

Shepherd

Matthew 9:36, Mark 6:34 Jesus knew that He would be arrested and executed soon, yet He was more concerned with the multitudes than with His own future. He characterized the populace as “sheep without a shepherd” and prayed that the Lord would send people to do that function.

Matthew 18:12 – 14, Luke 15:3 – 7 Jesus likens Himself to the Shepherd who goes in search of the one stray sheep. He did not come to earth to condemn but to rescue.

Matthew 25:32 Jesus characterized His position at Judgment as that of a shepherd who separates sheep from goats.

Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:27 Jesus quoted Zechariah 13:7 and applied it to Himself. Five hundred years before Jesus, Zechariah had predicted many details about the time of the Messiah. One such prediction was that, when the Shepherd (Zechariah’s description of the Messiah) was killed, His followers would be without a leader and scattered, which is what happened. Therefore, Jesus told them that, upon His return, He would meet them in Galilee to reorganize, which He did.

John 10:1 – 18 This is the longest passage in which Jesus is compared to a shepherd.

(1 – 5) In the first parable, Jesus is the shepherd, other religious leaders are the thieves, the doorkeeper is God, and faithful people are the sheep. The sheep recognize the right voice, which says something negative about those who follow the various religious leaders of our time.

(7 – 10) In the second parable, Jesus is the door. The other characters are the same as before. In this parable, Jesus is the passageway to good pastures. Other leaders consume the sheep, whereas Jesus seeks their good.

(11 – 13) In the third parable, Jesus draws a contrast between the owner and a hired shepherd. The owner of the sheep defends the sheep to the point of death. The hired shepherd runs away at the first sign of danger. The hired shepherd represents the religious leaders who run away when things become difficult.

(14 – 18) In the fourth parable, Jesus repeats ideas from the previous three, but adds one more piece. Jesus has “other sheep not of this fold.” The other sheep are the faithful of the rest of the world, faithful Gentiles. Further, Jesus asserts that he has the authority to lay down His life, and to pick it up again, an obvious reference to His execution and resurrection. No one could take Jesus’ life, but He was willing to give it up for us. Further, He has power over death, so He can reclaim His life when He wants.

Hebrews 13:20 Jesus is called “the great Shepherd of the sheep,” using the same images as John.

1 Peter 2:25 Peter recalls the lost sheep parable.

1 Peter 5:4 Jesus is called the Chief Shepherd in connection with Judgment when all the sheep (faithful people) are collected up.