



Gracestoration

Update

"Restoring people in God's grace and making disciples"

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Shepherd

Chronology [Part 2]

Jesus the Designate Shepherd Fulfilling the Covenant

Jesus, in speaking to his disciples in the Upper Room, quoted the prophet Zechariah in Mark 14:27, **"It is written, I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."** Jesus understood that as the Son of God, His Father would lay on him the 'iniquity of us all' (see Isa. 53:6). He also wanted his disciples to know that his blood was soon to be shed for their sins, **"This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many"** (Mark 14:24). Previously he had reminded them of his purpose in coming into the world, **"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"** (Mark 10:45). This was fully demonstrated by His death on the cross of Calvary.

Jesus Christ became the fulfillment of God's promise of a shepherd after God's heart. **'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM... OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL'** (Matt. 2:6). When John the Baptist first saw Jesus he declared, **"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"** (Jn. 1:29). Peter acknowledges Jesus, **"As of a Lamb unblemished and spotless"** (1 Pet. 1:19), and Paul confirms, **"For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed"** (1 Cor. 5:7).

Jesus Himself said, **"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."**

have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd" (Jn. 10:14:16).

Jesus, **"Seeing the multitude, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd"** (Matt. 9:36).



Jesus told the following parable highlighting His value of sheep [His people], **"What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to**

them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Lk. 15:4-7).

Too Valuable to Lose

"The ninety-nine are left in the wilderness. They are certainly left with undershepherds and quite likely in a cave. Yet, is it wise to leave the ninety-nine and wander away searching for the one? . . . Indeed, it is the shepherd's willingness to go after the one that gives the ninety-nine their real security. If the one is sacrificed in the name of the larger group, then each individual in the group is insecure. He knows that he too is of little value. If lost, he too will be left to die. **When the shepherd pays a high price to find the one, he thereby offers the profoundest security to the many.**" (Quoted from The Cross and The Prodigal by Kenneth E. Bailey.)

Jesus reiterates His purpose, **"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"** (Lk. 19:10).

Jesus Christ our Great Shepherd fulfills that which He designed and covenanted for His people before the foundation of the world.

Jesus' Charge to His Undershepherds Today

Jesus identified His design for undershepherds. His leaders are designed to shepherd Jesus' sheep by tending, i.e. caring, feeding and protecting them. Jesus said to Peter, **"Simon, . . . do you love Me? ...Tend**

My lambs; Again a second time, Simon, . . . do you love Me? ... Shepherd My sheep.' He said to him the third time, Simon, . . . , do you love Me...Tend My sheep" (Jn. 21:15-17).

Obviously, Jesus' purpose for Christian leaders was to shepherd His people as He did., but they are still Jesus' sheep!

Jesus' Warning of Predators: *"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. "You will know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:15-16). Jesus identifies these false prophets as predators, thieves and robbers in sheep's clothing.*

The Apostle Peter's Charge to the Elders: *"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you... shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (1 Pet. 5:1-4).*

The Apostle Peter's Warning: *"False prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words" (2 Pet. 2:1-3).*

The Apostle Paul's Charge, *"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood... Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Act. 20:18-32).*

The Apostle Paul's Warning, *"I know that after my departure savage*

wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Act. 20:29-30). "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (Col. 2:8).

The Apostle John's Charge, *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world... We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 Jn. 4:1-6).*

The Apostle John's Warning, *"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 Jn. 7-9).*

Undershepherds of Today

We live in a world that is very much like the end of the period of the judges. This is an age where *"everyone did what was right in his own eyes"* (Judg. 21:25). This is also an age where the enemy of our soul is reaping much havoc among Christians and their leaders. The church, missions and all Christian ministries need the undershepherding leaders who are responding to the Good Shepherd's shepherding in their own lives today!

We can take comfort in the fact that God has fulfilled His **eternal covenant** in us who believe in Jesus Christ His Son!

*"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the **eternal covenant**, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20-21).*

We pray that God will continue to raise up present-day undershepherds through whom He may fulfill His covenantal design for His sheep today!

The Memorial Day Retreat

was a spiritual blessing with fifty in attendance. Our theme was "Salty Christianity," based on the verse, *"You are the **salt of the earth**; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men"* (Matt. 5:13).

Dottie began with the 'salt of the earth' (people of influence) by tracing the history of the message of grace as taught by C.H. Spurgeon, D.L. Moody, and Paul Rader to our present day.

Bob and Deedra taught on how salt used in the Scriptures illustrated the Christian's savory, daily walk with Christ, *"who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place"* (2 Cor. 2:14).

Note a few comments from the retreat:

"Each day was an adventure, one building on the other. I expect to continue to grow from the teaching."

"God has shown me new aspects of His Word that are precious and invite more consideration."

"The salt motif was well developed and applied."

"Thank you for stressing the difference between 'committing' and 'entrusting' oneself to the Lord!"

The burden or responsibility is on God as we release ourselves to Him."