

TIME TO SWITCH SHEPHERDS

John 10:1-21 / "Yeshua" §104

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Next Week: Communion Message

Part 1.	The Coming of the King
Part 2.	The Authentication of the King
Part 3.	The Controversy over the King
Part 4.	The Training of the Twelve by the King
Part 5.	The Opposition to the King:
→	Time To Switch Shepherds
Part 6.	The Preparation of the Disciples by the King
Part 7.	The Official Presentation of the King
Part 8.	The Preparation for the Death of the King
Part 9.	The Trial of the King:
Part 10.	The Death of the King
Part 11.	The Resurrection and the Ascension of the King
Part 12.	The Sequels

Following on the heels of Jesus' healing of the man born blind, he goes into an extended figure of speech, in which he identified himself as a few different pictures, sourced in the Jewish culture of sheep and shepherding. As we study this passage today, we will clearly see what Jesus is communicating about himself and his listeners, as

well as what it has to do with the healing of the blind man in chapter 9, and the subsequent response of the Jewish community, particularly, the Pharisees.

The image of sheep and shepherd is very prominent throughout the Old Testament scriptures, and was very familiar to Jesus' Jewish audience. Yet, despite their familiarity with the picture, these Jewish leaders struggled to understand exactly what Jesus was trying to communicate (see 10:6), as a result Jesus came at this teaching from two different starting points. Though he came at this truth two different ways, there was a singular message to all who would hear... it was time to switch shepherds.

MARKS OF A FALSE SHEPHERD

In these two pictures it becomes clear that there are those who are pretending to be the "shepherds" of Israel. Jesus used a number of things to help define them. They were: climbing into the sheepfold another way (v1), strangers whose voice the sheep don't recognize (v5), thieves and robbers (v8), coming to steal, kill and destroy (v10), a hired hand who abandons the sheep when the wolves come because he doesn't care for them (vv12-13). These false shepherds, who Jesus was describing, had no real care or concern for the sheep, they thought only of themselves and their own interests. There is no relationship between these false shepherds and the sheep, and when they do try to lead the sheep anywhere the sheep flee from them.

It is no coincidence that this follows right after the situation with the healing of the blind man. Jesus followed up that incident with this discussion about true vs false shepherds, because it perfectly illustrated the way that the religious "shepherds" related to their "flock". Let's take a quick look to see the marks of a false shepherd.

In 9:16 we see that these religious leaders of Israel were far more concerned that Jesus had directly violated the Oral Law, than they were thrilled to see one of their "sheep" healed from a life of blindness! In fact, there is no indication that they cared about his healing AT ALL!!! In verse 18 they dismissed and doubted the man's testimony, even though he had been brought there with a group of people testifying that

he indeed was the man born blind. This perfectly illustrated what Jesus was saying about the sheep not knowing the false shepherds. There was no caring relationship between these leaders and the people, just distrust, manipulation and control. We see this even more clearly when they interview the man's parents. The parents are unwilling to say very much out of fear! (9:22-23) They are afraid to celebrate the miraculous healing of their son because these false shepherds had instilled a very real fear into the people about getting kicked out of the synagogue if anyone "should confess Jesus to be Christ". These Pharisees ruled their sheep with fear and power and manipulation. At the end of their interaction, these fears prove to be well warranted, as they violently rejected the truth from the healed man, verbally assaulted him and cast him out of the synagogue (9:31-34). Lastly, when interacting with Jesus, they were blinded by their pride and self-righteousness (9:40-41). These were the marks of the current "shepherds" of Israel, these were clearly false shepherds and the time had come for the people to abandon them and follow the true and Good Shepherd, Yeshua.

MARKS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In sharp contrast, Jesus revealed how he, the Good Shepherd, relates to his sheep. They hear and know his voice, he calls them by name and they follow him (vv3-4), he is the only way into the pasture (v9), he came to bring abundant life to the sheep (v10), he would lay down his life for the sheep (vv11, 15, 17-18), his care extends to other sheep (the gentiles) and he will bring them in and make one fold (v16), he knows, is loved by, and has authority from the Father (vv15, 17-18).

Jesus came to fulfill the role of shepherd that the Pharisees of Israel had stolen away and corrupted. Jesus came to lead, provide and protect his sheep, and the ultimate way he was going to do that was by intentionally laying down his life for the sheep. This truth that Jesus revealed to them is the fulfillment of the sacrifice system in his death and resurrection. Those who are familiar with the New Testament, will probably be very familiar with Jesus as the sacrificial lamb, giving his life as a sacrifice, but here his point is that he, as the shepherd, would give his life to rescue the sheep. We can once again look back just a few verses (9:35) to see Jesus' actions in sharp contrast to the Pharisees. Jesus had heard that the man had been cast out from his "fold" by the Pharisees, and he went to find him and spiritually lead and provide for him in a way that the Pharisees had no desire to do. Not too much has changed from then till now, so let us be diligent to look for the marks of true shepherds in those we follow in our spiritual lives.

Grace Family Needs, News and Notes

Voice of the Martyrs virtual event @ GCC, March 5th @ 6:30pm.

Head over to gccramona.com for more information and to register.

