty pieces of silver.

And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the Lord. Then I said to them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’ – that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter. Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. And the Lord said to me, ‘Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish *shepherd*. For indeed I will raise up a *shepherd* in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces. Woe to the worthless shepherd, who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm and against his right eye; his arm shall completely wither, and his right eye shall be totally blinded.’ (Zech 11:10-17)

The life of a Judean shepherd was very difficult and hard. Often the sheep would wander off and become exposed to dangers such as cliffs or ravenous animals such as lions, wolves, jackals, panthers, leopards, bears and hyenas. Robbers would attempt to steal sheep from the flock. At the end of the day, the shepherd would hold his rod or staff low to the ground in order to force the sheep to pass under the rod to enter the sheepfold (see Lev 27:32 and Ezek 20:37). This allowed the shepherd to examine the sheep to determine if it had any wound or ailment needing attention. The good shepherd would even risk his own life to save the life of one of his sheep. As a shepherd, David fought at least one lion and one bear while protecting his flock (1 Sam 17:34-35, 37). According to rabbinic law or tradition, a shepherd was not called upon to expose his own life for the safety of his flock, nor was he even responsible in such a case.⁵ This is quite a contrast to David and David’s descendant, Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

⁵ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (United States: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 607.

All of this history and culture would be in the frame of reference of Jesus' hearers when he called Himself the Good Shepherd thereby providing encouragement to the man formerly blind and warning against the false shepherds – the Jewish religious leaders.

These first 21 verses of chapter 10 contain three parables. In the first parable (vv. 1-6), Jesus contrasts false shepherds from true shepherds. In the second parable (vv. 7-10), Jesus compares Himself to the gate of the sheepfold. In the third (vv. 11-18), Jesus speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd.

Parable #1 - True and False Shepherds (vv. 1-6)

In this passage, Jesus corrects a misunderstanding about the authority of the Pharisees. He emphasizes the importance of His instruction with the phrase – “I tell you the truth” (v. 1). The Pharisees had not entered the sheepfold in the prescribed manner (v. 1 – “does not enter...by the door”), i.e. through faith in God's promises of saving mercy through the person of the Messiah. The Messiah and God's provision of salvation through Him was a gracious gift not to be earned through compliance with the Law.⁶ Because of their unbelief, they were false shepherds who misled their followers onto a treacherous path of dependency upon their own efforts to save themselves. Since they led the sheep along the wrong path, Jesus called them thieves and robbers of God's sheep (v. 1). The true sheep of God (e.g. the formerly blind man) would not heed the voice of a stranger (v. 5).

The allegory in this passage must not be pressed too hard; however, some other observations of this passage include: 1) the “doorkeeper” was the under shepherd who would permit the Shepherd access to the flock; 2) the “door” in this parable (vv. 1-6), as explained above, was God's “covenant-mercy and Gospel-promise – the door by which God had brought, and ever brings, His flock into His fold!”⁷; 3) the shepherd knew each of his sheep by name (cf. Isa 43:1; 49:15-16; 1 Co 8:3; Re 3:5); 4) the shepherd leads his sheep (v. 3) – when the Pharisees threw out the new believer, Jesus found him and led him away from the false shepherds; 5) the shepherd goes ahead of his sheep (v. 4) – this insures their safety and security (cf. Psa 78:52-53; Psa 23). The true shepherd puts out the sheep in order to feed them, whereas the false shepherd puts out the sheep in order to rid themselves of trouble.

Parable #2 – Jesus as the Gate (vv. 7-10)

Jesus gave this second illustration or parable because those who heard the first parable did not understand (v. 6) the first. In the previous parable, the “door” or “gate” represented those promises of God's mercy through the Messiah that were represented in Jesus. In this parable, the “door” or “gate” is Jesus Himself. Jesus had to be more explicit so that He could be sure they understood. In some sheepfolds, the shepherd himself served as the gate. He would lie down in front of the entry opening to an area bordered by rough, stone walls or some other material. Therefore, in this metaphor, Jesus is both the Shepherd and the gate.

All the Old Testament institutions, prophecies, and promises, so far as they referred to access into God's fold, meant Christ. And all those who went before Him, pretending to be the door – whether Pharisees, Sadducees, or Nationalists – were only thieves and robbers: that was not the door into the Kingdom of God.⁸

In verse 9, Jesus builds upon his previous parable. When He states – “if anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture” – He is alluding to the fact that if anyone enters by a different means, he has climbed over the wall like a thief or a robber. To be

⁶ Ibid., 605.

⁷ Ibid., 606.

⁸ Ibid.

outside the gate and apart from the Shepherd was equivalent to spiritual death; whereas to be inside the gate through the Shepherd meant spiritual life (cf. Jn 5:24; Eph 2:1). To go in and out of the sheepfold meant to be able to move unmolested and described a life that was under the care and protection of the Shepherd. In Israel's history, this had great significance. A true leader took responsibility to go before the people and guide and protect them at the same time (Num 27:17 cf. Psa 121:8).

Parable #3 – Jesus is the Good Shepherd (vv. 11-21)

In our interpretation of this passage, we need to be careful to distinguish between the dispensational and doctrinal aspects of Christ's life and ministry. This passage is dispensationally set within the Age of Israel and is directed to Israelites as the primary focus of Jesus' ministry. Jesus' words in verse 16 – "other sheep I have which are not of this fold" – has been interpreted by traditional dispensational theologians as well as other theologians to be a reference to the Gentiles of the present Church Age. "The great blunder of the Church has ever been to identify itself with Israel, appropriating to itself the Israel promises, and leaving only the curses to the Israel to whom the promises were made."⁹ On the other hand, I do not accept the interpretation that Jesus was referring to Himself as one Shepherd over two folds (i.e. the Northern and Southern kingdoms) of Israel.¹⁰ Rather, there is abundant evidence in the Old Testament that the kingdom over which the Messiah will reign would include Gentiles who have believed in Jesus.

For example, in the Psalms alone, note the following phrases that include the terms and phrases "nations," "peoples," "ends of the earth," and "whole earth." I have bolded those that have special emphasis upon the inclusion of Gentiles in the ultimate reign of our Lord.

The Phrase "Nations" in the Psalms

Psa 2:1 – Why do the nations rage (against the Messiah's triumph and kingdom)

Psa 2:8 – Ask of Me and I will give you the nations (the Messiah's triumph and kingdom)

Psa 9:5 – You have rebuked the nations (thanksgiving with Messianic overtones)

Psa 9:17 – The wicked shall be turned into hell, all the nations that forget God (thanksgiving with Messianic overtones)

Psa 9:19 – Let the nations be judged in your sight (thanksgiving with Messianic overtones)

Psa 9:20 – That the nations may know themselves to be just men (thanksgiving with Messianic overtones)

Psa 10:16 – The Lord is King forever and ever; the nations have perished out of His land (a Psalm of confidence that the Lord will ultimately triumph; Messianic overtones)

Psa 18:43 – You have made me the head of the nations; a people I have not known will serve me (a strong Messianic reference)

Psa 18:49 – Therefore, I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the Gentiles (Psalm of trust – here Gentiles is used instead of nations in the NKJV)

Psa 22:27 – And all the families of the nations shall worship before You (very Messianic Psalm)

Psa 22:28 – And He rules over the nations (very Messianic Psalm)

Psa 33:10 – The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing (creation and sovereignty Psalm)

Psa 44:2 – You drove out the nations with Your hand (celebration of the Exodus)

Psa 44:11 – You have scattered us among the nations (celebration of the Exodus)

Psa 44:14 – You make us a byword among the nations (celebration of the Exodus)

Psa 46:6 – The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted (God is the refuge to Tribulation believers just prior to the break of the dawn of the Millennium)

⁹ Charles F. Baker, *Understanding the Gospels, A Different Approach* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: 1978), 166.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Psa 46:10 – I will be exalted among the nations (a Messianic reference)

Psa 47:3 – He will subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet (a praise Psalm with Messianic overtones)

Psa 47:8 – God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne (praise Psalm with Messianic overtones)

Psa 57:9 – I will sing to You among the nations (Prayer for safety from enemies)

Psa 59:5 – O Lord God, awake and punish all the nations (the assured judgment of the wicked)

Psa 59:8 – You shall have all the nations in derision (the assured judgment of the wicked)

Psa 66:7 – His eyes observe the nations (Psalm of praise)

Psa 67:2 – Your salvation among all nations (Psalm of praise with Messianic overtones)

Psa 67:4 – Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! (Psalm of praise with Messianic overtones)

Psa 72:11 – All nations shall serve Him (Messianic)

Psa 72:17 – All nations shall call Him blessed (Messianic)

Psa 78:55 – He also drove out the nations before them (a Psalm of remembrance of God's faithfulness to Israel)

Psa 79:1 – O God, the nations have come into your inheritance (a Psalm of prayer for Israel that had been destroyed by enemies for God to vindicate her and Himself)

Psa 79:6 – Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not know You (prayer for vindication)

Psa 79:10 – Why should the nations say (prayer for vindication)

Psa 80:8 – You have cast out the nations and planted a vine brought out of Egypt (an appeal for repentance)

Psa 82:8 – Arise, O God, judge the earth; for You shall inherit all nations (Psalm pleading for justice with the acknowledgment that ultimately God will rule over all the nations)

Psa 86:9 – All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You (a prayer for mercy with meditation on the excellencies of the Lord)

Psa 94:10 – He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct (God as the refuge of the righteous)

Psa 96:3 – Declare His glory among the nations (a praise Psalm with Messianic overtones)

Psa 96:10 – Say among the nations, The Lord reigns (a praise Psalm with Messianic overtones)

Psa 98:2 – His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations (a praise Psalm with Messianic overtones)

Psa 102:15 – So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord (a prayer of the afflicted remembering that the Lord is a God of eternal love with Messianic overtones)

Psa 105:44 – And they inherited the labor of the nations (a Psalm recalling the eternal faithfulness of the Lord in Israel's past)

Psa 106:27 – To overthrow their descendants among the nations (a Psalm of joy acknowledging God's forgiveness of Israel's past sins)

Psa 106:35 – But they mingled with the Gentiles (here, Gentiles is used in the NKJV instead of nations)

Psa 106:41 – And He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles

Psa 106:47 – And gather us from among the Gentiles

Psa 108:3 – And I will sing praises to You among the nations (Assurance of God's victory over Israel's enemies)

Psa 110:6 – He shall judge among the nations (Messianic)

Psa 111:6 – In giving them the heritage of the nations (a Psalm of praise)

Psa 113:4 – The Lord is high above all nations (a Psalm of praise)

Psa 115:2 – Why should the Gentiles say, "So where is their God?" (the superiority of the Lord; NKJV uses Gentiles)

Psa 117:1 – Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles (Praise; NKJV uses Gentiles)

Psa 118:10 – All nations surround me, but in the name of the Lord, I will destroy them (a Psalm of praise)

Psa 126:2 – Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them" (a Psalm of praise)

Psa 135:10 – He defeated many nations (a Psalm of praise)

Psa 135:15 – The idols of the nations are silver and gold (a Psalm of praise)

Psa 149:7 – To execute vengeance on the nations (a Psalm of praise)

The Phrase “Peoples” in the Psalms

Psa 2:1 – Why do the nations rage (Messiah’s Triumph)

Psa 7:7 – So the congregation of the peoples shall surround you (Messianic hope of David)

Psa 7:8 – The Lord shall judge the peoples (Messianic hope of David)

Psa 9:8 – He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness (Thanksgiving with Messianic overtones)

Psa 9:11 – Declare His deeds among the people (Thanksgiving with Messianic overtones)

Psa 18:47 – God subdues the peoples under me (Psalm of trust)

Psa 33:10 – The Lord makes the plans of the peoples to no effect (creation and sovereignty Psalm)

Psa 44:2 – You afflicted the peoples and cast them out (celebration of the Exodus)

Psa 44:14 – You make us a byword among the nations and a shaking of the head among the peoples

Psa 45:5 – The peoples fall under you (the conquering Messiah at the beginning of the Second Advent)

Psa 45:17 – The people shall praise you forever and ever

Psa 47:1 – Clap your hands all you peoples (Messianic)

Psa 47:3 – He will subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet (Messianic)

Psa 49:1 – Hear this all peoples (Psalm against the confidence of the foolish)

Psa 56:7 – In anger, cast down the peoples, O God (Prayer for relief from tormentors)

Psa 57:9 – I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples (Prayer for safety from enemies)

Psa 65:7 – You [God] Who still the noise of the seas and the tumult of the peoples

Psa 66:8 – O bless our God you peoples (Psalm of praise)

Psa 67:3 – Let the peoples praise You, O God (Psalm of praise with Messianic overtones)

Psa 67:4 – You shall judge the people righteously

Psa 67:5 – Let the peoples praise you

Psa 68:30 – Scatter the peoples who delight in war (Praise with Messianic references)

Psa 77:14 – You have declared Your strength among the peoples (a Psalm of a troubled believer who is recounting the redemptive work of God among His people)

Psa 87:6 – The Lord will record the spiritual birthplace of believers as Zion when He registers the peoples (Psalm with Messianic overtones)

Psa 89:50 – Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants – how I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples (a Psalm lamenting the fact that David’s descendants had not remained faithful to the provisions of the Davidic covenant)

Psa 96:5 – For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens (Psalm celebrating conditions associated with the 2nd Coming of the Messiah and the Messianic reign to follow)

Psa 96:7 – Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples (Messianic Psalm)

Psa 96:10 – He shall judge the peoples righteously (Messianic Psalm)

Psa 96:13 – He shall judge the peoples with His truth (Messianic Psalm)

Psa 97:6 – The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory (Praise Psalm with definite Messianic overtones)

Psa 98:9 – He will judge the earth, the world, and the peoples with equity (Messianic Psalm)

Psa 99:2 – The Lord is great in Zion and He is high above all the peoples (Praise with Messianic overtones)

Psa 102:22 – When the peoples are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord (a Psalm of penitence with Messianic overtones)

Psa 105:1 – Make known His deeds among the peoples (a Psalm of praise to the Lord for what He has done on Israel’s behalf)

Psa 106:34 – They did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them (a wisdom Psalm recounting God’s merciful acts toward Israel)

Psa 108:3 – I will praise you, O Lord among the peoples (a Psalm of David praising God for the certainty of God’s victory over His enemies)

Psa 117:1 – Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples (the shortest Psalm, a Psalm of praise)

Psa 148:11 – Kings of the earth and all peoples (a Psalm calling for all of creation to praise the Lord)

Psa 149:7 – To execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples (a Psalm of praise to God for His salvation and judgment)

The Phrase “Ends of the Earth”

Psa 2:8 – If you ask, I will give you the nations and the ends of the earth (the Messiah’s triumph)

Psa 22:27 – All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord (the Messianic kingdom)

Psa 48:10 – Your praise is to the ends of the earth (the Messianic kingdom)

Psa 59:13 – Consume them and let them know that God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth (the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom at the 2nd Advent)

Psa 65:5 – O God of our salvation, the confidence of all the ends of the earth (a creation Psalm)

Psa 65:8 – Those who dwell in the ends of the earth are afraid of your signs (a creation Psalm)

Psa 67:7 – All the ends of the earth shall fear Him (a psalm of praise urging the nations to join Israel in honoring the Creator)

Psa 72:8 – He shall have dominion from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth (Messianic overtones)

Psa 98:3 – All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God (Praise with Messianic overtones)

Psa 135:7 – He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth (Creation Praise Psalm)

The Phrase “Whole Earth”

Psa 48:2 – Jerusalem is the joy of the whole earth (a Messianic reference)

Psa 72:19 – Let the whole earth be filled with His glory (the Messiah’s reign)

Psa 97:5 – The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth (the events surrounding the 2nd Advent)

The false shepherds of Israel, like the bad shepherds in the field, were not interested in the well being of the sheep. They were only interested what they could get out of the arrangement – power, approbation, fame, position, or money. When trouble came, it was every man for himself. Contrast these shepherds with the actions of Moses, David, and ultimately Jesus. Note the following characteristics of the good shepherd in this passage:

- He knows His own sheep (v. 14)
- His own sheep know Him (v. 14)
- The Good Shepherd knows God perfectly as God knows Him (v. 15)
- The Good Shepherd sacrificially dies for the sheep (v. 15)
- The Good Shepherd seeks Gentile sheep also (v. 16)
- The Good Shepherd is loved by His Father (v. 17)
- The Good Shepherd always had the hope of the resurrection in mind (v. 17)
- The Good Shepherd obeyed His Father’s command (v. 18) – this was in obedience to the Father’s purpose for Him (Eph 5:2; Phil 2:8)
- The Good Shepherd had power to lay down His life and take it up again (v. 18) – this especially made Him unique