

November 2010

Christ's Sheep

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27

X. Are you the Messiah? v. 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.” John 10:24 - εκυκλωσαν ουν αυτον οι ιουδαιοι και ελεγον αυτω εως ποτε την ψυχην ημων αιρεις ει συ ει ο χριστος ειπε ημιν παρησια

1. “Then came the Jews round about him,” - εκυκλωσαν ουν αυτον οι ιουδαιοι

The use of the word *gathered around*, *kukloo* in the aorist active indicative, is important for it conveys an hostile intention. If the idea of gathering around him was for conversation, or to meet and greet him, or for fellowship, then several other Greek words could have been used. But with the word *kukloo*, it meant to encircle him with the hostile intention of preventing his escape.

They encircled him for the purpose of not letting him get away so they could force or entrap him, into making a categorical statement whereby they could get on him a charge of **blasphemy** so they could stone him. The encircling of the Lord combined with the emphatic use of *oun, therefore*, bears this out. So this isn't a friendly crowd of people gathering around the Lord for the purpose of fellowship, or instruction in the Word of God, but a crowd of Jews surrounding the Lord with hostile intentions.

2. “How long dost thou make us to doubt?” - και ελεγον αυτω εως ποτε την ψυχην ημων αιρεις

The imperfect active indicative of *lego, saying*, tells us that they just didn't ask him this question, but kept on asking him over and over and from different men in the crowd. The reason for this is obvious was because they were trying to “trip him up”. This is a tendential use of the imperfect telling us that **the action did not attain to the end that it was intended**.

They kept on asking him, (a tactic used by interrogators to confuse the one they're questioning into making a statement they can use against them), if he was the Messiah in the attempt to try to get him to trip up and make a statement so they could bring a charge against him according to Jewish law. But he never answered their question directly by replying yes or no. If he had answered **no**, then they would have got him on that. If he had answered **yes**, then they would have got him on that, because it wouldn't have been according to what **their** idea of a Messiah was!

So their interrogation of the Lord never attained to its intended goal. He never answered their questions, which he didn't have to. They weren't able to trap him into getting a statement from him, so they could have some kind of trumped up charges to justify killing him. If he wasn't the Messiah, the **no** answer, then what was he doing going around acting like the Messiah. If he was the Messiah, then why was he going around like he did. Why isn't he, instead, going out and leading a rebellion against Rome and freeing Israel from its yoke? Why isn't he amassing his army to go out and conquer the entire middle east and bring about their Zionist empire?

3. “*If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.*” - εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς εἶπε ἡμῖν παρρησια

“*If you, you are the Messiah tell us boldly*”. This is the first class condition of *if* in the assumptive use, which is to assume something to be true for the sake of the argument or discussion. They're not saying that they believe that Jesus is the Messiah, but more along this line. 'Let's say, for the sake of argument, that you, you are the Messiah of Israel, then tell us plainly'!

Tell us is the orist active imperative of *lego*, which tells us that they're commanding Christ to answer their questions! What arrogance. Who do they think they are to be telling the Lord what to do? From all this we can definitely see what they thought of the Lord.

The word *plainly* is *parresia* and it meant to speak boldly, confidently, freely, dynamically, or plainly as we have here. It's the manner of speech that the Greek citizen would have in speaking before the public assembly. He had every right to speak his mind on public matters and he would do so boldly.

But Christ didn't have to go down the streets of Jerusalem boldly proclaiming that he was the Messiah. His personal integrity, love, teaching and miracles would speak for themselves. Negative volition always looks for the loud, the dramatic, the show and all that, while positive volition doesn't. A simple statement of truth suffices positive volition.

Christ had taught many things and they had seen his miracles, but they still refused to believe. These Jews were neither believers in Christ, nor were they positive to the truth. It wouldn't have mattered what he did they still wouldn't have believed him. All they wanted to do is get some legal charge against him.

Y. They didn't believe. v. 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.*” John 10:25 - ἀπεκριθη αυτοις ο ιησους ειπον υμιν και ου πιστευετε τα εργα α εγω ποιω εν τω ονοματι του πατρος μου ταυτα μαρτυρει περι εμου

1. “*Jesus answered them, I told you,*” - ἀπεκριθη αυτοις ο ιησους ειπον υμιν

The word for *answer* here is the orist passive indicative of *apokrinomai*, which is to give an answer to a question, or a reply to a statement. It's a culminative orist with the emphasis on the results of that action. **I told you, or I did tell you, but you did not believe!**

The orist active imperative of *lego*, *I told you*, refers to an utterance previously made, but in the imperative mood statements that had been made that carried with them the force of a command. The doctrines, the statements, the words that he had told these Jews, and everyone else for that matter, **came from the throne of the eternal God and carried with them the force of immediate compliance!**

To understand what is going on here, one needs to see that this situation with the Jews in Jerusalem was just part of an ongoing attack against the Lord, where they had been hounding him from the beginning. It was another example of the sons of darkness persecuting the Son of light.

We see it when the Jews questioned John the Baptist as he was ministering. “*And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?*” John 1:19

When the Lord threw the moneychangers out of the temple, the Jews demanded a sign to authenticate his authority as the Messiah. *“Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?”* John 2:18

The Jews persecuted the Lord because he healed an official's son on the Sabbath day. *“And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.”* John 5:16

It was these same Jews that he tried to speak to them about their unbelief. They thought that they could find something in the Scriptures that would save them, but the Scriptures kept pointing them to Jesus Christ – **but they would not come to him**. *“(You) search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”* John 5:39

Again Christ brings out the problem of their unbelief. *“But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.”* John 6:64

Again, because the Jews were trying to kill him, he hung around in Galilee. *“After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.”* John 7:1

The Lord's half brothers in the flesh, (through Mary), who had not yet believed on him as their Savior, were urging him to go up to the feast, but he told them, *“You go up to the feast”*. He did so because his time was not here yet and the Jews were on the look out for him. After they left for the feast, he did go up to it, only in secret, not publicly. *“Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, “Where is that man? (literally an unfavorable connotation – **that one**)””* John 7:11

John 7:19b, *“Why go ye about to kill me?”*, John 7:25b, *“Whom they seek to kill?”*, John 7:30-32, all show that they were still trying to kill the Lord.

The event where the woman caught in adultery was used by the scribes and Pharisees as a trap in order to bring an accusation against the Lord in their ongoing war against him. *“Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.”* John 8:5,6a

John 8:25, *“Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.”*, shows that they were still challenging the Lord demanding to know who he is, even though he had been telling them all along.

John 8:37, *“But ye seek to kill me,”*, shows that they were trying to **kill** him. And again in John 8:40, *“But now ye seek to kill me”*. In John 8:48, *“Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”*, they said he had a **demon**. Again in John 8:52, *“Now we know that thou hast a devil.”*, they said he had a **demon**. In John 8:44, *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*, he was very clear about who these Jews were. He said that they were liars, murderers and that their father was the devil.

And in John 9:22, *“These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.”*, the Jews would kick anybody out of the synagogue, if they confessed that Jesus was the Messiah.

2. “*And ye believed not:*” - και ου πιστευετε

A simple negative statement that summed it all up – “*and you believed not*”. They had not believed him when he was talking before to them, and they still weren't believing him when he was talking to them then. *I did tell you – past tense, and you believed not – historical present where a past event is put in the present to add vividness to it.* The emphatic *ou* emphasizes their continuing negative volition.

So here we come down to our passage where the Jews are carrying along their same strategy of trying to trap him with some trumped up charges where they twisted the Law, but for the real purpose of wanting to kill him. But Christ didn't have to answer their questions. His words, his acts, his miracles were sufficient to verify who he was – the Messiah of Israel! These Jews did not believe his words, nor his miracles, because they did not **want** to believe!

Throughout life you have two kinds of people, those who want to believe because they want the truth, and those who do not believe because they are not interested in the truth! A phenomenon that will be prevalent in the last days. “*And in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.*” 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

3. “*The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.*” - τα εργα α εγω ποιω εν τω ονοματι του πατρος μου ταυτα μαρτυρει περι εμου.

“*The works, or activities, which I am doing in the name of my Father, these bear witness concerning me.*” The fact that Jesus Christ was performing all these miraculous works was demonstrable proof that he had been sent from the Eternal One on high, and that the Eternal One had granted him all power and authority. **Authority** meant he had been given the legal right from the Father to perform these acts, and **power** was the ability to do them.

The word *witness, martureo*, is significant, because in the eyes of the Law a legal fact could not be established apart from two or three witnesses, who had to be someone who had seen it with their own eyes, or heard it with their own ears.

Jesus Christ came to us from the right hand of the Father on high. But what man is qualified to be a witness of that? We were not there to see him at the right hand of the Father and then see him to depart to earth to be born of a virgin. But if he came to earth doing the works of the Father, then these works would bear witness of him and that's what we have here. **He could not have done the works of the Father, unless the Father had granted him the authority and the power to do so in his name.**

Healing the sick, causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear and the lame to walk, raising the dead.. who could do all that apart from the permission and power of God?? And especially doing all those things in the name of God! One could attempt to do those things in the name of God, but if God had not granted him the legal right to do them, and to use his name, then he would not supply the power to do them! So he would have failed miserably in performing any acts of miracles.

No human being was present in heaven when the divine economy was transpiring, so Christ's miracles themselves bore witness concerning him that, like he said, he had been sent from God and that he was the Messiah of Israel.

Z. They were not his sheep. v. 26

“*But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.*” - ἀλλ υμεις ου πιστευετε ου γαρ εστε εκ των προβατων των εμων καθως ειπον υμιν

1. “*But ye believe not,*” - ἀλλ υμεις ου πιστευετε

The didn't believe the Lord when he was doing them and they weren't believing him now, present tense of *pisteuo*, the word for to believe. They didn't believe his personal testimony and they didn't believe the miracles that he was performing, even though he was doing miracles they could easily verify and which they did verify! And why is that? **Because they did not want to believe!**

Alla, but, is used to contrast something, the subject of which is pointed out by the use of the word for *you*, the nominative plural of *humeis*, which would be *you all*, and is speaking of these men from Jerusalem. He is contrasting these unsaved, arrogant, self righteous, legalists from Jerusalem, who were there only to get some trumped up charge on him so they could prosecute him and have him executed, to his sheep. This could be rendered, “*but you, you do not believe*”. By wording it this way it brings our attention to this group of men in contrast to another group comprised of his sheep.

2. “*Because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.*” - ου γαρ εστε εκ των προβατων των εμων καθως ειπον υμιν

Now he goes on to explain why they did not believe his words or his miracles by the use of the word *hoti*, because you are not my sheep! His sheep knew who he was and you didn't see them arguing the point like these men were. They didn't even have to see the miracles to believe! All they had to hear were his words!

We have the use of the emphatic negative *ou* being used here to emphasize the point that they were definitely not his sheep! We have contrasted here self righteous religionists and the true believers in Jesus Christ, who are called his sheep.

We have, “*you are not of my sheep*”, *ek ton probaton ton emon*. The preposition *ek* refers to the idea of belonging to something, such as a nation, a family, a group, etc.. They are not a part of his flock and they do not belong to him. You see, the Father gave to his Son a body of people referred to as believers in Christ, who are also referred to as the sheep of Christ. And what the Lord is saying is that they definitely are not a part of that group and that they do not belong to him.

There are two groups of people living here on the earth, those that belong to Jesus Christ and those who don't! Those who belong to Christ are his sheep. He is the Chief Shepherd of the flock of believers that the Father has given to him, while Pastor-Teachers in the local churches are the Shepherds under him shepherding various parts of the flock belonging to Christ.

What a sobering reality this is, that there is a body of believers on earth who belong to Jesus Christ and are a part of his flock, while at the same time, all else outside of his flock do not belong to him and are on their way to Hell and the lake of fire! The single most important issue for every individual on earth is, do you belong to Christ? Are you part of his flock? Have you trusted him as your Savior? If not, then you need to believe on him as your Lord and Savior now! And in so doing, then you will now be one of his sheep destined for eternity with him.

AA. Christ's Sheep. v.27

“*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*” - τα προβατα τα εμα της φωνης μου ακουει καγω γινωσκω αυτα και ακολουθουσιν μοι.

1. “*My sheep hear my voice,*” - τα προβατα τα εμα της φωνης μου ακουει

We begin with a genitive of possession, *my sheep*, showing that the sheep of Jesus Christ belong to him and only to him. We do not belong to the devil, nor do we belong to the world; we only belong to Christ. We were given to him by the Father in heaven. He paid for us by his death on the cross. We are his and he is ours. Where do the rest of the people of the world belong? To the devil.

The word for *voice* is *phone*, but *phone* does not refer to just the words that one speaks, but the actual distinctive sound of the voice. People say the same words in society, but all of us have a distinctive sound to our voices. A mother knows the sound of her infant, and children know the sound of their mothers and fathers. And in those days, and still today, the sheep know the sound of their shepherd.

So what makes Christ, the chief shepherd's voice, so different than other men's voices? What distinctive sound coming from him would be so recognizable by his sheep? And we note, by his sheep, but not by the people of the world. The answer is the sound of Bible Doctrine! His voice carries with it the sound, the distinctive ring of truth.

When Christ speaks it has a distinctive spiritual quality, the sound of truth, that goes out and resonates in our souls. And why wouldn't it, for our new natures are comprised of spirit and truth! When other men speak, it's just noise. But when he speaks, there is something about his words that we must have, that our souls need – Bible Doctrine. We don't care about the pomp and ceremony, the religious facade, or even what he looks like! What draws us to him is the truth that he speaks.

The hearing spoken of here, *akouo*, is the hearing of believing, holding to, depending upon and following after the sound of truth being spoken. For where that sound does, the sheep follow after. **The sheep must follow after!** As Peter said, “*Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*” John 6:68

2. “*And I know them,*” - καγω γινωσκω αυτα

Kai plus ego, kago, is, “*and I know them*”. One thing about the Semitic shepherd in those days was that he knew who his sheep were. He walked with them, he talked to them, he lived, ate and slept with them, he watched over them, he protected them, he helped them when in trouble or need, and he led them from pasture to pasture so they might feed.

So it would be easy to see that after spending all his time with his sheep he would know each and everyone of them. Like after **losing the one sheep** the shepherd goes out to find it. “*What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?*” Luke 15:4 Like him **separating his sheep from the goats on Judgment day!** “*And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*” Matthew 25:32 So when Jesus told those Jews that **they were not his sheep**, he knew exactly what he was talking about!

3. “*And they follow me.*” - και ακολουθουσιν μοι

All three of the verbs in this passage are in the indicative mood, the mood of reality, but they are declarative indicatives to denote that Christ is declaring a fact of reality in each instance. “My sheep hear my voice...and I know them...and they follow me!

If one can picture the Semitic shepherd leading his flock from pasture to pasture, one would see a variety of things along the way. There were those sheep who always stayed the closest to the shepherd. Sometimes he would break the leg of a young lamb, then bind it up and carry it in his arms until the leg healed. But when it healed, it never strayed after that and was always close to him. Then there were those who stayed fairly close, but not as close as the others.

Then there were always the occasional sheep, who wandered off and got caught in the brambles, briars, bushes and thorns, (a picture of the believer involved in the world system). And when it yelled out, the shepherd would come over with his staff and take the end of his staff with the crook on the end, reach into the briars, grab his rear leg, jerk him out leaving some of his wool behind and return him sheepishly to the fold. How many believers have left much, or all, of their production behind in the world, when the Lord returned them to the fold?

Then there were the sheep, who strayed so far from the shepherd, that they became prey for the predators. Which is a picture of believers, who stray away from the Word of God, and then become prey for false teachers. And then there were the “cast down” sheep, who because they had become wet, or had so much wool, that they ended up on their backs and couldn't get up by themselves. They bleated and the shepherd came and set them back on their hooves. This is a picture of depressed believers, who, when they call out to the Lord, the Lord will come and get them back on their feet.

And there was the problem with wolves creeping in among the flock. The sheep didn't recognize them, but the shepherd certainly did. The wolves refers to unsaved men teaching false doctrines, as well as false brothers or legalists coming into a local assembly. The average Christian will not pick up on them, but the men with the spiritual gift of Pastor-Teacher certainly do. The protection the Lord provides for this is for Christians to stay close to the teaching of the Word of God in a local church that has men with the gift of Pastor-Teacher.

Now all the sheep knew the sound of the voice of the shepherd and they knew what he wanted them to do. For the sheep that stayed close to the shepherd, because of that closeness, there was no problem with them wandering off, straggling behind, or becoming a meal for the wolf. For the larger body of the sheep that stayed somewhat close, there was no problem either, except in the case of the wolf coming in among their midst. For the sheep wandering off, or straggling behind, these were those who knew the sound of their shepherd's voice, but were more interested in whatever was distracting them.

Now there were several words for following after:

dioko – to pursue after

katadioko – to pursue after with determination

sunakoloutheo – to follow along with, to accompany a leader

parakoloutheo – to follow close by, side by side

katakoloutheo – to follow intently behind

epakoloutheo – to follow closely behind

exakoloutheo – to follow to the end

akoloutheo – a follower, companion, or disciple

But the significance of *akoloutheo* is a follower, a companion, one going in the same direction with the idea of union and likeness. What this is saying is that Christ and his sheep are heading in the same direction, that is, to heaven and into eternal life and that we are all one with him! Our union with Christ occurred when we trusted him as our Savior.

Christ's relationship with his Church remains always the same. He is faithful, dependable, loving, concerned, protective, always watching over us, leading us in the paths of righteousness and truth, etc.. But the Church's relationship with him in our daily living varies somewhat.

There are some believers, who through various trials and suffering, have been trained to stay close to him always listening to the sound of his voice – Bible Doctrine. Other believers are close, but not as close. They are still within the sound of his voice, but have other things that they're interested in. Similar to the inner and outer core of churches.

Then there are those believers who can't seem to keep their noses out of the world system. So they're always wandering off from the sound of the Shepherd's voice, (the teaching of the Word of God as taught in the local church), and getting themselves entangled in the affairs of this life to their own detriment.

Then there are those Christians, who either wander off, or straggle way behind the flock, who make themselves easy prey for the predators with their false doctrines. These false teachers would bring them under legalism, programism, the occult, the new age movement, anything contrary to grace, faith and truth. But regardless of what the temporal existence is on earth of each one of Christ's sheep, they are all going in the same direction of heaven and eternal life.

So *akoloutheo* allows for the fact that Christ's sheep are all of his fold. Some stay close, some are close by, some straggle behind and some go wandering off into the briars and brambles of Satan's world system, but all belong to him and all are heading in the same direction having the same destination and that is to be with him and his Father in eternity.

The comforting assurance is that Christ knows who each one of his sheep are and he will not lose any of them. *“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, **and go after that which is lost, until he find it?**”* Luke 15:4 *“And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that **of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing**, but should raise it up again at the last day.”* John 6:39

Some believers mistakenly think they can lose their salvation, usually because of their misinterpretation of 2 Peter 2:22, *“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The **dog** is turned to his own vomit again; and the **sow** that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”* What they fail to see is that animals are used metaphorically in the Bible to denote a variety of concepts, but in this passage they are referring to unsaved individuals.

The **dog** refers to unsaved men. The **sow** refers to unsaved women. The **wolf** refers to unsaved men who are teachers, prophets, etc., **but these three animals never refer to believers!** There is only one animal that is used figuratively to refer to believers in Christ and that is the **sheep!** And the sheep, when they wander off, **are returned to their shepherd.** *“For ye were as **sheep** going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”* 1 Peter 2:25