

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. —A.W. Tozer

God knew what we were before conversion- wicked, guilty and defiled; yet He loved us. He knows what we will be after conversion- weak, erring and frail; yet He loves us. —J.C. Ryle

Spurgeon's Catechism
Compiled by Charles Haddon Spurgeon
[1834 -1892]

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

65.Q. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere man, since the fall, is able in his life perfectly to keep the commandments of God (Eccl. 7:20), but does daily break them in thought, (Gen. 8:21) word (Jas. 3:8), and deed (Jas. 3:2).

66.Q. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of various aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others (Jn. 19:11; 1 Jn. 5:15).

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Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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ONE SHEPHERD

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. (Ezekiel 34:23-24)

It is always a delight to discover Christ in reading the Old Testament and to find that all that was said of Him has come to pass. Especially is this so when it becomes a matter of spiritual revelation in the heart of every true believer. This is more than mere fascination with the idea that something was written and then came to pass hundreds of years later. This is the extent of the understanding of many. They tend to focus on prophesied events rather than on the realization of the ultimate promise of God whom we behold in the person of Christ Jesus our Lord. To the objects and beneficiaries of redemption, it is the fact that were in view that makes these things particular and precious. In that Ezekiel was a prophet to the captives in Babylon, the immediate context of this is Israel. But in that these things are embraced in the things of Christ, the message is Gospel in its substance, and its promise extends to all believers.

It is the oneness of Christ to which we are directed in the Scripture in that He is the exclusive perfection that God receives, and we marvel as we are drawn to Him and away from those pretending to be shepherds in this world. The directive to Ezekiel at the outset of this

chapter ran thus: Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, *Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? (Ezekiel 34:2).* Certainly, this seems to fit the manner of many false shepherds, those who have appeared in every age.

The divine remedy is to set up one Shepherd over them. It is evidently being declared that Christ is exclusive and is to be received as such by all who come to Him. As we have already noted the problems with rebellious Israel have often been witnessed down through history. The tendency is to seek new and better ways and to be caught up in an idea that seems right to them but is certainly not of the Lord's doing. The intent of the revelation of Christ is that all attention and all submission is to be directed to Him. Proud men feel the need to insert self as either a contributor or deserving of praise.

Christ is the one Shepherd of all: *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. (John 10:16).* With these words He revealed that He would succeed. Two things are apparent. That which He must do – bring them and that they shall hear His voice. In that same context he declared that they would not follow another.

And so, He is revealed to us in three very precious ways.

He is the good Shepherd. *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (John 10:11)*. And we read further that, *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. (John 10:14)*. Of course, redemption is here in view both in terms of what He would do and the response that would be the result. He knows them and they know Him.

Furthermore, He is the Great Shepherd. *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)*. What a precious benediction. Truly, it is through the blood of the everlasting covenant. It is He that works in us to be well pleasing in His sight. Certainly, the glory is to be His.

And He is the Chief Shepherd. *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Peter 5:4)*. The admonition that Peter gave to these elders was a far cry from the behavior of the false shepherds. All are subject to Him and are to be examples even as He was to His sheep in all ways.

Then we are told what He would do. He would feed them who could not otherwise feed themselves; those pushed about and rejected by the world. He shall do it by His ministers, by His ordinances, through their worship, and in

accordance with His Word. Truly, He shall, and does feed them with Himself as the Bread of life and with His flesh and blood which are meat indeed and drink indeed. He shall minister to them and incorporate into their life covenant grace such as is described in the next verse: *And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. (Ezekiel 34:25)*. This is all understood and has come to pass in the Gospel and the promises it displays. The teachings written in the hearts so that they might be made effectual in their lives. "My servant David," is an obvious reference to David as the type as well as the lineage of Christ in Human form.

The declaration here is not one of a mere announcement of the sovereign rule of God (Although He is God over all). It is more particular to us in this manner: *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:6)*, and *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; (2 Corinthians 1:3)*. The declaration here is of a relationship that God will have with His people and that in covenant relationship with Christ. The declaration here is that this loving caring relationship will be the precious redeeming work of the Prince among them who came and bled and died and rose again for them. The arrangement between the Father and Son has been so ordered to identify One Shepherd.

Indeed, the Lord is our Shepherd, and we want no other. *bhs*

One thing we know about the Lord Jesus is that He loves His own people with an everlasting love, and His intention is that we enjoy His love. He is not in the business of creating floundering doubters. He wants you to know that you are precious to Him, that you are His and He is yours, and that you have really come to Him. No one has been damned for self-examination, but millions have been damned for presumption.

Geoffrey Thomas, *Everyone's Invited*

It would crush the highest archangel in an instant!
(Charles Simeon)

"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep!"
John 10:11

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from their sins!" Matthew 1:21

Salvation is a work which no man could accomplish for himself; it is a work which all the angels in Heaven were unequal to perform!

The curse due to sin must be borne--even the wrath of Almighty God! Who could sustain this weight? It would crush the highest archangel in an instant!

None could endure it, but God's divine Son. He cheerfully undertaking to bear it in our place, the Father made Him our sin-atonement substitute; so that, divine justice being satisfied, and the law magnified by His obedience unto death--saving mercy might be extended unto us, and reconciliation be made between God and His chosen people.

Yet it was not enough for Jesus to die for their sin.

"He will feed His flock like a Shepherd.

He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to his heart.

He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young!" Isaiah 40:11

They were wandering afar off, and they must be searched out.

They were in rebellion, and must be subdued.

Even after they are truly converted in this poor world,

they are weak, and must be upheld;

they are tempted, and must be strengthened;

they are beset with enemies, and must be protected;

they must never be left to themselves one moment;

they must have everything done for them;

the whole care of preserving them, from first to last, must be devolved on Him who died for them! They must be "carried in the arms," "dandled on the knees," fed at the bosom, and be watched over exactly like new-born infants!

Nothing less than this will suffice for the redeemed people of God. Though there are millions of His redeemed sheep spread over the face of the whole globe, they must all be attended to as much as if there were only one!

"My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me.

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:27-28.

--copied from Grace Gems, 11/7/23

The Scriptures are profitable for all things. Is the believer cast down? Here are "comforts to delight the soul!" Is he assaulted by Satan? Here is "the sword of the Spirit" to resist him. --Thomas Watson