

The Gospel of John - Seven I Am Sayings Session 4

John 10:11 "I am the GOOD SHEPHERD. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

John 10:14-15 "I am the GOOD SHEPHERD I know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father."

These verses are literally right on the heels of the "I am the gate" sayings. The way the chapter started I would have thought Jesus was going to mention the good shepherd first.

There are a lot of connections to the Old Testament with the Shepherd image. Of course the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Loads of other Psalms. Isaiah, Ezekiel all have shepherd images of God. You could say the Old Testament is chock full of shepherds and sheep.

The familiarity of the shepherd image is most likely why Jesus would use it in one of his I am sayings. The people would have been very familiar with seeing God as their shepherd. Now Jesus is inserting himself in that frame.

"I lay my life down for the sheep." As the end of verse 15 is reminding his listeners once more why he has come into the world.

Different point of view from Matthew Mark and Luke

In John's Gospel Jesus is never heard saying to his followers, "If you want to be my disciple you must deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow me." In John's Gospel, Jesus alone does the suffering and sacrifice.

Although the other Gospels use Shepherd imagery, they do not call Jesus the good shepherd. Jesus uses a shepherd story to talk about how much God loves his sheep; Luke 15.

An interesting note: the title, Pastor, which we use at Lord of Life, as do most denominations, is from a Latin word that means: Shepherd.

Jesus is not using this phrase to separate himself from other "bad Shepherds" like in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jesus is seen as laying it open to his hearers to understand that there are good sheep and bad sheep. Good sheep are those "in the fold", that is, they listen to his voice, as in verse 16.

At the same time Jesus is reaching out to those outside Judaism. The Gentiles are included in this understanding of sheep.

Christology

Getting back to the subject of the Study of Christ, one of the telltale signs of Christology in John's Gospel is this need to include the Father seemingly every time Jesus talks about himself.

In our I am saying today, in verse 14-15, "I am the good shepherd I know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father." Why the need to stress this relationship? Because the Jews were not used to hearing about Father God. This repeated phrase not only develops this new concept of God, it establishes Jesus as God.

Fully human – fully Divine – one of the many issues of Christology. It is a matter of faith to most of us. But there are those that need to dissect and dissect some more to figure out exactly how that works.

This topic will come up in our next session on the 5th I am saying: **"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live even though they die. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die."** John 11:25

A correction on the video: I used the wrong dates for the writing of the Gospel of Mark. Written 50-70AD.