

SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King's Kids.

<u>News:</u>

Wednesday Evening Classes 6:30-8:00

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776 Visit the website ~ **www.myaletheia.com** Like us on Facebook (aletheiachristianfellowship) Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com

John 10:11-21 ~

Here's the contrast once again. While Jesus, the True Shepherd, sacrifices _____ in place of His sheep, the present leaders of the Jewish people are <u>like</u> hired hands.

The sheep are the one thing that makes the job of shepherding _____.

Roughly 40% of all American ______ are actively considering leaving the ministry.

On average, pastors serve a church for _____ years. Only ____% will stay in ministry long enough to retire as a pastor.

If you are in ministry to make a ______ as a hireling, you will very likely become a statistic.

All Jews understood God as their _____, but none would have personalized the relationship the way Jesus did – it was shocking.

Add to that His fourth formal "I AM" statement in the space of a handful of verses and then add His crazy claim that He can _____ His life and take it back up again.

Verse 16 expands on the ______ nature of Jesus' mission as the One and Only Savior.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Jesus said that He _____ His Own.

And we, if we are His, _____ Him as well. There is an inexorable pull towards Him for all His sheep, even if born in a time or a place where they never have opportunity to hear His Name – they intuitively _____ Him and immediately recognize Him once introduced.

This bilateral ______ of each other is so strong that Jesus equated it to the absolutely perfect knowing of each other between the Himself, the Word of God and His Father, the Will of God.

The Father has given Jesus His _____ and Jesus will not lose a single one of them.

I Corinthians 10:13b, "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able."

At the end of verse 16 Jesus added what is five words in Greek $\gamma \epsilon v \eta \sigma ov \tau \alpha \iota \mu i \alpha \pi o i \mu v \eta$, $\epsilon i \zeta \pi o \iota \mu \eta v$ (gě-nā-sŏn-tī mē-ä poym-nā hās poy-mān). The first word means that it will come to be. The next four words create a _____ that basically means "one sheep flock, one sheep herder."

Because of that there is to be perfect _____ within the one flock as we are exhorted in Ephesians 4:2-6.

Nothing is worse than _____ in the flock. So many Christians today have little use for the church – what a travesty.

We think the _____ is supposed to serve us.

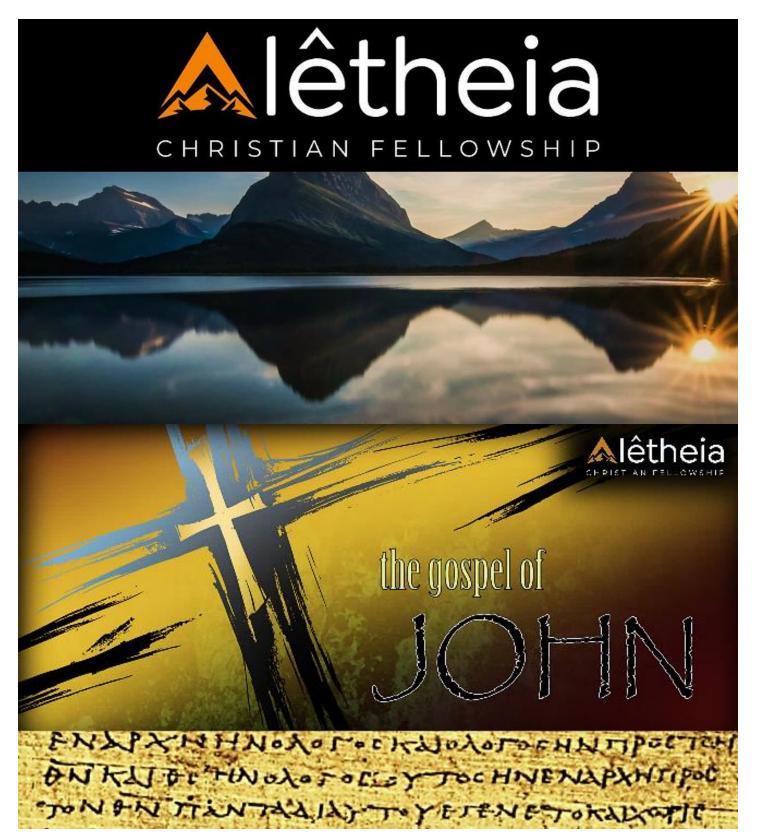
Because God has provided only _____ Savior, that Savior must be a _____ Savior.

That concept, fleshed out a bit further, confirms that there is only one God of all the people and therefore no people have a special ethnic ______ to Him. It was an absolutely mind-blowing concept to people.

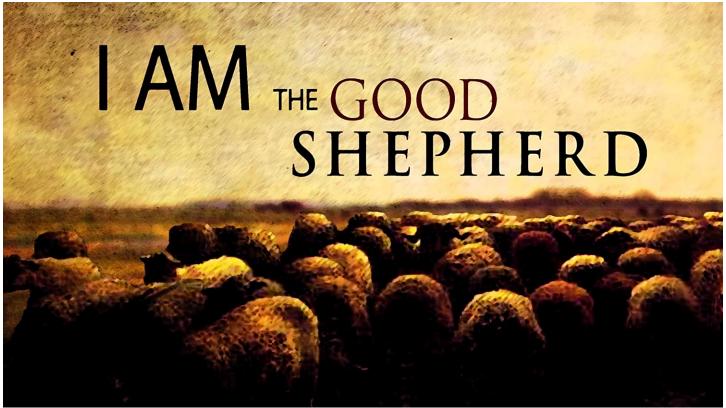
Christianity, called the New Covenant, is the evolved and _____ state of what came before. Since He is the God of all, Christianity has to be the path for all.

Destroy sin and _____ cannot hold You. That's why the bodily Resurrection is the proof that it worked.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.



As we've seen, Jesus has unequivocally claimed to be the One and Only True Doorway that exists between God and mankind, which is the basis for His claim to also be the One and Only True Shepherd. Both roles are related. In fact, the second actually confirms the first.



We saw in John 10:11, Jesus declared, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." That very act of laying down His life for the sheep makes Him the only Door for the sheep.



Jesus continued in John 10:12&13, 12"He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13"He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

Here's the contrast once again. While Jesus, the True Shepherd, sacrifices His life in place of His sheep, the present leaders of the Jewish people are like hired hands.

Verse 13 clarifies that the type of person He was talking about, "is not concerned about the sheep." So,

6

Jesus wasn't describing the character and integrity of every conceivable employee; He was making His point with the all-too-common type of employee who only works for the pay. In such cases, not only is there no real concern for the employer's business or assets, there's often a level of animosity or resentment involved. In Jesus' example, the hireling has no love for the Owner's sheep – in fact, the sheep are the one thing that makes the job of shepherding difficult.

Imagine how great it would be to be paid to shepherd sheep, if there were no sheep to deal with. To bring this back to Jesus' original point, while He would voluntarily take the sheep's place in the slaughterhouse, the Jewish religious leaders would run the other way leaving the sheep to their fate. When personally threatened they would eagerly throw the sheep to the wolves to save themselves. What's crazy is at the very instant that the sheep need a protector, the protector protects only himself.

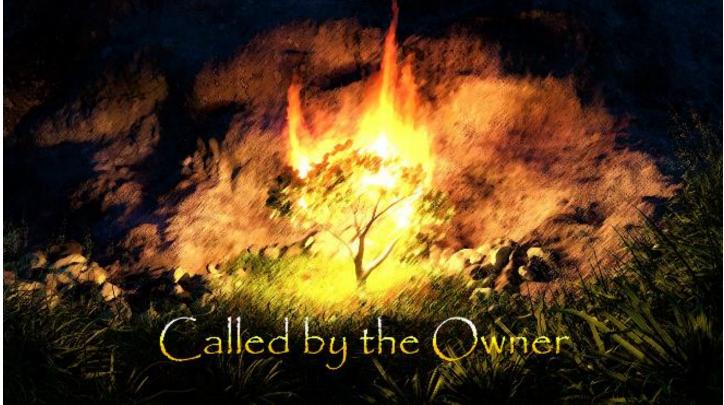
There exists then only an illusion of protection. Which then, is the beautiful shepherd?

To bring it to the present day, I must tell you that I've known a fair number of pastors who are in ministry

because it seemed to them to be a great way to make a living. It's a horrible idea for a whole host of reasons, not the least of which is precisely what Jesus was talking about.

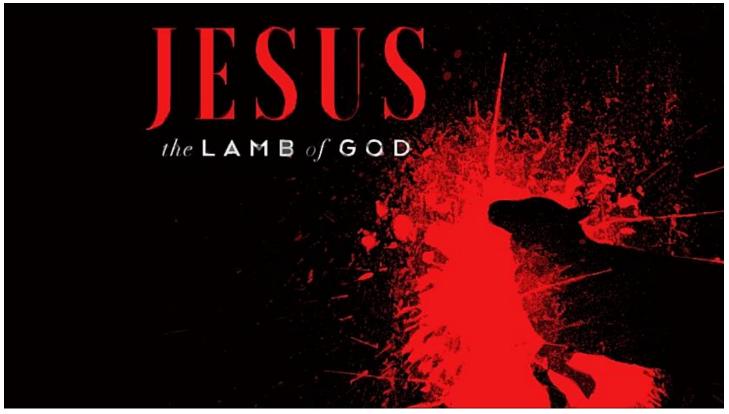
When you're only in ministry for the paycheck, it's difficult to care about the sheep, because the sheep are the very thing that makes ministry difficult. In almost every church in American the person filling the position of pastor is merely creating the illusion that the church has a pastor. What they actually have is a person who will abandon them in their time of need. That goes all the way from failing to teach God's Word, to refusing to address bad doctrine and behavior. It goes from being unavailable to support individuals in their trials to bailing out when times get tough... It is an illusion that there is a pastor.

Pastor burnout is epidemic. Roughly 40 percent of all American pastors are actively considering leaving the ministry. That same number 4 out of every 10 pastors, admit that they are struggling mentally. In other words, only 60 percent of American pastors rate their present mental health as normal. On average, pastors serve a church for four years. It is extremely rare for a pastor to serve a single church for more than 10 years. Even with pastors bouncing from church to church, only 1 pastor in 10 of them – that's a mere 10%, will stay in ministry long enough to retire as a pastor. There's a real problem. I've seen it firsthand.



If you are in ministry to make a paycheck as a hireling, you will very likely become a statistic. The only reason anyone should ever shepherd the Owner's sheep is if that person is called by the Owner and accepts that calling. It's just too hard, unless you have accepted the role of under-shepherd by allowing the love the Owner has for His sheep to rub off on you. There is a supernatural bond that I have with the people presently under my care. I'm not unconcerned about the people who have yet to place themselves under my pastoral care, and I'm not unconcerned about those who have taken themselves out of my pastoral care, but it's a normal amount of Christian concern. For those who are part of the flock today, there is a different level. I love you; I want to feed you; I want to keep you from eating bad food; I want to protect you; I would literally risk my life to save yours.

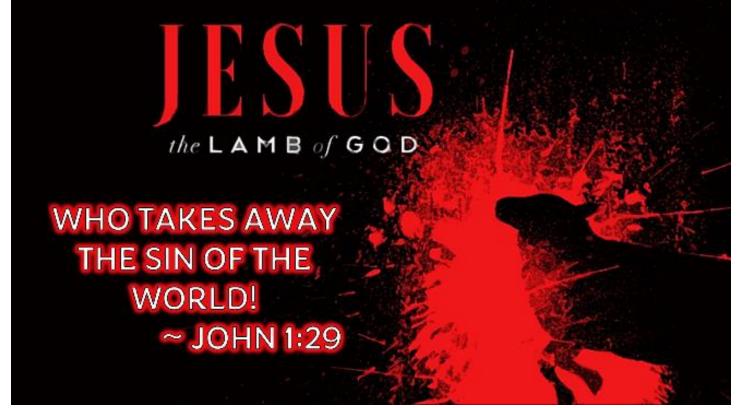
I don't want anything from you other than what God wants for you. If you care about me at all – love God and love each other. Jesus, the Beautiful Shepherd, demands no less than that from you.



John 10:14-21, 14"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, 15even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16"I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. 17"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18"No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." 19A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words. 20Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?" 21Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"

We need to note that in this context Jesus has made it abundantly clear to His audience that "the Father," who He calls "My Father," is Yahweh God. All Jews understood God as their Father, but none would have personalized it the way Jesus did – it was shocking. Jesus was claiming a closer familial connection with God than was acceptable for a human.

Add to that His fourth formal "I AM" statement in the space of a handful of verses and then add His crazy claim that He can lay down His life at will and take it back up again at will. I think you get the picture. It was quite obvious to the people there that Jesus was making outrageous claims. They were so outrageous, in fact, that they spawned a wide range of reactions from His audience. Everything from angry dismissal to hopeful consideration, but mostly confusion. How could He be claiming what I think He claimed. Surely, He didn't mean what I thought He said. As with the two "I AM" statements about existing as the only "Door" Jesus makes two about existing as the only "Beautiful Shepherd." In both cases He goes from statements about His Messianic role to Israel, and then extends His statements to the entire world.

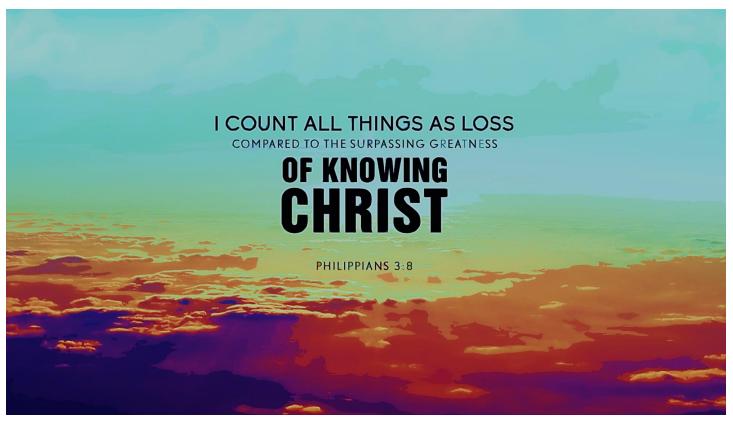


Remember He said in verse 7, "I AM the Door of the Sheep" in reference to the Jews, and then in verse 9 He said, "I AM the Door" now in reference to "anyone" entering – to the whole of humanity. Then in verse 11, He said "I AM the Good Shepherd," again in reference to the Jews. Here He expands that once again to what is clearly a universal scope. That is precisely the meaning of verse 16. It expands on the universal nature of Jesus' mission as the One

and Only Anointed One of God. "All nations will be blessed" (Genesis 22:18, etc.) God declared to Abraham 4,000 years ago. That was always the prophecy. The other sheep, in proper context, literally means those people other than ethnic Jews. Jesus is the Savior of all people; He is the Savior of the World.

I specifically brought that part up because the Mormon's use that verse to justify their cult. They claim that Jesus was indicating here that He was going to travel to what is now America and proclaim Himself to the so-called "Lost Tribe of Israel" living here 2,000 years ago. The result of that visit is the Book of Mormon that supersedes the Bible that they call "Another Testament of Jesus Christ."

It's stupid on multiple levels and is a great example of an uneducated, untrained, uncalled dude interpreting the Bible from a translation.



Jesus said that He knows His Own. What that means is that before time was created through Him, the Word of God knew the name, face, character, and personality of every one of His sheep. He has known you and me for eons prior to bringing you and me into existence.

And we, if we are His, know Him as well. There is an inexorable pull towards Him for all His sheep, even if born in a time or a place where they never have opportunity to hear His Name – they intuitively know Him and immediately recognize Him once introduced. This bilateral knowing of each other is so strong that Jesus equated it to the absolutely perfect knowing of

each other between the Himself, the Word of God and His Father, the Will of God.

God an eternally and internally relational Being, certainly knows Himself – that's the degree of certainty that Jesus tells us applies in Him knowing us – which is cool, but sort of makes sense. What's insane is us also knowing Him – being drawn to Him – that amazing.

The Father has given to Jesus His flock and Jesus will not lose a single one of them. If you are one of His sheep, your eternity with Him is set in stone.

Now, you may start thinking that this is Calvinism – it's not – it's Truth straight from the lips of Jesus. How and why a particular person is part of the flock is a completely different conversation.

Jesus' point was that there are those who belong to Him, by whatever precise sequence of events, and they have been known by Him from time immemorial, they will know Him, and they will be with Him forevermore. That seems pretty great.

You see, if a person is a Holy Spirit filled Christian, there is nothing that can change that reality. God does not make mistakes and God does not allow His sheep to be lost.

The all-too-common objection is that a person could choose to give up their Salvation. Perhaps theoretically, but never actually. The only reason a person filled with the Holy Spirit would repudiate Jesus is that they were mentally unhinged or psychologically overwhelmed. The first wouldn't count any more for God than it would in a human court of law and the second is answered by I Corinthians 10:13b, "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able." It comes down to whether you trust that God is able and faithful enough to preserve you or not.

The obvious question then is are you a Holy Spirit filled Christian? If you are unsure, become sure by trusting fully in Him alone. If you are already sure, rejoice! Trust fully in His continued care of you and so, act like you belong to His flock.



That trusting enough to act like a Christian is actually a way to determine if you are indwelt by God's Spirit... Do you want to act like you belong to His flock? Do you desire to be like the Beautiful Shepherd Himself? You see, once the Holy Spirit indwells a Christian, His primary job then becomes conforming said Christian to Christ. If you have little to no internal desire to be more like Jesus – be concerned. On the other hand, if you have a deep-seated desire to be like Him it is because the Holy Spirit is encouraging you in that direction.

At the end of verse 16 Jesus added what is five words in Greek γενήσονται μία ποίμνη, εἶς ποιμήν (gĕ-nā-sŏntī mē-ä poym-nā hās poy-mān). Even though in English we make it 8 or more words it is still very easily overlooked.

In Greek, the first word means that it will come to be, or it will become. The next four words create a play on words that basically means "one sheep flock, one sheep herder."



There is a ridiculously simple to recognize, complicated to explain thing going on rhetorically. Just know that it is a common way in Greek rhetoric to make a point beyond the mere words themselves. The intention is to call attention to this simple phrase. As one scholar put it, the "effect highlights (the concept) that the unity of the sheep (that's both) Jew and gentile – as (a single) the people of God! Finds its origin in the person of the Shepherd" (Edward W. Klink III). There is only one flock because there is only One Shepherd.

The One Shepherd is the One Shepherd to all of His sheep and so they are one flock. Because of that there is to be perfect unity within the one flock as we are exhorted in Ephesians 4:2-6, 2with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Nothing is worse than division in the flock. So many Christians today have little use for the church – what a travesty. Christ and the church are identical to the Beautiful Shepherd and His one flock. There is no Christianity outside of the church.

Christ the One True Shepherd has delegated to His many under-shepherds the care, feeding, and protection of His one flock. By His design, each undershepherd is given a small group of sheep from within the larger flock to care for. Each sheep must loyally follow the under-shepherd to which the One Shepherd has assigned them. That's how church is supposed to work.

A Christian is not supposed to act like a typical consumer shopping for the best deal in a church – you are a sheep who needs to hear from the One Shepherd, which under-shepherd He's assigned you to. Then you are to follow that under-shepherd until the High Shepherd reassigns you.

Now, if you know anything at all about Jesus, you know that He is not a let's reshuffle the deck kind of Shepherd. The mentality regarding church that most Christians in America exhibit is anything but Biblical. You cannot be part of the flock if you're off doing your own thing.

There are many ways that we do our own thing. There's the, I don't go to church because I can't find a good one nonsense. There's the, I can have church with my family at home justification. The, I can commune with God on a mountaintop copout. What's more subtle is the, I don't think they should spend that much money on the music, the new construction, foreign missions, the pastor, the staff, whatever. I don't agree with the doctrine, or the direction, or the focus. I don't like the style of music, I want a better youth program, I think we should have more homegroups. Regardless of the particulars, we hold our opinions, our desire to be served, and our personal feelings in higher regard than we do God's Word. The local church to which the Lord has assigned you is your flock within the flock. It's your assigned family. It's where you belong and it's where you are to serve.

We constantly get things backwards. We think the church is supposed to serve us. Please show me in the Bible where the church is supposed to serve you. The Truth is that you are supposed to be served in the process of you serving.

Then Jesus said that the reason that the Father loves Him is because He willingly, voluntarily, laid down His life on behalf of the sheep. That's fascinating and it is just a bit confusing in light of what we discussed last week concerning God's love.



The Father Agapês Jesus "For this reason," and then there's a performative reason given. Seemingly, Jesus acts and because of His act, the Father Agapês Him. But we just spent a whole sermon talking about Agapê being a choice to love another regardless of their performance and irrespective of their lovability. ¹⁴"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

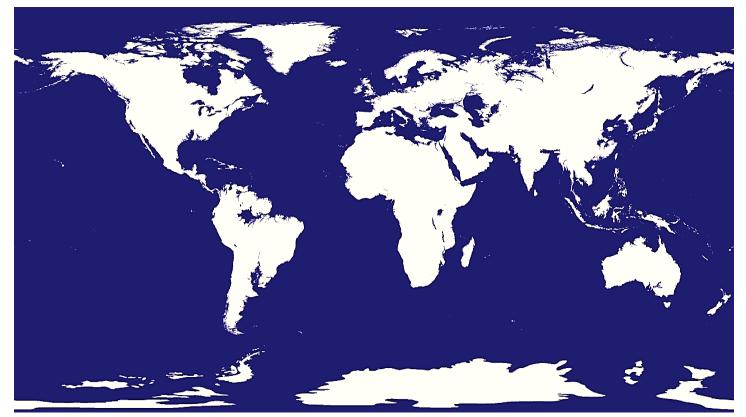
reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

Context is so important and part of that is how parts of speech relate to other parts, here we can see that if we remove verse 16, the passage flows better. When that happens, we need to ask why. Usually, it's a parenthetical or extra bit of, oh by the way, information added in as an aside.

em also.

¹⁴"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶"I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. ¹⁷"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

When we add it back into the passage, it seems like that's the answer. While easy to see it that way, in this particular instance, it is not the case. This seemingly parenthetical extra information is actually integral to what Jesus means and when correctly viewed it not only becomes even more profound, it answers our Agapê issue.



We've already talked about verse 16 and the absurd interpretation of it by the Mormons. In doing so, we've seen that it was actually a confirmation of the universal scope of Jesus' Messianic Mission. Salvation through Jesus, according to Him in this passage, is the only Salvation there is – He alone exists as the Door. Because God has provided only one Savior, that Savior must be a universal Savior, not merely a Jewish Savior.

It's popular for non-Christians to call Christianity "white man's religion," or to otherwise associate it with the wider western world, or Europe, or America, or the Republican Party. Nothing could be further from the Truth. Jesus was not any of those things and neither is His church. No person, regardless of generation, culture, race, nationality, or ethnic makeup is hindered in any way from Salvation in the universal Savior.

That concept, fleshed out a bit further, confirms that there is only one God of all the people and therefore no people have a special ethnic connection to Him. God is not an old Jewish guy, or an old white guy, or an old any kind of guy. No person who has ever lived is any less connected to God that any other person – He loves all people the same and His Savior Saves all people the same.

It was an absolutely mind-blowing concept to people. No religion was like that. All religions were ethnically, or culturally, or nationally, bound. Even Judaism made use of the human tendency for tribalism. In Judaism, even to this day, there are definite classes of Jews. Purebred Jews are superior to those with gentile genes. If half Jew, it is far better if that DNA comes from your mother, third class is reserved for those whose 50% comes from dad. If you're not ethnically Jewish, but convert to their religion, you've made it as a fourth-class Jew. In Jesus' day the Jews from Jerusalem were superior to the Jews from the Judean countryside, who were superior to the Jews from Galilee.



Judaism wasn't supposed to be closed off. Abraham was a Mesopotamian who lived in the city of Ur 4,000 years ago. He was either a Sumerian, or more likely, an Akkadian, from what is now southcentral Iraq – there was no such thing as a Jew at that time.

God said that He would bless all nations through Abraham's descendant, singular, meaning Jesus, as the Apostle Paul confirms in Galatians 3:16.

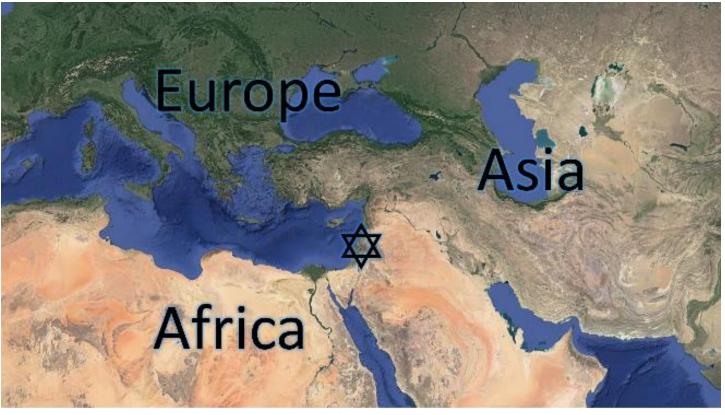


The Jews became an ethnic entity primarily due to their 400-plus-year captivity as slaves in Egypt. God used that bondage to create a bond among the people. A culture that we know as Jewish where God's Word, the Torah, Prophets, and Writings would be safe. A culture

where the one and only Creator of all things was recognized as a Covenantal God.

God's initiation of the Covenant reveals His concern and His eagerness to be relational. If a person wants nothing at all to do with you, they certainly don't track you down and offer you a covenant where each one of you agrees to behave towards the other in a way that fosters unity.

All of God's dealings with man, from creating a perfect environment for us, to breathing His Own Breath into the first man that He formed, from taking Enoch into Heaven, to speaking with Moses from a Burning Bush, from Writing the Commandments with His finger to promising a Messiah, all of it, every bit of it, was God working towards right-relationship with us.



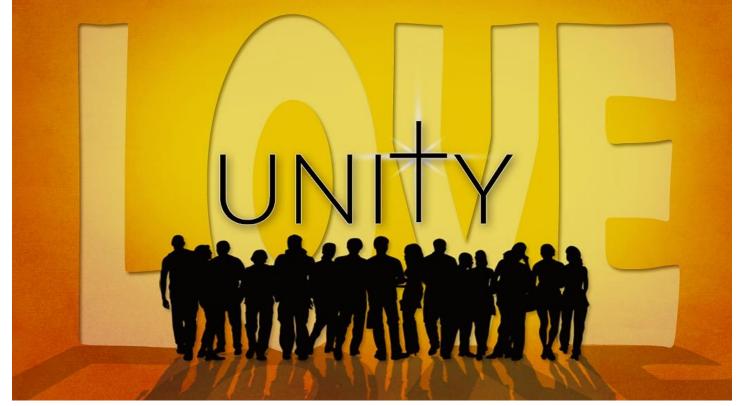
God placed His now strongly unified people with their dramatic racial identity and their knowledge of Him in the literal crossroads of the ancient world. They were to be His beacon of hope to all mankind. Instead, they turned God's self-revelation into a legalistic religion which always has the effect of creating self-righteous better-than-you, hypocrites – always.

That brings us back to the point. The Covenant made with Abraham 4,000 years ago was always for the purpose of Saving all humanity. Certainly, it was always God's plan to provide a once and for all Savior in the form of Himself to make it so.



Christianity, called the New Covenant, is the evolved and final state of what came before – of the Old Covenant. Well, the Old Covenant itself was the evolved state of God's dealings with Adam and Eve and the Antediluvians (the pre-flood people). Christianity is the only True path to God because it is the fully formed, full-revealed, method of interaction between God and us. Since He is the God of all, Christianity has to be the path for all.

The Word of God living sinlessly as a human, taking the sin of the world upon Himself, and laying down His life in humble sacrifice to pay for that sin on behalf of all people... was the plan. To be so perfectly righteous in all of that would make Him victorious over sin. The dominion of sin would be broken forever and therefore the power and curse of sin, which is death, would be rendered toothless. If it worked, then Jesus could take back His life as death would no longer have any sway... Death would be powerless to hold Him. That was the plan all along and the Father desperately loves the Son for being all in on their mutual plan.



The love is not based on the performative... that Jesus accomplished what the Father wanted... it is based on the eternal unified single-minded purpose. Jesus and the Father are locked together with the Holy Spirit in their mutual devotion to each other and to their eternally agreed upon plan. The Agapê for the Son is

due to the future they have together with us – the plan will result in the desired outcome – an outcome of unity in love for all in Heaven, forever.

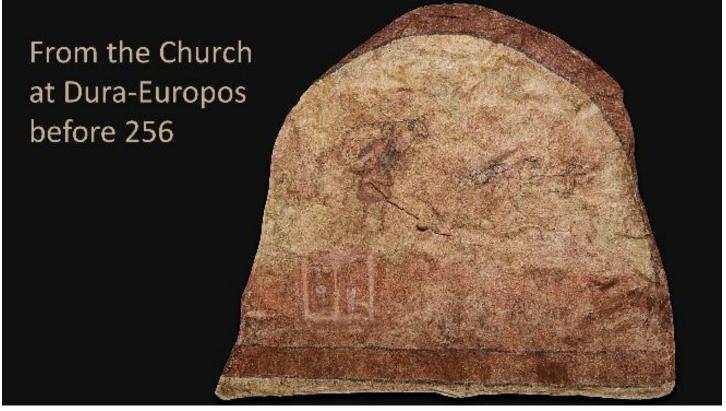


To be clear, that's the power that the Father gave to the Son. Destroy sin and death cannot hold You. Looking carefully at His words. "I lay down My life... so that... (therefore making it possible, in order that, so that)... I may take it again." It is the voluntary laying it down after taking all the sin upon Himself that defeated the power of sin which is death. With death broken Jesus was able to pick up His life again.

That's why the bodily Resurrection is the proof that it worked.



Verse 19, the people didn't know what to make of all of it and came up with a variety of opinions. What striking to me is that those most hostile to Him ask a rhetorical question in verse 20, "Why listen to him?" The earlier point was that His sheep hear Him and recognize His voice and follow.



The verse 21 people are more agreeable, but they seem to be more interested in the miraculous healing than in what Jesus was teaching.



Will you listen? Will you focus on the show or on the substance? Do you hear Him and recognize His voice? Will you follow what He says – obey His commands?



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At the end of verse 16 Jesus added what is five words in Greek $\gamma \epsilon v \eta \sigma ov \tau \alpha \iota \mu i \alpha \pi o i \mu v \eta$, $\epsilon i \zeta \pi o \iota \mu \eta v$ (gě-nā-sŏn-tī mē-ä poym-nā hās poy-mān). The first word means that it will come to be. The next four words create a play on words that basically means "one sheep flock, one sheep herder."

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