

## 90. The Gospel of John—9:35-10:1

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### *“The Good Shepherd” Pt.1*

(10/6/19)

As we have been studying John’s gospel, we came to chapter 8 where we pointed out that chapters 8:1 thru 10:21 together present one incident which took place over the course of a single day—which started in John 8 with these words—

#### **John 8:2-6 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup> Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, <sup>4</sup> they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. <sup>5</sup> Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" <sup>6</sup> This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him...

After the Lord turned the tables on these men by saying to them—“*Let him who is without sin cast the first stone...*”—He then told this woman to go her way and sin no more (stop living a sexually immoral life and start living a God honoring life!).

From there He got into a lengthy and heated confrontation with the Pharisees that made up the rest of the chapter ending with Him (once again) referring to Himself as the ‘Great I AM’ (v.58) and them taking up stones to kill Him for blasphemy (v.59).

As Jesus walked thru the midst of them (probably, supernaturally) and passed by leaving the Temple area—chapter 9 begins by telling us that He came across a blind man who was begging—a man who was blind from birth.

➔ Paraphrase chapter 9

We left off last time with verse 34—

**John 9:34 (NKJV)**

**<sup>34</sup> They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out. [excommunicated him from the synagogue].**

Here is where we pick up the story for this morning—

**John 9:35-38 (NKJV)**

**<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" <sup>36</sup> He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" <sup>37</sup> And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." <sup>38</sup> Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.**

This then becomes the segue into chapter 10 where Jesus declares Himself to be the Good Shepherd—as opposed to the religious leaders of Israel who were evil or bad shepherds.

I believe that John chapter 10 is the partial fulfillment of what the God of Israel promised the nation in the indictment He brought against the bad (evil) shepherds of Israel (religious leaders like the Pharisees)—six hundred years earlier thru the prophet Ezekiel:

**Ezekiel 34:1-11 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" <sup>3</sup> You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, *but* you do not feed the flock. <sup>4</sup> The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. <sup>5</sup> So they were scattered because *there was* no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. <sup>6</sup> My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching *for them*.'" <sup>7</sup> "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: <sup>8</sup> "*as I live*," says the Lord GOD, "surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock"-- <sup>9</sup> therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD! <sup>10</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them." <sup>11</sup> "For thus

says the Lord GOD: "**Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out...**[a prophecy of Jesus as the 'Good Shepherd']

Before we look at chapter 10—let's finish chapter 9.

In chapter 9 we see a man blind from birth, slowly having his spiritual eyes opened as he went from unbelief to saving faith:

- In verse 11 he refers to the Lord as, "*a Man named Jesus.*"
- In verse 17 his faith in Jesus deepens to the point he refers to Him as "*a Prophet*".
- In verse 33 his faith grows deeper still, and he says of Jesus that "*He came from God*" (some kind of heavenly messenger—maybe an angel in human form).
- And finally, in verse 38 we read that his faith climaxed when Jesus asked him, "*Do you believe in Me as the Son of God?*" (v.35), and he responded to Jesus—"Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

It is important to understand that not all faith is *saving* faith—

**John 2:23-25 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many *believed* in His name when they saw the signs which He did. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, <sup>25</sup> and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

**James 2:14-18 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

James didn't teach faith *plus* works equals salvation—he taught a faith *that* works as evidence of salvation.

Let me paraphrase what James is saying—“*If a person claims to be a Christian ('has faith') but has no works (no fruit or evidence of a changed life) to back it up—can that kind of so-called faith save him?*”

This is the very thing Jesus taught when He said of true Christians—“*you will know them by their fruit*” (Matt.12:33).

It's very comforting to know that—to be saved a person doesn't have to be able to rattle off doctrine like a theologian.

Saving faith is a *simple* faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ—so much so that a child can believe and be saved—or even an adult with ‘child-like’ faith as we see in this man whom Jesus healed of blindness.

**John 9:38-39 (NKJV)**

<sup>38</sup> ...**"Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.** <sup>39</sup> **And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."**

At first glance, this statement by Jesus seems to contradict what He said earlier in John 3:17—**“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn [judge] the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

However, there is no conflict or contradiction here with what the Lord said in John 9:39.

In John 3:17, the condemnation (judgment) that Jesus was referring to was the *final* judgment where unbelievers would be judged and sent to hell (Rev.20:11-15)—Jesus hadn't come the first time as a Judge to send people to hell—He came the first time as a Savior to offer them eternal life in heaven.

Whereas the *judgment* He is talking about in John 9:39 is a *separating* of the true from the false—the sheep that belonged to Him from those who were not His sheep—how?

By declaring the truth of God (the gospel)—those who responded were judged to be His sheep and those (like the Pharisees) who rejected Him judged themselves to not be His sheep.

**John 10:27 (NKJV)**

**<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

In essence, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, was *calling* to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—it was up to each individual Jew whether they responded to His voice (as their Shepherd) and followed Him out of Judaism and into the Good Shepherd's fold (the Church)—or not!

In that regard it *was* a judgment—but a judgment that each person chose for themselves—from their own free will! (Just like the final judgment!)

**John 9:39 (NKJV)**

**<sup>39</sup> And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, **that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.**"**

When Jesus said He came into the world so that, **“those who do not see may see”**—He was referring to people like this blind man who was blind physically—but was also ‘blind’ spiritually with regard to spiritual truth.

And he was by no means alone—there were many others in Jewish society who were spiritually blind, but who received no help from their spiritual leaders (shepherds) of Israel (who were themselves ‘blind leaders of the blind’)—because they loathed these people and considered them fodder for hell fire instead of those God loved and wanted to redeem.

You see, these weren't sophisticated people—certainly not religious scholars like the Scribes and Pharisees who claimed to know the Word of God better than anyone—or in other words, to ‘**see**’ the truth of God better than anyone else.

These were simple people whom society had written off because they were poor or who had to steal to get by or sell their bodies for money to survive.

These were folks that didn't have a degree in theology (Judaism)—and so in that respect they **'didn't see'** (in other words, were ignorant and unlearned with regard to spiritual truth).

And yet these kinds of people (tax-collectors, prostitutes and other social outcasts like this blind man) seemed to make up a large portion of Jesus' followers, because they knew they were blind to the things of God and lost—but they were humble enough to admit it and look to Jesus for hope.

The Pharisees on the other hand—were at the other end of the spectrum.

These men were so full of themselves, so filled with pride because of their knowledge of Judaism (doctors of the Law), so sure that they (and they alone) **saw** and understood spiritual truth when others were blind—that they couldn't see the truth when He was standing right in front of their eyes—Jesus—God in human form!

And their spiritual *'perception'* told them that Jesus was *not* the Messiah—in fact that He was a crazy person who had a demon (John 8:48)!

And so with every word Jesus spoke they became more and more hardhearted to His message and with it more and more blind to God's truth—which is what Jesus alluded to at the end of verse 39—**“that those who see** (who think they see) **may be made** (*'might become permanently'*) **blind.**”

One pastor said this—

*“Spiritual sight comes only to **those** who acknowledge that they **do not see**, who confess their spiritual blindness and their need for the Light of the World. On the other hand, **those who** think they **see** on their own apart from Christ delude themselves and will remain **blind**. They will not come to the Light, because they love the darkness and do not want their evil deeds to be exposed (3:19).”*

- ➔ Relate to Roman Catholics who think they ‘see’ but are blind. In that regard they are like the Jewish people that Paul mentioned in Romans 10 that—*“they have a zeal for God but not according to the truth of God with regard to salvation...”*

And so again, the Pharisees were so blinded by their pride while at the same time totally convinced they were the only ones who really understood spiritual things—that it never crossed their minds that they could actually be blind to the truth of God.

So much so that when Jesus said in verse 39 that He came to give sight to those who knew they were spiritually blind, but also to blind permanently those who think they see—we read in verse 40:

**John 9:40 (NKJV)**

**<sup>40</sup> Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"**

In the Greek their question comes thru this way—**“You’re not saying that we’re blind also are You?”**

*“They expected a negative answer because they assumed that certainly they, of all men, possessed spiritual perception. Sin constantly deceives people so they live in falsehood.”*

To which Jesus responded, **"If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore, your sin remains."** (v.41)

The Pharisees couldn’t plead ‘ignorance’—their pride told them their spiritual perception and vision was superior to everyone else’s—therefore, as Jesus said, their guilt (sin) remained.

Warren Wiersbe—

*“Our Lord’s reply was a paradox. “If you were blind, you would be better off. But you claim to see. Therefore, you are guilty!” Blindness would at least be an excuse for not knowing what was going on. But they did know what was going on. Jesus had performed many miracles and the religious leaders ignored the evidence to make a right decision.*

*Jesus is the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5). The only people who cannot see the light are blind people and those who refuse to look, those who make themselves blind. The beggar was physically blind and spiritually blind, yet both his eyes and his heart were opened. Why? Because*

*he listened to the Word, believed it, obeyed, and experienced the grace of God. The Pharisees had good physical vision, but they were blind spiritually. Had they listened to the Word and sincerely considered the evidence, they too would have believed on Jesus Christ and been born again."*

**John 10:1 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."**

At first glance you might think that, starting in chapter 10—Jesus has moved on and is introducing a whole new subject—but you’d be wrong.

This is a continuation of what Jesus was talking about to end chapter 9.

John chapter 9 is all about a ‘lost sheep’ of Israel (man born blind) who was rejected by the bad shepherds of Israel (Pharisees) who cast him out of their ‘sheepfold’ (Judaism) and how the Good Shepherd found him and made him a part of *His* fold (the Church).

But as we pointed out numerous times in our study of chapter 9—this blind man represents fallen humanity (all of us who are born spiritually blind).

And in that regard, we are all lost sheep that need a shepherd to lead us in our journey thru life—which brings us to chapter 10!

John 10 contains one of the most beautiful and powerful discourses in the New Testament—the Good Shepherd discourse.

This whole discourse centers around Jesus as the Good Shepherd in contrast to the false shepherds of Israel (the Pharisees) whom Jesus calls ‘*thieves and robbers*’—who only came to steal, kill and destroy the sheep.



False shepherds, whether they were in the Old Testament or the New Testament or who are living right now are always the same—they never care about their flock, all they care about is themselves!

The New Testament especially says they're in it for the money, the power and the prestige that comes with the title “THE Minister”!

They fancy themselves as celebrities as they strut across on stage wearing their eighteen hundred-dollar Armani suit and five hundred-dollar Oxford loafers, having come to a “ministry” event in their own private jet.

Jesse Duplantis just acquired his fourth private jet; and Kenneth Copeland’s ministry recently purchased a \$8 million jet (they’re trying to raise \$17 million more for a new hanger to park it in) for him to fly to “ministry” events.

Copeland is worth over seven hundred and fifty million dollars and lives in a six million dollar lakefront mansion.

These men and others like them are definitely *not* in ministry to help people—they use people to get what they want.

As someone has said, “They are ‘*fleecers*’ of the flock and not feeders of the flock.”

And so, Jesus is contrasting the false shepherds of Israel with Himself as the Good and True Shepherd.

And before He ascended back to His Father—He commissioned His ‘under-shepherds’ (pastors) to conduct themselves as good shepherds to His sheep.

To Peter He said—"Feed My lambs"; "Tend (watch over and protect) My sheep"; "Feed My sheep". (John 21:15-17)

Peter took that to heart and passed it along to other pastor/shepherds in the church—

**1 Peter 5:2-4 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; <sup>3</sup> nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; <sup>4</sup> and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

This reminds us of what Paul told the Ephesian elders regarding his ministry to their churches—

**Acts 20:33-35 (NKJV)**

<sup>33</sup> I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. <sup>34</sup> Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. <sup>35</sup> I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

The church is rife with phonies, con-men, hucksters and rip-off artists masquerading as good shepherds but whose only interest in the flock of God is to 'fleece' them—

**2 Peter 2:3 (NLT2)**

<sup>3</sup> In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money.

In John 10 the Good Shepherd is calling you to make Him your Shepherd—to follow and serve Him with your whole heart and life.