

THE SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP

By Henry T. Mahan

John 10:14-18

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 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. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 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.

TV-466a

**Henry Mahan T. Tape Library
Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501**

I want you to open your Bibles today to a very familiar passage of scripture, the **Tenth Chapter of the Book of John**; we'll look at **verses 14 through 18**. This will be a message in two parts. Today, I'm going to preach on the subject: **"THE SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP."** Next Sunday, I'm going to bring you the second part of this message that will be titled "The Sheep of the Shepherd." Now, if you want these messages on tape, remember these titles, because both messages will be on the same cassette tape. I'll bring one message this morning and then the other next Sunday. The subject today is: "The Shepherd of the Sheep," and then next Sunday, "The Sheep of the Shepherd."

There are several reasons why this is an important two part message. There are several reasons why all of you should be interested in these messages and why I am emphasizing them like I am. I want you to listen today and then listen next Lord's Day. Then, I want you to get the tape and share it with friends. This is an important, two part message: "The Shepherd of the Sheep" and "the Sheep of the Shepherd."

Again, there are several reasons why this message is of great importance. First of all, these are the words of our Lord Himself. I know that the entire Bible is the Word of God. I believe very strongly that the Bible is verbally inspired, that it is the Word of God; I believe that very strongly, but these words that I'm going to be dealing with today and next

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week are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He spoke these words to a congregation of people. This is His message, this is His sermon, and this is His exaltation, and that is why it's so important.

Secondly, these words have to do with His person and work. He's talking about Himself, the Shepherd of the sheep. He's also talking about the sheep of the Shepherd. He's talking about who He is, what He came to do, and the people for whom He did it. These are the words of our Lord about Himself (the Shepherd of the sheep), and about His people (the sheep of the Shepherd).

I just came back from Mexico; I was down there visiting with missionaries and preaching in some of the pueblos. There is a man there by the name of Roberto who owns a coffee plantation, a coffee ranch. He comes down to Chiapas to hear the missionary quite often; he and the missionary are good friends. One day they were riding in the truck together (the missionary was driving and Roberto was sitting next to him). Roberto turned to the missionary and said (speaking in Spanish), "I heard you say that God sent you to Mexico to preach the gospel, because the Lord had some sheep down here, and that you came here with the gospel, seeking those sheep." He then asked, "Do you suppose I could be one of those sheep that God sent you down here to preach to and to find?" The missionary replied, "I certainly hope so." That's what our Lord is talking about here in **John Chapter 10**. He's talking about the Shepherd of the sheep, and He's talking about the sheep of the Shepherd. He's saying these things in His own words.

I'll tell you the third reason why that you ought to be interested in what our Lord has to say in this Tenth Chapter of John. It's because of the two-fold effect which these words had upon the people that heard them. A lot of people heard what our Lord had to say in this message (these same two messages that I'm going to be bringing you today and next Sunday). First of all, some got quite angry. It says in **verse 19**, "*There was a great division among the people because of these words.*" Some of them said, "*He hath a devil.*" Some of them said, "*He's crazy, why do you listen to Him?*" They became so angry at the words of our Lord that they said in **verse 20** (after He had talked about the Shepherd of the sheep), "*He's crazy; He's got a devil.*" They were talking about the Lord Himself.

After He talked about the sheep of the Shepherd, they took up stones to stone Him. They were so angry; they were going to kill Him. Some of these people got quite angry, but some were very comforted by His words. Some of you will get angry, but maybe some of you will be comforted. Which will it be, anger or assurance? Will it be comfort or will it be consternation (disapproval)?

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Well, let's take the first one. Open your Bible there to **John Chapter 10** and let's look at **verse 14**. The Lord Jesus says, "*I'm the good Shepherd.*" That's the first words He uses here, "*I am the good Shepherd.*" Now, whatever type or symbol our Lord chooses by which to reveal His person and work; He always uses this definite article; "*I am the good Shepherd,*" there isn't another. As far as Shepherds are concerned, and redemption is concerned and life eternal is concerned; I am the only good Shepherd. He's says "*I am the door; (there is no other door), by Me, if any man enter in he shall be saved and going in and out of fine pastures, I am the door.*" He said, "*I am the light of the world*", (there is no other light). He said, "*I am the bread of life. I am that bread that came down from Heaven. Moses gave you bread from heaven; but they ate it and died. If any man eat this bread, he will never die; I'm the bread. I'm the water of life.*" Then He said in **John 14:6**, "*I am the way,*" (the way to God). There is no other way. "*I am the truth;* (all truth is in Christ). "*I am the life, the way, the truth and the life.*"

So, here in verse 14 He says, "*I'm the good Shepherd,*" There's none good but God; He's God and He's good. Our Lord Jesus Christ is good in that He is sinless, He's Holy and there's no fault in Him. There's no blame, there's no sin. He's good in that He loves His people. He's good in that He goes out and seeks the sheep and brings them back. "*I am the good Shepherd.*"

Again, He's called the "*Great Shepherd.*" Paul, in the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews said, "*God brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant;*" the great Shepherd, the victorious Shepherd. He is victorious over sin, victorious over death, victorious over the grave, victorious! He is the great Shepherd.

Then, Peter talks about Him in this way, saying "*When the chief Shepherd shall appear, then shall you receive a reward, a crown of righteousness;*" He is that chief Shepherd. All other shepherds are under-shepherds and under-servants: He's the chief Shepherd. When our Lord uses a symbol or a type, "*I am the good Shepherd,*" a definite article, it is always, "*the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, and the chief Shepherd.*"

Look back at our text in verse 14. In the second statement of this verse He says, "*I know my sheep.*" The question may be raised, "Pastor, doesn't God know everybody, doesn't God know all things?" "Is there anyone or anything that He does not know?" It's true, my friends, that God is omniscient. We say that God is omnipresent, (all present and present everywhere). God is omnipotent, (all powerful) and God is omniscient, (all knowing). There's a sense in which God knows all things. God knows all men and even God knows their thoughts.

Often times the scripture says, "*That Jesus, knowing their thoughts said [this].*" My friends, when He says, "*I'm the good Shepherd, I know my sheep*", it is a contrast; God

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does not know all people in the same way that He knows His sheep. That's what He is talking about here, "I know my sheep, I love my sheep, I approve of my sheep, I accept my sheep, and I know them."

In **Matthew chapter seven**, at the Judgment, our Lord said, "*Many will say to me Lord, we've preached in your name, we've cast out devils in your name, did many wonderful works, but I will reply, I never knew you. You are workers of iniquity. (I know my sheep).*" He knows **about** those workers of iniquity. He knows **of** them; He knows their deeds and He knows their doings, but He doesn't know them in the sense that He knows His sheep anymore than a man knows all women, like he knows his wife. The scripture says, "*Adam knew His wife.*" There was an intimacy, there was a union, and there was an oneness. When Christ says here, "*I know my sheep;*" that's what He is saying. Like He said in **Second Timothy 2:19**, "*The foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His. I know my sheep, I'm the good Shepherd.*"

Now, watch this, He knows them because the Father gave them to Him. "*Known unto God are all His works from the beginning.*" He said in **John 17**, "*Father, I finished the work you gave me to do, you have given me power over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as thou hath given me.*" He knows His sheep in that the Father gave them to Him. He knows His sheep and calls them His own. He says, "They are my sheep." He says, "They belong to my church; I will build my church." He says, "They're my disciples." He calls them, "*My jewels.*" They are His! He knows them because the Father gave them to Him, and He knows them because they are His and He's always known them.

Do you know what He said to **Jeremiah**? He said, in **Jeremiah 1:5**, "*Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee.*" Now, He said to those people in the Judgment, "*I never knew thee.*" He said to **Jeremiah**, "*I've always know thee; before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, before you came from your mother's womb, I sanctified you and set you apart before you had any existence; I knew you.*" He says to **Jeremiah** also, in **Chapter 31**, "*I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*" Why did He draw **Jeremiah**? He drew Him because He had always loved him. Why does He love him now; it's because He has always loved him. He said to Jacob and Esau's mother before the children were born, "*The elder shall serve the younger*" (Genesis 25:23). Before Jacob or Esau were born, before they did any good or evil, God said, "*Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated*" (Romans 9:13).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, and the chief Shepherd. He knows His sheep and they know Him. "*I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*"

Yes, I know, we know in part. There's none of us going to boast about how much we know of the Lord and how much we love the Lord and how much knowledge we have.

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“We know in part, we preach in part, we see through a glass dimly, but we do know whom we have believed.” It’s not I know what I believe, it’s not I know when I believe, it’s *“I know whom I have believed.”* We know Him! The scripture says in **First John 5 and verse 20**, *“And we know that the Son of God has come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and that we are in Him, that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ and this is the true God and this is eternal life.”*

That’s how we know Him as the true God, as the only God, the living God, as very God of very God; we know Him. We know Him as the Christ; He’s the Messiah. He’s the one whom God said would come and He’s the one who did come and He’s the one who intercedes at the right hand of the Father. We know Him. We know Him in His office because He’s our Prophet, Priest and King. He’s the prophet to reveal God, and the Priest to make atonement before the Father, and the King to reign over us. We know Him as our Mediator; *“The only mediator between God and men is Christ Jesus.”* We do know Him. We continue to come to Him. We continue to believe on Him, and we continue to look to Him. We trust, by the Word of God; *“we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.”* There’s so much to learn. There’s so much we don’t know, but we do know Him. We can say with Paul, *“I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded, (confident), that He’s able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.”* Our confidence and our hope is in Christ.

The songwriter said:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and His righteousness.
And I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But I wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood.
When all around my soul gives way
He then is my only hope and stay.

Look at **verse 15**, *“He said as the Father knoweth me, even so I know the Father.”* Now, this statement is read with the preceding verse; now listen to it together, Christ said, *“I’m the good Shepherd, I know my sheep, and they know me. As the Father knoweth me, even so I know the Father.”* In other words, I know my sheep and the sheep know me as the Father knows me and I know the Father. I know that seems to be beyond understanding, how can we know God and God know us like God knows the Son and the Son knows the Father? I don’t know how, but I know He prayed in **John 17**, He says, *“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”*

I don’t understand that, I am just saying it, Christ said, *“I know my sheep and my sheep know me; as the Father knows me and I know the Father.”*

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Then He said this, look at verse 15, *“I lay down my life for the sheep.”* Now, here are some things that are quite clear. Everybody listening to my voice knows that this is true. Jesus Christ the Son of God came into this world. You know that! I know that! That’s so. Jesus Christ the Son of God lived on this earth and was born of a woman, made of a woman, made under the law; lived a perfect life. No one could find any fault in Him. He died on a cross; He died as a substitute, as a sin offering, as a sacrifice on a cross for sin. He died the just for the unjust to bring somebody to God. He arose again; He arose from the grave on the third day and ascended to glory. The scripture says, *“He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.”* There He is, an Advocate; *“We have an advocate with the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our forerunner has entered for us within the veil; He is at the right hand of God; He’s the Mediator.”* The scripture says, *“There’s one God and one mediator, between God and men.”* He’s an Advocate, Mediator and Intercessor.

Now, you know those things to be true. Did I go through them too quickly? No, I didn’t. He came, He lived, He died, He arose, He ascended, He’s seated, He reigns, and He intercedes.

Now the question comes, for whom did He come? For whom did He live and die? For whom did He arise from the grave and ascend and intercede? For whom does He pray? He tells us right here, He says, listen, now this is the reason some were comforted and some grew angry. He said, *“I am the good Shepherd. I know my sheep and they know me and I know them like the Father knows me and they know Me like I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep.”*

What does the word (for) mean? Well, it means in the place of, doesn’t it, in the stead of? If boys are playing basketball and a young man goes in (for) another one, they say, number “15” is going in (for) number “25,” that’s means he takes his place doesn’t it? Number “25” comes out and number “15” goes in (for) him, he goes in the stead of. He’s carrying the load (for) me. What does that mean? It means he’s doing it and I’m not; he’s doing it (for) me. He paid the bill (for) me. We go into a restaurant or a clothing store, and he tells me I owe so much and the fellow says that he will pay it; he pays it (for) me. I don’t pay (for) it, he did. This is what our Lord is saying; *“I lay down my life (for) my sheep,”* in the place of and in the stead of. That’s what **Isaiah** said, *“He was wounded (for) our transgressions,”* then I’m not wounded, He is. *“He was bruised (for) my iniquities, not I but He has been wounded and bruised. “And by His stripes I’m healed.”*

[Put your name in there]. *“He was wounded for [Henry Mahan’s] transgressions, He was bruised for [Henry Mahan’s] iniquities, the chastisement of peace was laid on Him and by His stripes, [Henry Mahan’s] healed.”* That’s substitution!

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Then, He said in **verse 15**, *“I lay down my life for my sheep, and then He says in **verse 16**, “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them I must bring,” in other words, He looked at these 12 disciples, Peter, James, John, Nathaniel and all of them and He says, “These are not all of my sheep. I’m the good Shepherd; I know my sheep.” This isn’t all of them, other sheep I have; I already have. Where did He get them? The Father gave them to Him. Watch what He says, “In the same way that I called Matthew, I’ll call them also. “Matthew, you follow me,” Peter, James, John; you “follow me!” I called these; I’ll call them. “Other sheep, also I must bring.”*

How many times does it say in the scripture, *“The Son of man (must) be lifted up. He (must) needs go through Samaria.”* He said, *“The Son of man (must) go to Jerusalem, He (must) suffer and die;”* it’s a necessity. He says, *“These sheep that I have, I (must) bring them,”* not stand back and invite them, not stand back and challenge them to come. He says, *“I (must) bring them!”*

The shepherd went out into the wilderness and found a sheep and put it on His shoulder and did what? He brought it home. He didn’t lead it home or drive it home; he brought it home on his shoulder and *“He died the Just for the Unjust to bring us to God.”* Do you see that? *“Other sheep I have.”*

Maybe I’m talking to some sheep. Maybe Roberto, down there in Mexico, and his son Raphael in lower Chiapas, maybe he’s one of God’s sheep. Maybe God sent that missionary to tell him about Christ so he could bring him home, so he would believe.

Here is what He says, *“And they shall hear my voice,”* they shall.” I love the (shalls) of God’s word; they (shall). There are no maybes or perhaps due to certain conditions. They (shall) hear my voice. They (shall) hear His voice of regeneration. They that are in the grave (shall) hear the voice of the Son of God and live. They will hear His voice in the gospel; *“In whom you trusted after that you heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation. They’ll hear my voice.”*

As I preached this message, someone just reminded me that this is program number 900. In all of these telecasts that I’ve been making up here at Channel 13, number 900. I’ve preached to a lot of people and this is what I know when I preach this gospel, *“His sheep (shall) hear His voice and they will come.”* He will bring them. *“And they (shall) be one fold and one shepherd.”*

Does this sound like there is any doubt about the population of His Kingdom or the populating of His Kingdom? Does it sound like there is any doubt about the populating of His sheepfold or of heaven? He’s the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the chief Shepherd who has a sheep, who knows them and they know Him and *“They (shall) hear my voice and they (shall) be one fold and one Shepherd, because I (must) bring them.”*

Now, look at **verse 17**, *“Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again.”* How do we find out what this means? Well, I believe we find out

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what this means by discovering what we already know. Christ said, *“Therefore because of what I’ve done, doth my Father love me.”* Well, I know this, the Father has always loved Him; the Father has always delighted in Him; the Father has always accepted Christ as the eternal Son of God, one with God in essence and power and purpose. The Father has always loved Him. What Christ is saying here, because of what I’ve done, and who I am, my Father loves me because *“I lay down my life.”* My Father loves me.

He’s speaking here as the Shepherd of the sheep. That’s my subject, “The Shepherd of the Sheep.” He’s speaking here as the Redeemer of a people; He’s speaking here as the Messiah who is sent and the servant who came to do the Father’s will. He’s the successful Mediator. The laying down of His life was a supreme act of obedience. He said, *“Therefore, doth my Father love me because I laid down my life. Though He were a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things that He suffered.”* The Father is pleased with the Substitute and He’s pleased with me. *“This is my Son in whom I’m well pleased.”* If the Father accepts my Substitute, He accepts me.

Now **verse 18**, He said, *“No man takes my life from me, I lay it down of myself.”* Jesus Christ, most unusual. He chose when He would come into the world, He chose the nation through which He would come, He chose the woman who would give Him birth, and He chose the time that He would die. He chose the way that He would die. He chose the people for whom He would die. He is truly the Lord of glory!

When you see these signs in a church and they say, *“Jesus is Lord,”* is He really? *“He’s Lord of Lord’s and King of King’s,”* He’s sovereign over all things. That’s the shepherd of the sheep and that’s why He (can) bring His sheep!