



John 10:12-13



“But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.”



Before I get started I would like to make it clear that I am not speaking for any group nor anyone else for that matter but am simply attempting to put forth what I believe the Lord has revealed to me and hopefully continuing to reveal to me. Please do as scripture exhorts and prove (*test*) all things but I implore you that your test be kept strictly with what scripture says and not according to what other men say or have said or what any tradition says. Please see Acts 17:10-12, 1 Thessalonians 5:21 and 1 John 4:1. – Tom



If you will notice the very first word in our two verses above. It is the word “But” which immediately shows a conjunction to what was previously said and it also shows that there is a contrast between what was previously said and what will be said. So, before we look at these two verses let us look at the previous verses and the verses after to help with the context and contrast.

Here are these two verses in context with their surrounding verses:

“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. **But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.** I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” (John 10:7-18*)
[bold emphasis added]

In the previous chapter and verse 40 the Pharisees asked Jesus a question. He gives His answer and then continues to speak to them. So, these verses are included in that conversation. Jesus starts if off with clearly saying that He is **THE** (*definite article*) door and only **THE** (*definite article*) sheep can enter in by Him and find pasture. Not only is He the **ONLY** door to enter in for **ONLY HIS** sheep but he goes on to say “I am the good shepherd”. And because He is the good shepherd He gives His life for His sheep. He does not run and He does not hide but He always has the best interest of **THE (HIS)** sheep at heart. He cares deeply for **THE** sheep because He knows them and is known by them.

What is a shepherd and what is that he does on a regular basis? A shepherd is someone who keeps the sheep together in a flock, guides them and protects them. He guides them so they don’t wander off and get hurt or killed. He always has a watchful eye upon the sheep to keep them in line and to watch for predators like for example a wolf. If he sees one he does everything in his power to ward it off even to the point of laying down his

life protecting his sheep because of his love for them. Each and everyone of them is known personally to him.

I believe that we can take from this that a shepherd or pastor of a local flock is there to keep the flock together and safe. He guides and protects the sheep (*members*) with the messages, teachings and counsel that he gives. He knows each of the sheep personally and has a love for them. He is alert and always has a watchful eye upon them to keep them safe and to keep them from wandering off.

Jesus shows the importance of having a “good shepherd” for the flock. Then to emphasize this importance he gives a stark contrast by going into what a “hireling” is. With giving this contrast He is making it abundantly clear that the “good shepherd” and “hireling” are diametrically opposed to one another.

Let’s look back at our verses: “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.”

What is a hireling? The basic meaning for the Greek word is: “a wage worker, a hired servant” which simply means that he is one who is there solely to get paid. He just works for the pay or money. Specifically though with these verses, a hireling is one who has no care for the sheep. He is very self-involved and self-concerned. When he sees the wolf coming his only thought is self-preservation and gets out of there as fast as he can. So, in other words if one is a shepherd (*pastor*) and he abandons his flock for any reason, can he not be called a “hireling”? From our verses a true shepherd will stay and protect his flock through thick and thin. Why? Because of his love for them. A hireling on the other hand is out of there at the first hint of danger. Why? Because of his love for himself and not for the sheep.

Can I say without a doubt that a hireling knows he is a hireling and has ulterior motives from the beginning? There are those men (*and women*) out there these days that their whole goal is just to fleece the sheep, but I don’t believe that is what these verses are talking about. I don’t believe that every hireling knows he is a hireling. But as scripture makes clear: “The hireling fleeth, **because** he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” If a so-called shepherd (*pastor*) flees (*abandons, walks away, etc.*) the sheep it

only **PROVES** one thing. It proves that he is nothing more than a hireling and never was a true shepherd.

If we look at the parable of the ten virgins we see something similar.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (**Matthew 25:1-13**)”

Here we have ten virgins who are all waiting for the bridegroom to show up. They are all virgins, they all have a lamp and believe they are ready to go when the bridegroom arrives. Even though five are foolish and five are wise, from all outward appearances they are all the same. It isn't until the bridegroom arrives that the five that are foolish prove their foolishness because their lamp has no oil in it and therefore there was no light for them. The revelation of who they truly are, came only at the arrival of the bridegroom and not before. They all thought they were ready for the bridegroom, just like a hireling may think he is a shepherd (*pastor*) but when it matters and he is needed, he proves whom he truly is, just that – a hireling.

Also, please take into consideration the first letter of John chapter 2 verse 19.

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. (**I John 2:19**)”

Keeping it in our line of thought, when a so-called shepherd (*pastor*) flees (*abandons, walks away, etc.*) the sheep it again **PROVES** something else. He left so that he “might

be made manifest that” he was not of them. He fled, he abandoned, or he walked away from the flock at the decree and direction of God simply to show his true colors.

I believe that in most cases the man, or better yet the “hireling” who flees (*abandons, walks away, etc.*) the flock does not come back. But what if he was granted repentance and asked to stand before the assembly to ask their forgiveness? If God has truly granted him repentance, there is no reason for that assembly not to welcome him back as a brother. But by fleeing he has proved beyond a doubt that he is not a shepherd (*pastor*) and he has disqualified himself from being an Bishop (*elder, pastor*) because he has clearly shown that he is not blameless (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6), thus he cannot step back in to his old position. And if he has truly been granted repentance then he will not fight this truth but be thankful that the assembly has welcomed him back.

On the other hand, what if that man (*hireling*) does come back but comes back without requesting or revealing a desire to go before the brethren and ask their forgiveness? What if he comes back expecting to step right back in that position and is welcomed in with open arms and NOTHING is said to him? I believe that assembly will unfortunately pay the price spiritually in the long run. **PLEASE DO NOT DO THIS!!!**

I realize this has not exactly been a cheery or uplifting writing. I apologize for that. Yet what is contained here is of utmost importance for the health of the flock. To disregard what scripture has to say about this truth is spiritually a very dangerous game to play.

One in hope,

Thomas R. Adams

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GodIsSovereign@gmail.com

* All Scripture is quoted from the KJV