

Chapter 1 : Flock Definition and Meaning - Bible Dictionary

You are My flock, the sheep of My pasture, My people, and I am your God,' declares the Lord GOD." New American Standard Bible "As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God," declares the Lord GOD.

The Lord is my Shepherd Sheep are mentioned in the Bible more than times, more than any other animal. The prominence of sheep in the Bible grows out of two realities. Sheep were important to the nomads and agricultural life of the Hebrews and similiar peoples. Biblical shepherds Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel also brought an offering -- fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. Abraham and Moses were shepherds. King David was the best known shepherd of Bible history. He wrote the beloved Psalm Shepherds were the first people to see the newborn Jesus Christ. The Prophet Mohammed worked as a shepherd when he was 8 years old. A close relationship My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. The sheep recognize the voice of the shepherd. They follow him or her. The shepherd protects his flock and would give his life for them. It is known that animals can instantly recognize the voice of a familiar trusted person. Sheep have excellent memories for faces. They remember their handler. They also remember people who inflict abuse upon them. There is a commonly-held belief that shepherds in Biblical times would break the legs of lambs that constantly wandered away. While there is no way to know for certain what Biblical shepherds did, there is no such story in the Bible, and to do so would be cruel and impractical. In many homes, a lamb-shaped cake decorates the table. Many Eastern Orthodox Christians hang pictures of the Easter lamb in their homes. Sacrificial lamb Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. He was willing to do so, but God gave him a sheep ram to sacrifice instead of his son Christians and Jews believe that the life of Isaac was saved, while Muslims believe that it was Ismael that was nearly sacrificed on the alter. Jews and Arabs trace their heritage to Isaac and Ismael, respectively. The festival is called Eid al-Adha. Its English translation is "Festival of Sacrifice. The sheep have to meet certain age requirements at least one year of age and quality standards unblemished. The meat is shared with family and friends and distributed to the poor. Aqeeqah aqiqah The Muslim "equivalent" to Christian Baptism is aqeeqah, which occurs 7 days after the birth of a child. As a symbol of thanksgiving for the gift of a child from God, a sacrifice is performed. Two sheep which resemble each other, are to be sacrificed for a boy and one for a girl. The meat is shared with family, friends, and the poor. Spotted sheep So that very day, Laban went out and formed a flock for Jacob. He took from his herds all the male goats that were ringed and spotted. He also included the females that were speckled and spotted with any white patches, and all of the black sheep. Some claim that Jacobs of today descend directly from the sheep raised by Jacob, that traveled from Palestine to Egypt and to Spain via the coast of North Africa and Morocco. Separating the sheep from the goats He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Sheep are the followers of Christ, while goats chose not to follow Christ. The parable is based on the differences in behavior between sheep and goats. Sheep are gentle, quiet, innocent animals. They do not give their shepherds a lot of problems. They are easily led. Sheep are grazers, unlike the goat, which likes to browse. In the Bible, goats are sometimes used to symbolize evil.

Chapter 2 : "The flock of God."

In CHRISTIANITY MAGAZINE, January , there was an article under the above heading. Since the word "flock" above is in the singular, it sounds like God has only one flock, but apparently the writer does not believe this.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God.

Chapter 3 : The Assembly, Figuratively Speaking (4): God's Flock | Truth & Tidings

∅ A group of sheep is referred to as a mob or a flock. ∅ The average life-span of a sheep is about 7- 9 years although some live longer. ∅ Some have been known to live as long as 20 years.

Please note this article is included for interest only, it is not suitable for serious study as precise accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Please keep in mind that information included on this website has been researched to the best of my ability and any misinformation is quite by accident but is of course possible. The difference between myth and religion of course depends on ones own personal perspective and beliefs. I will discuss the significance of sheep in mythology and religions both modern and ancient. I have chosen several well known and one or two less known examples of the role of sheep in religion and mythology. God or more correctly, Yahweh, referred to in Judaism and Christianity and Allah are of course the same deity. Sheep are common symbols in both mythology and religion. The ancient civilisations where polytheistic believing in many Gods. Many of these ancient peoples worshipped animals as Gods, used animals to symbolically represent their gods and believed that these gods could shape shift to assume the form of an animal. The ancient Sumerians, approximately BC to , who are thought to have developed the first form of writing in the ancient world Cuneiform script immortalised sheep through religion in the form of gods and goddesses whose sphere of activity was to guard and represent flocks. The most prominent and powerful was Duttur sheep goddess and protector of flocks, a Mother Goddess of both Dumuzi, also Lord of shepherds and the flocks, and Gestinanna although an oracular goddess associated with the interpretation of dreams also has associations with sheep and shepherding. The Sumerians had huge flocks of sheep, and sheep where important for meat and clothing for the entire population, sheep where the most important part of the economy as they were in many ancient cultures. Likewise The Egyptians also valued sheep, they were dependent on sheep for milk, meat, clothing and to provide manure to fertilise the land. Right from the earliest times the Egyptians worshipped animals and at various periods held certain animals to be sacred and as representations of their gods and goddesses. Many graves of ancient Egyptian people have been found which include the remains of animals wrapped in cloth, including sheep. Concerning sheep in the religious context of Egypt, the God Khnum had the head of a ram. Revered as the most important of the gods he was believed to have been self created and it was he who made the first egg from which arose all of creation in its entirety. Rams heads have been found in ancient Neolithic shrines in Catal Huyuk in Ancient Turkey suggesting some religious significance. The Greeks, Romans, and other cultures set significant store in the sacrifice of animals as an act of propitiation or worship in order to placate the gods and no doubt sheep where included amongst the animals deemed suitable as sacrificial offerings. In Greek culture according to mythology the gods took delight in human sacrifice but seemingly were willing to accept a substitute of an animal sacrifice with a few drops of human blood symbolically added. A fine example of Roman artwork constructed in marble it dates from the first half of the 1st century AD. Courtesy of Marie-Lan Nguyen.

Chapter 4 : Gods flock | One flock NOT many

Scattered Like Sheep Prophecies Concerning Christ God With Christ Sheep Names And Titles For Christ "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones.

It is the verb used in John There can be hardly any doubt that St. Peter was thinking of that scene when he issued these directions. Our Lord had committed into his hands all His sheep and lambs, without restriction of age or country, to be fed and shepherded; and now the time was approaching when he would have to "put off this tabernacle" 2Peter 1: He still shepherds the flock by proxy. Two other points must be mentioned, which bring this passage into connection with the charge given by St. Paul to the Ephesian elders Acts Peter calls it "the flock of God. Peter is in remembrance how Christ had said, "Feed My sheep. Though there were many elders in Ephesus, there was but one flock they fed between them. So now, all over Asia Minor, it was but one flock. Peter, to whom the flock throughout the whole world was committed, saw it as a whole, but the elders to whom he writes had only to look to that part of the one flock which was "among them. Taking the oversight thereof. If they do, the translation unduly limits the meaning, which would be better expressed by "maintaining or, exercising the oversight," or "performing the duties of bishops," for he is addressing men who were already ordained. By this time the word "bishop" had not become a fixed title of one special office, though the office itself was in existence. Not by constraint, but willingly. It is hardly to be thought that St. Peter had in view the humility which led men to adopt such strange methods of avoiding the responsibility of the priesthood as we find resorted to by Chrysostom and Ambrose. Much more probably he is thinking of the actual danger to life and property of being "ringleaders of the sect" Acts He is not treating of the motives which should lead a man to accept the position. He speaks to persons who already hold the office, and urges them not to leave the flock, like hirelings, when they see the persecution coming on. Several of the best authorities add," but willingly, according to God. Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Some, who had no fears, might be tempted to retain the office by the good salary which the Church gave, or might threaten to resign if their salaries were not raised in proportion to their risk. The "ready mind," of which the Apostle speaks, means the love of the work itself, which should be the sole motive in seeking, or performing, the gospel ministry. Pulpit Commentary Verse 2. Peter wished to concentrate into one point of view all the labors of the ministerial life. Bernard, quoted by Alford. Peter lays stress upon the solemn fact that the flock belongs to God, not to the shepherds comp. Paul says 1 Corinthians 9: Bede, quoted by Alford, says, "Coacte pascit gregem, qui propter rerum temporalium penurium non habens unde vivat, idcirco praedicat evangelium ut de evangelio vivere possit. Not for filthy lucre. It would seem that, even in the apostolic age, there were sometimes such opportunities of gain see Titus 1: Peter uses a strong word in condemnation of such a motive. But of a ready mind. Matthew Henry Commentary 5: He does not claim power to rule over all pastors and churches. These poor, dispersed, suffering Christians, were the flock of God, redeemed to God by the great Shepherd, living in holy love and communion, according to the will of God. Christ is the chief Shepherd of the whole flock and heritage of God. And all faithful ministers will receive a crown of unfading glory, infinitely better and more honourable than all the authority, wealth, and pleasure of the world.

Chapter 5 : 25 Important Bible Verses About Sheep

CHURCH OF CHRIST SERMONS: A SHEEP IN GOD'S FLOCK. I preached this lesson at the Faulkner University lectureship.

If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? Next slide Slide 4 Intro: Our acceptance comes only through the merits of Jesus Christ 2 Corinthians 5: The child of God will not follow when he hears the voice of strangers John It is encouraging to know that Christ knows each of His sheep by name. Unless we follow our Shepherd, we will go astray I Peter 2: In return for all He does for us, we should be useful to Him. We should be giving our all to the Lord Rom. Slide 10 Sheep Flock Together. It is the nature of sheep to want to be with the flock; and it is the nature of the believer to want to be with one another The New Testament knows nothing of isolated Christian living. We need to be steadfast. The isolated sheep is always in danger. Slide 12 Jesus As Shepherd: Slide 13 Intro-Part 2 These three titles tell about His ministry to us in the past, present and future. We must follow Him one step at a time, one day at a time. Slide 16 We must Stay Close to the Shepherd no matter whether He leads us to the green pastures or to the dark valley. He is with us in both places. We must always have our eyes on the Savior Heb. We must use it. All can do something for God. We must find our talent and use it for the Lord.

Chapter 6 : Shearing Sheep: Fleecing the Flock | Christian Treasury

Sheep in God's Flock-Why Does God Compare His People to Sheep? Text: John "Truly I tell you, anyone who doesn't enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice.

We are not responsible for all views posted on this website. Authors are solely responsible for the content of their articles. Linked material is the responsibility of the party who created it. Those sharing stories or testimonies are responsible for the content of comments. The opinions expressed in articles, linked materials, and comments are not necessarily those of wicked shepherds. This provides a simple way that the church can understand and relate to the love and care that a faithful shepherd has for his sheep and the innocent undoubting trust that the sheep have for their shepherd. A search of the Scriptures for the words shepherd and sheep will bring up an abundance of pertinent verses. Sadly, due to some very bad teachings and bad practices that are commonplace in many churches today, a lot of Christians miss the symbolic nature of the shepherd-sheep analogy and apply it almost literally in the area of pastoral authority. While the Bible teaches a symbolic analogy to be applied non-literally, the average modern pastor teaches a concrete under-shepherd scenario to be taken almost literally. The average modern pastor or elder goes way too far and paints a completely different picture than the Bible paints. These men, who are merely symbolic under-shepherds, go beyond that which is written and conveniently grant massive powers and privileges to themselves, power and privileges that Jesus simply does not grant them. A Little Common Sense Please! We know without a shadow of a doubt that we are human beings, not four legged animals that grow wool and graze on grass. More importantly, we know that Jesus is not a literal shepherd of any literal four legged grass-grazing sheep. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the Good Shepherd over Christians who are people, not farm animals. So even though Jesus is referred to as the Good Shepherd and even though Christians are referred to as sheep in the Bible, that does not mean that Jesus is a literal farm shepherd or that Christians are to be treated as literal sheep. While there are many passages that refer to Christians directly as sheep, we know this reference is only symbolic. Here is one verse that on its own demonstrates a clear comparison: For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. This is clearly just a comparison, not a one-to-one correlation. Those too are symbolic references that illustrate important spiritual truths. Does this mean that adults should behave with the immaturity of a child, when in 1Cor Jesus often focuses on one or two positive aspects or characteristics of an example for the purpose of illustration, in this case the sincere belief and trust that children have. Jesus is not licensing Christians to take any of the other characteristics of children and remain immature. We also know this because other Scriptures on the same subject clearly shows this. Sadly we have no shortage of those who run wild and beyond common sense into extremism and error on a wide variety of subjects. The Bible is not saying that Christians should be corralled and treated as subservient or less than human. But nevertheless this is exactly what we see going on today. Pastors bad pastors that is typically see themselves as the superior and wise humans the shepherds and, whether they admit it or not, they typically view the overall congregation as stupid animals the sheep. The sheep are instructed by those very shepherds not to question their doctrine or alleged authority. Those who have the good sense to question are marginalized as being rebellious and are often thrown out of their church. This is just one of many ways that these type of so-called pastors feed upon and devour the sheep. Israel had its share of bad shepherds as well, and as far as the results, we have basically the same kind of situation going on today: My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: 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 to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O you 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, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be food for them. Therefore thus says the

LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; You have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: In other words, they are not to be controlling. A Disturbing Church-World Parallel While God does not permit pastors to be controlling, literal sheep animals must be ruled and controlled otherwise they would run wild all over the countryside unattended and in danger of being eaten by wolves. Ironically, it is this very argument danger of wolves that these authoritarian leaders often misuse and capitalize upon to try to justify their heavy-handed control-based leadership approach to the total denial of what God and His Bible commands to the contrary. In many ways these men become the very wolves that they claim to be protecting the sheep against. The trading of freedom for alleged protection is a grievous mistake. This is a door that once opened by freedom of choice may never be able to be closed by freedom of choice, for that very freedom is often lost in the process. Once you let the monster out, getting it back in its cage is whole different story. This is exactly what we see going on in socialistic and communistic governments. But they love the power and money that they can be gained by being the ones who convert a good country into a bad one. Similarly we have no shortage of churchmen today who gain much power and profit by taking unwary freedom-based churches at least freedom in some respects and putting them under tyranny, or by building control-based churches from the start. As shocking as it may sound, many churches today are highly communistic in how they are run. Some have gone so far down the road in this regard that there is no solution but to disband the administration and start over. Of course the tyrants in power would never willingly allow such a thing and so they fight tooth and nail with everything at their disposal to maintain their power. Ironically, they are almost always able to use the money and power that they have gained from the people against the people in order to maintain their ungodly regime. Many unnerving parallels can be drawn between the modern institutional church and the ways of socialism and communism. I have been working on a more in-depth article on these parallels for some time. I hope to release it fairly soon. Lining Up To Be a Hot Lunch Just like a runaway government gorges itself on citizens, false pastors gorge themselves and continue to gorge themselves on a never-ending supply of sheep. Astonishingly these are sheep who have a choice and yet still willingly serve themselves up as the main course. False shepherds delight in sheep meat. This is their favorite delicacy and they have access to an abundance of it without any cost whatsoever. It is supplied without question or resistance. In fact, the sheep even line up willingly to be devoured, even when they see other sheep being eaten! Of course I am figuratively referring to Christians who observe other Christians being abused and mistreated. They squeal and struggle when they see their comrades being killed in front of their very eyes. They at least know instinctively that there is a huge problem going on and they would certainly run away if they could. And even when the average professing Christian sees others trampled and destroyed by the giant meat grinder of the false church system which processes people through the front door and spits out the empty shells of who they once were out the back door , these onlookers still remain in the problem at least long enough to become the main course themselves. They fail to use the greatest means at their disposal to make their escape: Of course the pigs I mentioned reacted by animal instinct and not by any human form of rational reasoning power. If pigs had that kind of human ability, they would communicate with each other and do everything in their power including banding together and using combined force in order to try to escape. They would utilize whatever was at hand that could be used as weapons. If they had the physical ability and if the necessary materials were available, they would try to build tools or other aids to assist their escape, just as any group of humans would try to do if similarly held in such captivity and grave impending danger. But animals have no such God-given human abilities. The abuse manifests itself at different levels or intensities depending on how heavy handed a particular church government may be. Of course any manmade church government is a departure from Scripture and is therefore abusive by default, but nevertheless there can be varying levels of how extreme the fallout can be. Literal shepherds shear their sheep for wool and sometimes even slaughter them for meat. He forbade anything remotely close. In no uncertain terms the Bible warns of false shepherds who devour the sheep. The question for some of you reading this is: Will you heed those solemn warnings, avoid those men and remove yourselves from the menu or will you continue to serve yourselves up as the main course?

Chapter 7 : Sheep - Wikipedia

God's goodness and mercy towards us will hunt us down, just like the sheep dog does, never stopping, pursuing us our whole life. At the end of our life, if we are a part of God's flock, we have assurance that we will dwell in His house forever.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 10, , page 9. But while God ever remained the Great Shepherd of Israel, He also delegated authority to under-shepherds who were responsible to care for the flock. In the exercise of this responsibility the shepherds lamentably failed, and as a result the flock was ruined and scattered. In Ezekiel 34 we have a solemn denunciation of these under-shepherds for the violation of their trust. In the first four verses three distinct charges are brought against them. They are charged with using their position to exalt themselves at the expense of the flock. Woe to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: The shepherds are charged with having utterly neglected the flock. There were weak sheep, but they had not strengthened them; there were sick sheep, but they had not healed them; there were wounded sheep, but they had not bound up their wounds; there were sheep driven away from the flock, but they made no effort to recover them; and there were wandering sheep, but they had not gone after the lost ver. Occupied with themselves they had entirely neglected the good of the sheep. For in this day also God has His flock. Passing through this world, the Lord Jesus gathered a company of Jewish believers around Himself, leading them outside the Jewish fold. The Lord Himself is the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and the Great Shepherd, as risen again from among the dead "the One who has triumphed over the power of death, and He can say, "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand" John But furthermore, the Lord is the Chief Shepherd, and as such He has again delegated the oversight of His flock to under-shepherds. Paul, in his farewell address to the elders of the church at Ephesus, gives the under-shepherds a solemn charge in Acts He warns them to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers. He gives them a threefold exhortation in reference to the flock, which answers to the threefold denunciation of the shepherds of Israel. Instead of exalting themselves they are exhorted to "feed the church of God" ver. Instead of neglecting the sheep they are to "watch" and "support the weak" vers. Instead of ruling with "force and cruelty" they are to remember "it is more blessed to give than to receive" ver. Furthermore, the Apostle Peter, before his departure, gives a threefold charge to the under-shepherds 1 Peter 5: They are exhorted to "feed the flock of God. To care for the flock, "taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Not to drive the flock but to lead as "ensamples to the flock. Instead of feeding the flock they fed themselves; instead of taking the oversight they neglected the flock; instead of being ensamples they ruled the flock with harshness and cruelty. And, alas, as the shepherds of Israel failed, so, in like manner, the shepherds of the Christian flock have failed, and with a like result. The sheep are scattered for the lack of a shepherd to lead. Being scattered they become a prey to the beasts of the field. Harassed by the beasts of prey they wander through all the barren mountains and on every high hill. Instead of one flock "one beautiful flock" we have scattered, harassed, and wandering sheep with none to search or seek after them. United they could have resisted the inroads of the enemy, but scattered they fall an easy prey to every evil; and under the power of evil they are starving and wandering in a solitary way in this barren world. Having portrayed the sorrowful condition of the sheep, the Lord proceeds to pass sentence upon the responsible shepherds: But if God is against the shepherds He is for the sheep, as He says, "I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. And as the Chief Shepherd acts so should the under-shepherds. We do well to take to heart the sevenfold actings of the Chief Shepherd as set forth in these touching verses. God says, "Behold I, even I, will. He thought of them from all eternity, but, alas, we can only give them the odd moments of our lives. He left His home of glory to seek His sheep, and can we not leave our poor homes to seek them? He went to the uttermost distance of the cross to find His sheep, but we can hardly go into the next street to seek them. After the Good Samaritan found that poor wounded man and bound up his wounds, he brought him to an inn and "took care of him," and

ere he left he put the man in charge of the host, saying, "Take care of him. Yes, blessed be His name, He cares, but how little we care. We have failed to act the part of the host. We have failed in tending the sheep. But not only does the Lord tend His sheep, but He does it in a very blessed way. It is not as one far removed in some high position giving directions for the care of the sheep, but it is as a shepherd "among his sheep that are scattered. If we have scattered them, will He forsake them? Will He leave them because they follow not with us? He will never give them up. He is "among His sheep that are scattered. Further, the Lord says: While the shepherds wrangle, the sheep wander. We can scatter, but what little power we have to deliver. But the Lord will deliver. Not one of His sheep will be left behind when He acts in delivering power. But the Lord does not deliver His people from the powers of the enemy and then leave them; He also "gathers" them, and so we read, "I will bring them out from the peoples and GATHER them from the countries. Separation without gathering only puffs up and leads to the spirit of the Pharisee, and to further scattering. When the Lord separates His people from evil He gathers them around Himself. We may get Christians together, but if it is not gathering to Christ and with Christ it will only add to the scattering. We may gather people around some great truth, or to deepen spirituality, or to increase holiness and thus make a holiness party; or we may get Christians together to express the truth of the One Body, and to maintain a scriptural discipline, and thus make an ecclesiastical party. We may gather believers together to preach the gospel, and thus make an evangelical party. But, however good our intentions, if we fall short of gathering to Christ as the living centre we shall only add to the scattering. God knows no centre of union but the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Himself the object, and nothing but Christ can be the centre. Whatever is not gathering round that centre, for Him and from Him, is scattering. We are by nature so essentially sectarian that we have need to watch against this. I cannot make Christ the centre of my efforts if He is not the centre of my thoughts" J. But what does God do with His delivered and gathered saints? There is a company we can call our own Acts 4: Israel has been scattered and lost their land, Christians have been scattered and have lost the truth of their heavenly calling. But when God takes His people in hand, whether earthly or heavenly, it will be to "bring them to their own land. If gathered by the Lord it is that we may be led by the Lord into our own country. When Israel were brought to their own land they fed upon the old corn of the land Joshua 5: Passing through the wilderness we need Christ as the manna, but as a heavenly people we feed upon Christ as "the old corn of the land. And what we feed upon forms us. To feed upon Christ in His earthly path of humiliation will win our affections, but to feed upon Christ in His glories will change our characters. Beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord 2 Cor. And lastly, in that heavenly land He gives His people "Rest": In this world there is no lasting rest for the people of God. The Christian is like the dove that went out from the Ark and "found no rest for the sole of her foot. Hungry sheep will not lie down in a fat pasture, they will feed. If they lie down it is a sure proof they are satisfied. The great Shepherd of the sheep leads them into a region of satisfied desire. When we awake in His likeness we shall be satisfied. Yes, but "He shall see of the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. In the light of this perfect example of shepherd care may we have grace to judge our past failures and seek, for the little time that may yet remain, to shape our service according to this divine standard. How better can we serve the flock, or seek the approbation of the Chief Shepherd, than by, 1. Tending the sheep, 3. Delivering the sheep from evil, 4. Gathering the sheep to the Lord, 5. Leading the sheep to their own land, 6. Feeding the sheep, and 7. Bringing the sheep into rest. May we remember the words of the Lord, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" John And if we "do" them, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear we "shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away" 1 Peter 5:

Chapter 8 : Sheep In Religion and Mythology

God's relationship to the nation Israel was likened to that of a shepherd and his flock; God was Israel's Shepherd, and the people were His flock: Yet he brought out his people like sheep; he led them through the wilderness like a flock (Psalm).

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likewise "the head" of the local body; and the Eldership is also the "king" of the local kingdom! Let me close by asking you some more questions. How many did He promise to build in Matthew Do you really believe that Scripture teaches that each local corporate church is a "flock" of Christ? Is each local church a body of Christ? Do you really believe that Christ has thousands of little, local families with different names, such as the "First Methodist Church", for example? Can you find anything like that in the NT scriptures? Is each local church institution a "local priesthood"? Is He really the King over thousands of little "kingdoms" which today are called "local churches"? Is the local church-Kingdom the one into which being born again saved puts each individual? Wonder which local kingdom the eunuch was born into by the birth of the water and the Spirit? The hireling clergy are desperate in their efforts to justify their employer, the local church institution, as being Scriptural because upon that organization they depend for their livelihood. Look at the folly in which they engage to make you think such is from God and that you should be a member of some "local kingdom" and help pay for its operation! It is not from the Lord Jesus Christ, but from men.

Chapter 9 : 21 Bible Verses About the Sheep and the Shepherd – Heather C. King – Room to Breathe

Flock of God, you are protected from harm, because your faithful shepherds on earth must render an account to Jehovah God and Christ Jesus on your behalf. 29 The time has come to increase the flock. All the sheep are to be gathered together, and Jehovah God has commanded his people to bring them from the north and the south and the east and the west.

The Good Shepherd and his Sheep Text: Our lives are filled with numbers. It seems that everywhere we are know by our numbers. The government knows us by our tax number. The bank knows us by our account number. The church knows us by our Mailbox number well, I hope not only! And it goes on and on. Sometimes we wonder if anybody knows us at all without a number! He knows us intimately. In fact, our Good Shepherd knows us better than we know ourselves. The Gospel of John shows us a truth that our human hearts long to hear. In her book, *The Preaching Life*, Barbara Brown Taylor tells of a conversation she had with a friend who grew up on a sheep farm in the Midwest. According to him, sheep are not dumb at all. Stand behind them making loud noises and all they will do is run around behind you, because they prefer to be led. You push cows, her friend said, but you lead sheep, and they will not go anywhere that someone else does not go first-namely, their shepherd-who goes ahead of them to show them that everything is all right. He went on to say that "it never ceased to amaze him, growing up, that he could walk right through a sleeping flock without disturbing a single one of them, while a stranger could not step foot in the fold without causing pandemonium. The sheep and the shepherds develop a language of their own, namely a language of trust, mutual understanding and love. Jesus, our Good Shepherd knows us by name, and he calls us as his own, willing and ready to lead us. It is only human to have a deep longing to be known intimately by one who is greater than us. We listen for voices that we can trust, a strong and tender shepherd to lead us to fresh waters and green pastures. But, not all shepherds are good. And the best that we can do as human shepherds is to pattern our lives after his and be faithful representatives of Christ in our community. Our text this morning needs to be understood in the light of Ezekiel 34 from the Old Testament. The Lord has some serious words for the leaders of the people through the voice of the prophet. Even today this text serves as a warning to us as leaders. At the same time it serves as an inspiration to fulfil our calling in a godly way. Anyone who would be a follower of Christ, and influence people for Him, will do well to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd and seek to fulfil this great calling. Lets look at a few important things that John points out: He that does not enter through the door into the sheepfold is a thief and a robber. The sheepfold is a figure of the church, the door into which is Christ. There is a large door through which the shepherd enters with the sheep. The door is for the shepherd and the sheep, while those who get in otherwise are robbers who seek to prey upon the sheep. The gatekeeper is in charge of guarding the entrance. This servant carried arms to fight off intruders, but he would let the shepherd in. The sheep hear his voice. This is true to the letter. The sheep are so tame and so trained that they follow their keeper with the utmost obedience. He leads them forth from the fold just where he pleases. He calls his own sheep by name. Shepherds in the Middle East give names to their sheep as we do to horses, cows, cats and dogs. A traveller to the Middle East reported that "Passing by a flock of sheep, he asked the shepherd to call one of his sheep. He instantly did so, and it left its pasture and its companions, and ran to the shepherd with great pleasure. This is also true, and a stranger they will not follow, because his voice is strange. For us modern-day people, the call of our Lord is often "hidden" in a whole chorus of worldly voices which call to us. Other would-be shepherds seek to tempt us away from the Good Shepherd, from the joy of his forgiveness and the security of his love. And when we are weak and confused we may fall victim to the enticements of other gods. An American tourist was traveling in the Mid East. He came upon several shepherds whose flocks had intermingled while drinking water from a brook. After an exchange of greetings, one of the shepherds turned toward the sheep and called his flock out. Immediately his sheep separated themselves from the rest and followed him. Then one of the two remaining shepherds called out, and his sheep left the common flock to follow him. The traveler then said to the third shepherd, "I would like to try that. Let me put on your cloak and turban and see if I can get the rest of the sheep to follow me. Not one of them moved

toward him. People, young and old, who are "sick" are battered by the storms of life and distracted by voices urging them to go this way and that, they have lost their bearings and they do not know where they are or where they are going. That can be more than a little frightening; it leads to despair, to hopelessness. And when someone is "sick" they will follow anyone who will promise a moment of happiness, a brief feeling of peace or forgetfulness, a sense that they are someone. Our Lord reaches out to us in love that we might follow him. The shepherd enters into the fold and goes out by the same door as the sheep. Christ is that door. The message of John is that there is no other way in. There is no other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved. All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers. Ezekiel 34 gives us a picture of shepherds that were only after their own gain. Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. The mark of the good shepherd is that he gives his very life for his sheep. Shepherding is not a position of prominence. Rather it is a risky business. The Good Shepherd is willing to lay down his life so that his sheep may live. In the Middle East the shepherd often had to defend his flock with his own life against the attacks of wild animals or thieves. But the Good shepherd risks even gives his own life so that they may live. We believe that Jesus is our Good shepherd. And yet, He says that we are not the only ones. The Lord has other sheep, which are not of this fold. Not Jews, those who were his followers, but Gentiles and people of all nations and tribes, who would soon be called to him. These would hear his voice, enter through the door, into the same fold as the Jewish Christians, so that there would be "one fold and one shepherd. This expression of our Lord is an encouragement to check our attitude toward those who are different from us. Furthermore, there are also those sheep who have once belonged to the fold and have wandered off. People, like sheep, have a tendency to do their own thing and to wander off away from the safety of the fellowship. We also wander in dangerous places, thinking that we are strong enough, and that we can withstand temptation and that it will never happen to us. And still, stubborn as we are, some of us wander off too far, through deep and dark valleys and over or sharp cliffs, totally unaware of the dangers lurking in the shadows. And even then, our Good Shepherd comes looking for us, searching, calling us by name, until he finds us. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. We are challenged today to listen for the voice of our Good Shepherd and to follow Him to greater heights of spiritual nurture. When we feel like nothing more than a number, let us be assured that the Good Shepherd knows and calls us by name. Let us be alert to the voice of the Good shepherd, and follow him with confidence wherever he leads us.