

Title: Who is our Shepherd?

Text: Is 40: 10-31

Date: Dec 24, 2023

Place: SGBC, NJ

As I preach this the day before Christmas, I remind you, that we know Christmas is a pagan holy day. Christmas was originated by false religion. The specific day of our Lord's birth is not given in scripture nor the specific day of his death.

It is who was born and lived and laid down his life that is important not the day. It is why he came into this world that is important. It is for whom he laid down his life that is important. It is what he accomplished—the redemption of God's chosen people—that is important.

I was speaking with a pastor this week. He made the comment, "We preach the incarnation every time we preach. We cannot preach the gospel without doing so."

While we attach no significance to the day, we do rejoice that God overruled the pagans and their vain intentions to preserve a day when the whole world hears that the GodMan, Christ Jesus, shall save his people from their sins.

Isaiah 40: 10: Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Jehovah God has come, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is "Immanuel, God with us." "His name shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." He has accomplished his work of redeeming his people from the curse of the law.

John 10: 15: As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Hebrews 1: 3: [God in these last days has spoken to us by his Son]...Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Hebrews 9:12: Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

He made his people the righteousness of God in him. By one offering he perfected forever them that are sanctified.

Isaiah 40: 11: He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young

Christ is the Shepherd and his people are his sheep. We are Christ's sheep by the Father's election, by the purchase of Christ's own blood, by regeneration of the Holy Spirit. We are *his flock*.

Our Shepherd is *feeding his flock*. He is gathering his sheep through the preaching of his gospel. He is the Life and Bread that he feeds his flock. The gospel preached by his under-shepherds is the means by which he feeds us himself.

Our Shepherd is *gathering the lambs with his arm*. He is using us who he has gathered to preach him. By his word he is gathering to himself his lost sheep who he redeemed. He is doing it through the preaching that exalts his person and his work, while declaring all flesh and the goodness thereof is as grass that perishes. Our Shepherd shall do so for each one the Father chose who he redeemed.

Ezekiel 34: 16: I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Through the preaching of his gospel, by his strong hand, he is *carrying us in his bosom and gently leading those that are with young*. He leads us to see our own vileness and sinfulness more and more. He leads us to behold him more and more. He leads us gently as he gives us grace to bear up. The way our Shepherd leads us is typified in the way Jacob led his people and his flock.

Genesis 33: 13: And [Jacob] said unto [Esau], My lord knoweth that the children *are* tender, and the flocks and herds with young *are* with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. 14: Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

Christ our Shepherd leads us into green pastures and beside still waters, that is, into rest (Ps 23). He leads us into paths of righteousness for his name's sake. He leads us through the valley of the shadow of death. His rod and his staff comfort us along the way. He prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies. Christ anoints our head with oil and fills our cup till it overflows. He goes before us and he the Goodness and Mercy that follows us. So He will lead us into final glory.

But who is our Shepherd? Is Christ able to lead us? Is our Shepherd able to do the things promised here through Isaiah? Who is our Shepherd?

OUR SHEPHERD IS GOD OUR CREATOR

Isaiah 40: 12: Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Brethren, our Shepherd is our Creator who created all things. Look at the tiny hollow of your hand. Christ is God with a mighty big hand. He measured the waters in the hollow of his hand.

From the tip of the thumb to the tip of the index finger is a span. He meted out heaven with the span. The way we open a window on our computer our Shepherd spread out heaven.

Think of how much dust there is in the world. Think of how grand the mountains and the hills. Christ our Shepherd—the same one who calls and leads his sheep—measured the dust and the mountains and hills in scales.

OUR SHEPHERD IS WISDOM

Isaiah 40: 13: Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him? 14: With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

There is none before Christ our Shepherd. There was none with him. “He is before all things and by him all things consist.” He is Judgment and Knowledge. He is Wisdom!

Proverbs 3: 19: The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. 20: By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

Christ is the Wisdom of God. He is God our Wisdom.

Proverbs 8: 14: Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom: I *am* understanding; I have strength...22: The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. 23: I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. 24: When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth; when *there were* no fountains abounding with water. 25: Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: 26: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27: When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: 28: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: 30: Then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him; 31: Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights *were* with the sons of men.

WHAT ARE FALLEN SINNERS BEFORE HIM?

Isaiah 40: 15: Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. 16: And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. 17: All nations before him *are* as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

We cannot offer anything to him to merit salvation? If you burnt all Lebanon and all the beasts thereof it would not be sufficient to save? We cannot give anything to God. It all belongs to him. He made it all. All are as nothing and counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. For any offering to merit salvation it would have to profit God. Nothing we do profits God. He profits us.

Job 22:2: Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

Job 35:7: If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?

Psalms 16:2: O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;

OUR SHEPHERD IS INCOMPARABLE GOD

Isaiah 40: 18: To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? 19: The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. 20: He that *is* so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree *that* will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, *that* shall not be moved. 21: Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22: *It is* he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: 23: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. 24: Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

When is the last time that you had your day planned and when you headed out the door, a grasshopper stopped you from doing your work? Christ our Shepherd *sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; He brings princes to nothing. He makes the judges of the earth as vanity.*

Job 9: 12: Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

Our Shepherd is who Nebuchadnezzar spoke of when he declared:

Dan 4: 34...he liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: 35: And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Remember, how he said all flesh is grass? The flesh withers because he blows upon it. When it comes to princes or anyone that would attempt to hinder his work of feeding his flock, Christ promises us, "*Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.*"

We take the blower and blow the leaves off the parking lot. That is what our Savior does to the most powerful men in this world—*the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.*

THE WORD FROM OUR SHEPHERD TO US

When his child becomes weak and weary, here is what our Shepherd speaks effectually into our hearts. This what our Shepherd commands you and me to do today.

Isaiah 40: 25: To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. 26: Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is strong in power; not one faileth.*

The sun and moon and stars have not failed since he created them. The waters rain down, filter into the heart of the earth, come up as springs out of the earth, flow back to the sea. Then they do it all over again. Why? "*By the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth.*"

Brethren this is the Shepherd who became a Man like us. This is our Shepherd who laid down his life and justified us. This is our Shepherd who sent the gospel to us and called us to himself. He shall not fail to carry us in his bosom and keep us and deliver us into glory with him.

This is his message to his people. This is why he gave Isaiah this word to preach. This is his application to us.

Isaiah 40: 27: Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

When we are afflicted and trouble comes, why do we think our affliction is out his control? Why do we think our Shepherd has forgotten us? Why do we think we have to take matters into our own hands?

Isaiah 40: 28: Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

We are Jacob—sinful, supplanters in our flesh. Our salvation is that we are Israel by our heavenly Father's divine election. Our salvation is that Christ redeemed us. He regenerated us and made us know we are his Israel.

Little sinful man, who puts so much stock in our strength and our wisdom, we grow weary and sleep. But not our Shepherd. He is God. He faints not. He is never weary. There is no searching of his understanding. Even when we sleep, he is working all things together for the good of his people and for his own glory. And he is doing it in perfect wisdom.

Child of God do say, "But I am the sinner! I don't understand what to do in my trial! I am weary now! I am faint!" Then listen to his next word.

Isaiah 40: 29: He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have no might* he increaseth strength. 30: Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

Remember how our Shepherd wrestled Jacob? As long as Jacob fought, Jacob did not and could not prevail with our Shepherd. But the Lord brought him to the point that Jacob had no strength—the Lord brought him there by touching the hollow of his thigh. Then all Jacob could do was cry out for mercy. Scripture says that is how Jacob prevailed

Hosea 12:4: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: [how?] he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him *in* Bethel, and there he spake with us;

Child of God, who do you think worked your current trial and brought you to this point where you are weary and have no strength? It is the Lord touching the hollow of your thigh! It is the Lord making you see you have no strength! It is the Lord bringing you to cry out to him for mercy. The Lord our Shepherd has done it to reveal to you that he is your strength.

2 Corinthians 12: 7: And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8: For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9: And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10: Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

He giveth power to the faint but only to the faint. To them that have no might he increaseth strength. But why does he take so long to do it? He is teaching us he is the Lord, not us. He is teaching us to wait on him!

Isaiah 30: 31: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Waiting on the Lord is believing God. Waiting on the Lord is walking by faith, not by sight. They that wait upon the LORD shall "renew" strength. He shall renew strength in us. He is our Strength!

Isaiah 45:24 Surely, shall *one* say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

Child of God, do you believe that in Christ is all your Righteousness? It would be sin to try to work out a righteousness of our own, would it not? It is just as sinful, it is just as much salvation by works, to try to sanctify and save ourselves by our own strength. It is just as much glorying in self to try to sanctify ourselves by our own strength. "*Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even TO HIM shall men come*" (Is 45: 24). And Christ our Sanctifier is the one who strengthens us enough to even call on him for strength!

Those that are truly the Lords, he shall make weary in order that he might make us see we have no righteousness and we have no strength in ourselves. He will make it so that the only thing we can do is cry out to him for mercy just like he did Jacob!

Then *the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

We see this when the LORD delivered Israel out of bondage and lead through the wilderness. He said, "I delivered you on eagles wings and brought you to myself."

Deuteronomy 32: 11: As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: 12: *So* the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him. 13: He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock;

He is still doing so! because he will not lose one! He waits to so that we lose all strength in ourselves. He touches the hollow of our thigh by providence and brings us to cry out for mercy. It is because he will be exalted in the heart of his people.

Isaiah 30: 18: And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD *is* a God of judgment: blessed *are* all they that wait for him. 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

Have you called upon him? Have you confessed you have no righteousness and no strength except in the Lord? He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry. When he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

Colossians 3: 1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace...

Amen!