

Zechariah 18 – The Flock: Who’s Leading Whom

Zechariah – 10:3-12
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Flock Metaphor in the Bible

- Metaphor used extensively throughout the Bible
- Shepherds: lowest social order, just above slaves
- Shepherds are to protect and guide the flock, they are responsible for losses

The Hireling Shepherd



By William Holman Hunt - The York Project: 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei. DVD-ROM, 2002. ISBN 3936122202. Distributed by DIRECTMEDIA Publishing GmbH., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=151062>

Shepherds: Post-Exilic Judah

Sadducees

- Priesthood of the Temple
- Were to teach the Law
- Could not function vice Temple
- Used Temple to enrich themselves

Pharisees

- Rabbis from the people
- Taught their reasonings
- Kept Judaism in tact during the exile & after
- Used their traditions to empower themselves

Scribes probably assisted both groups translating Hebrew into local languages (Translators)

Christ Angry With The *Shepherds*

- *Shepherds* were hirelings not caring for God's flock but their own lusts {Power, Prestige, Material goods} (Jo 10:12-13)
 - These *shepherds* loved themselves, not the sheep
 - They would run from danger, leaving sheep exposed to evil influences {False teachings, Ignorance of the Bible}
 - This allowed ravenous wolves to harm the sheep
- These *shepherds* were goats, leading the herd astray

Understanding the Metaphor

Sheep

Goats

- | | |
|---|--|
| ○ Flocked together for safety | ○ More independent |
| ○ Run from danger | ○ More curious |
| ○ Low level grass foragers | ○ High level bush feeders |
| ○ Rams tend to win against bucks: fighting styles | ○ More aggressive, bullying sheep; usu. have horns |

Judah Follows Goats

- God's flock, Judah, was being led by goats {**צִיָּאִים**}
 - Rabbis and Priests not *feeding* God's word to the flock
 - People enticed with false {empty} beliefs = death
 - Goats lead sheep into heights – Few grasses (Ep 2:1-3)
 - Good Shepherd leads His sheep into the valleys (Ps 23)
- Good Shepherd is the lamb {Ram} that was slain and will come to reclaim His sheep from the goats
(Jo 10:14-18; Re 5:6-14)

Good Shepherd Empowers Judah

- Christ raises His people up; they become examples of His power to the kingdoms in Millennial Age
- Christ is the source of their empowerment; His is the:
 - Cornerstone - *True Jews* doctrine rests on Christ (He 6:1-3)
 - Tent peg - Christ is the anchor of the Millennial culture
 - Battle bow - He establishes order based on God's Word
 - Source of good rulers - Millennial kingdom rulers

Apparent Contradiction

- Since Christ {God} is omnipotent, what need has He of an army; especially since He dispenses with the armies at Armageddon with a single word? (Re 19:11-21)
 - Christ needs neither Jew nor Church to battle for Him
 - This metaphoric warrior imagery illustrates the strength He gives them to overcome adversity during the Great Tribulation; esp. infantry vs. cavalry: unusual bravery

God's Promise of Unity

- Not only will Judah return from international dispersion but also the Northern Kingdom (Joseph and Ephraim)
- He brings them back from where He sent them purely due to His grace, not because of their *goodness*
- He will whistle - They will hear and come *home*

Another Hint of Diaspora

- Hint of a dispersion forces the question, “What dispersion?” {Judah has already returned from exile}
 - This speaks of a *future* dispersion {Diaspora}
 - More thorough than Judah’s past exile {Israel}
 - When God calls, both will return in unity
- They joyfully return to worship Christ, *their* Messiah

Metaphor From Sea of Reeds

- Parting of the waters allowing the Hebrews to pass through Sea of Reeds referenced often in their history
 - Refers to actual event depicted in Exodus (Ex 14)
 - Metaphorically refers to “*God fighting for them*” (2Ch 20:13-18)
- Thus, when God calls they shall *pass through* their enemies coming back to Israel in His power {Today’s Israel - Zionist Israel (*False Jews* - Islam in opposition)}

They Rejoice in His Name

- As a people, Hebrews rejected Him (Ac 7:35-43)
 - Israel {United} wallowed in idolatry (1Ki 3:1-2; 11:1-13)
 - Israel {Northern Kingdom} built Golden Calves (1Ki 12:25-31)
 - Judah {Southern Kingdom} Deserted God’s Temple (2Ki 21:10-15; 22:1-13)
 - Post-exilic Judah killed Messiah & Stephen (Gospels; Ac 7:51-53)
- Yet, when He calls, they will come gladly in His name

Why Did They Reject God?

- Simple answer, “*natural* man does not...accept God”
 - Natural man (ψυχικός) cannot understand God (1Co 2:14)
 - He is fleshly (σάρξ), warring against God (Ro 8:5-8)
 - He is born a sinner, foreign to God’s thoughts (Is 55:8-9; Ro 5:1)
- Only spiritual man, taught by Holy Spirit, can grasp God’s truth {though still sinning remaining in the flesh growing in spiritual maturity until the appointed time} (1Co 15:42-49)

Important Distinctions

Natural (Sinful) Man

- Ruled by imagination, twists empirical evidence
- Man has no basis for his truth; *borrow*s from Bible
- Faith unsupported, his view of *truth* unreliable

Spiritual (Saved) Man

- Taught by God, agrees with empirical evidence
- God reasons from cause to effect in His word
- Faith supported reliability of His creation

Both Systems Require Faith

Natural (Lost) Man

- Incoherent foundation for beliefs – Mutable Man
- Relies on Bible but refutes the Bible – Incoherent
- Faith without any basis required – No hope

Spiritual (Saved) Man

- Coherent foundation for beliefs – Immutable God
- Bible details common morality for all peoples
- Faith with predictability yields stability – Hope

Understand Empirical Topic

Evolution

- Man believes life evolved from chaos, *spontaneously*
- Pseudo-random mutations started from *simple* forms
- Self-justifying: Geology dates life; life dates geo.

Creationism

- God brought order from disorder: orderly creation
- Creation: Air, land, plants, animals, then man
- Empiricism supports biblical accounts

Understand Metaphysical Topic

Existential Morality

- Each person defines own morality: different/person
- Equality - Laws *force* man's extrinsic morality
- Injustice: ever changing model - Nihilism results

Absolute Morality

- God's nature is morality: man made in God's image
- Liberty - Laws support God's intrinsic morality
- Justice: Consistent biblical morality applied equally

Why Do Sheep Follow Goats?

- Jews could explain their exile and return apart from God's word: {Today's man sees only *empirical* forces}
 - Political powers shift
 - Culture changes political fortunes
- Allegorical interpretations negate God's word
 - Rabbis created traditions removing need for God
 - Similar to German textual criticism discussed previously

Ram Overcomes the Buck

- Built-in fighting styles can determine outcomes
 - Buck (Goat) raises up to strike down
 - Ram (Sheep) charges straight in - Knocks buck down
- We are *sheep* of His pasture (Ps 100:3)
 - He is the Ram defending His flock - Son of Man
 - He is the Shepherd, Door of Life - Son of God (Jo 10:7-10)

Each Sheep Follows Own Kind

- *True* Jews {and Christians} only follow Christ's voice
 - These find eternal Life in Him
 - They have a solid foundation for their faith (Mt 7:24-25)
- *False* Jews follow the voices of thieves and robbers
 - Wolves in sheep skin garments kill the sheep (Mt 7:15)
 - Incoherent foundation of shifting sand (Mt 7:26-27)

Same Faith - Different Roles

True Jews

- Hear His voice and return to their land
- Tribulation → Millennium
- Enter His New Covenant
- Eternal grace in Christ

Christians

- Hear His voice and rise to meet Him in the air
- Rapture → Tribulation
- New Creations in Christ
- Eternal grace in Christ