



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## “Jesus – The Good Shepherd”

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The gospel of John was written to produce faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30-31). It is constructed around seven miracles, or signs as John calls them, that could only have been performed by a divine being. Who else but Jesus, God in the flesh, could turn water into wine, walk on water, restore sight to a blind man, or raise Lazarus from the dead?

The fourth gospel is also framed around several “I AM” statements that, once again, only Jesus could have made. Who else could live up to His claims to be the bread of life, the light of the world, and the resurrection and the life?

“I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11), He also said. He is the One who came to seek and save the sheep who had gone astray. He is the one who felt compassion for the crowd, for they were like sheep without a shepherd. And He didn’t respond by claiming to be “like” a shepherd or that He was “a” shepherd. He boldly professed to be “the good shepherd.”

What is it about Jesus that makes Him the good shepherd? Jesus knows His sheep. In Biblical times, the sheep were not just some business expense or tax write off for the shepherd. He was intimately connected with them; he was personally involved. And the sheep had such a love for their tender shepherd that they would only follow his voice. In fact, when they heard the voice of a stranger, they didn’t run away and hide but they found him who knew them by name.

Jesus calls His people by name. “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona” (Matthew 16:17). “Zaccheus, hurry and come down” (Luke 19:5). “Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:43). And Jesus knows you by name. He knows what you’re thinking, how you’re feeling, when you’re afraid, and when you feel lost. “I know My own and my own know Me” (John 10:14). You are not just another number to Him. You are His sheep, and the good shepherd knows His sheep.

Jesus watches over His sheep. When the sun went down at the end of a long day, the shepherd didn’t get to clock out. As they came in for the night, he inspected them, one by one, while they passed under his rod. As he carefully looked over them, he counted. If one came up missing, he didn’t do a cost-benefit analysis and say, “well, at least I still have 99 left.” He went out and searched for the one who had strayed and brought him back to the safety of the fold. He did this because he knew them sheep and he watched over them with his own life.

When Jesus made the claim to be the “good” shepherd, He did so to distinguish Himself from all other religious shepherds. The Pharisees would not accept the man Jesus healed, figuring a man born blind must be a man born a sinner. “So, they put him out” (John 9:34). But Jesus goes after that sheep. He doesn’t abandon him to danger. He accepts Him into a better fold; one where his needs and cared for, where he can find pasture.

Jesus wants to lead you to safety, to find green pastures and still waters. But He can’t lead someone who wants to be the leader. Hear His voice. Follow Him. He is the “Shepherd and Guardian” of your soul (1Peter 2:25).

Jesus lays down His life for His sheep. There was an easy way to tell the difference between a shepherd and a hired hand—how they responded to danger. When the wolves or thieves came to threaten the flock, the hireling fled for his own life, But the shepherd fought for the lives of his sheep. Before David became the “shepherd- king” of Israel, he tended his father’s sheep. He told King Saul how he rescued a lamb out of the mouth of a lion, grabbing the lion by the

beard and killing him (1Samuel 17:34). The shepherds did this not to impress anyone or for fear of losing their job. They were motivated for no other reason than their love for their sheep.

Jesus laid down His life, not for sheep who were loyal to Him and following Him. He laid down His life for Judas, who betrayed Him. He laid down His life for Peter, who denied Him. He laid down His life for the false shepherds, who crucified Him. He laid down His life for sinners, who rejected Him. The good shepherd became the lamb of God. He laid down His life to give the lost sheep safety and salvation.

Jesus, the good shepherd, is calling. Come to Him, where there is rest and room, while there is time and opportunity. – Folsom Bulletin

## *“That Many Pastors Can’t Be Wrong”*

Jeff Smelser

So asserted an advertisement for a direct mail service used by more than 1,000 churches. One would think that even with a passing familiarity with the Bible, people would be reluctant to determine the validity of something based on the number of people who believe in it.

When the twelve spies returned to the camp of Israel to report what they had seen in Canaan, ten of them said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us" ([Numbers 13:31](#)), while only two said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it" ([Numbers 13:30](#)). The people, evidently thinking that surely ten spies couldn't be wrong when only two spies offered a contrary opinion, balked at trying to invade Canaan. The ten were wrong - the two were right.

Goliath was a giant who opposed the army of Israel in the days of King Saul. It was the prevailing opinion that Goliath could not be defeated. "When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid" ([1 Samuel 17:24](#)). It would have been easy for a youth such as David to assume that so many trained soldiers could not be wrong. But you know the rest of that story.

The law of Moses warned against being swayed by a multitude: "You shall not follow a multitude in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert justice" ([Exodus 23:2](#)).

And Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it" ([Matthew 7:13-14](#)).

And yet the stumbling block for many in obeying the pure gospel of Jesus Christ is that doing so would be an implicit denunciation of what the world views as Christendom, and it seems that "millions of professing Christians can't be wrong!" They can be, and they are. And the only way I can be right is to follow God's word without being swayed by the multitudes.