

Gospel Reflections:
JOHN 10

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JOHN 10:1-15

- 1: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.
- 2: But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.
- 3: To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.
- 4: And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.
- 5: And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.
- 6: This parable spake JESUS unto them: but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them.
- 7: Then said JESUS unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am The Door of the sheep.
- 8: All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.
- 9: I am The Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
- 10: The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.
- 11: I am The Good Shepherd: The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.
- 12: But he that is an hireling, and not The Shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.
- 13: The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.
- 14: I am The Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.
- 15: As The Father knoweth Me, even so know I The Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Where else do we find the parable of our Lord of The Good Shepherd in The New Testament? It begins in MATTHEW 18:11-4, is missing in MARK, is expanded in The Text in LUKE 15:1-10 and is in its fullest Text here in JOHN 10:1-15. In all, we men are the lost sheep who have wandered from the safe and peaceful Pastures of The Lord, which is The faithful Church. The Divine Good Shepherd in the parable is of course The Messiah JESUS.

But here is the first curious thing. What mere human shepherd, when one of his sheep's life is about to be forfeit, will literally offer up his own life to prevent a literal sheep from dying? And that for its own folly of wandering away from the sheepfold and the shepherd! But here we see a question of salvation of the lives and souls of men, of far more worth than a sheep. The Kingdom of GOD comes to all men and to all of creation in JESUS CHRIST, and He offers up Himself to buy us back from the jaws of the wolves of the world, the flesh and of hell itself!

Here we see also the need for GOD's Grace for the saving of our souls, for if we are His saints – His sheep if you will – then He will send His preceding Grace, secure us with His saving Grace and keep us with His sustaining Grace. JESUS CHRIST tells us here that He is literally The Door to The Kingdom of GOD. We may only enter into The Presence of The Lord, and all the earthly and eternal blessings He desires to feed us with, through Him.

JOHN 10:16-21

16: And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be One Fold, and One Shepherd.

17: Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.

18: No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This Commandment have I received of My Father.

19: There was a division therefore again among the Jews for These Sayings.

20: And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?

21: Others said, These are not The Words of Him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

Now recall The Lord is preaching and speaking to an entirely Jewish audience in the remnant of Israel when He spoke These Words. But now CHRIST reveals what we, in hindsight with The Entire New Testament at our fingertips know, that The Kingdom of GOD is for all men – both Jew and Gentile. As Saint Paul says in I CORINTHIANS 8:6, “But to us there is but one GOD The Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord JESUS CHRIST, by Whom are all things, and we by Him.” For in CHRIST we all are one. So in The ancient Creeds we confess, “We believe in The one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.”

Now The Gentiles enter into The Kingdom of GOD via The Living Door – JESUS CHRIST – as equals and brothers. As Saint Paul says in GALATIANS 3:26-29, “For ye are all the children of GOD by faith in CHRIST JESUS. For as many of you as have been baptized into CHRIST have put on CHRIST. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in CHRIST JESUS. And if ye be CHRIST's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise!” What an exciting and joyful thing, that all men are called to enter His Presence as sons and daughters through The Living Door of The Sheepgate!

A proof that JESUS CHRIST is indeed The Living Door of GOD is given in The Words and works which He spoke and did, that men might be convicted of their sins, repent and enter into His Pastures. But as is always the case with men's hearts, some will hear, believe, confess and repent. Others will only harden their hearts to The Almighty's Truth and perish by their own hand.

JOHN 10:22-39

- 22: And it was at Jerusalem The Feast of The Dedication, and it was winter.
23: And JESUS walked in The Temple in Solomon's porch.
24: Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If Thou be The CHRIST, tell us plainly.
25: JESUS answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.
26: But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you.
27: My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me:
28: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.
29: My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand.
30: I and My Father are one.
31: Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.
32: JESUS answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from My Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me?
33: The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest thyself GOD.
34: JESUS answered them, Is it not written in your Law, I said, Ye are gods?
35: If He called them gods, unto whom The Word of GOD came, and The Scripture cannot be broken;
36: Say ye of Him, Whom The Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am The Son of GOD?
37: If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not.
38: But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that The Father is in Me, and I in Him.
39: Therefore they sought again to take Him: but He escaped out of their hand,

Here we have another encounter with The Messiah JESUS and the Jewish authorities again at The Jerusalem Temple. "It was at The Feast of Dedication, and it was winter, a feast that was annually observed by consent, in remembrance of the dedication of a new altar and the purging of The Temple, by Judas Maccabæus, after The Temple had been profaned and the altar defiled; we have the story of it at large in the history of the Maccabees." [Matthew Henry.]

The occasion is the recalling of the cleansing of The Jerusalem Temple by Judas Maccabee when the Greek heathen had profaned it with the sacrifice of unclean animals and dared to declare himself as GOD. Again we see the irony, that here is GOD Incarnate telling His covenant people to believe on Him and repent for the sake of His works if not His Words, and they defile The Temple by dishonouring The very Presence of GOD before them!

They could not see that The Messiah come of GOD had an agenda that did not fit theirs. They wanted a Divinely inspired leader and rescuer to drive out the hated Romans and bring earthly glory to their own national kingdom Israel. But instead they stand before The Divine Incarnate Himself Who has taken upon Himself human flesh, come to lead and rescue them and all men out of the devils' kingdom of sin and death! No matter how many miracles and inspired Words offered them by JESUS, they could not understand, hear or see.

Perhaps they would have understood differently had they studied the job description of The Messiah of GOD as given in ISAIAH 53, that in order to fulfill Those prophecies, He would have to come as fully GOD and fully Man but without sin. But they did not, and therefore those who should have seen to lead GOD's people into The Pastures of The Lord were instead blind themselves. In order for salvation to come at The Cross, it was necessary that GOD The Son be one with GOD The Father. Else He could not pay the price for the sins of all mankind, nor rise again to conquer sin and death for us!

But if they would not hear The CHRIST's Words on earthly things, they certainly could not hear His Words of heavenly things! Long before, The LORD sent His prophet Ezekiel to this same people, and they would not hear, as we read in EZEKIEL 2:3-4, "...Son of Man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against Me: they and their fathers have transgressed against Me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD." So we should not be surprised, but neither should we haughtily say we would have done better, that these religious leaders of GOD's people did not see or hear, though they sat in The Seat of Moses, before The Lord Himself.

JOHN 10:40-42

40: And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there He abode.

41: And many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of This Man were true.

42: And many believed on Him there.

We know that some of the members of the Jewish Sanhedran knew and believed on JESUS CHRIST as The Messiah. There was Nicodemus. There was Joseph of Aramathea. There was the wise counsel of Gamaliel to the Sanhedran who, after Saint Peter and the other Apostles of CHRIST had testified as to the messiahship of JESUS, said in ACTS 5:38-39, "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of GOD, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against GOD!"

And though conceit and human wisdom skewed the hearing and sight of many of the leaders of the Jews at this most critical time in the history of the universe, still many of the Jewish people saw, heard and believed on JESUS CHRIST. Here Saint John reminds us that John The Baptist did no miracles, and many believed and repented. Even more so, seeing the miracles and hearing The Words of The Saviour Himself, believed and repented. Would that, if by GOD's Providence He had placed us in that time and place, that we who today call ourselves Christians would do the same, and not be found in the numbers of those who rejected The CHRIST and thus fought against GOD!