

“I Am The Good Shepherd”

“I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

Not far from Nazareth, our bus driver stopped to see if he could help another driver whose bus had bogged down in the uncommon mud on the road’s shoulder. At first, it seemed like an unnecessary stop to me, for the job would surely demand the service of a giant tow truck. It was here, however, that I was able to take some special photographs of a Bedouin shepherd and his sheep, something I had hoped for on previous tours.

The situation apparently provided the shepherd with his entertainment for the week or for the month. Attracted by all the activity, he brought his flock down the hill and across the valley to the roadside setting. While he made his observations, however, his little ones began to wander. Although it was not an easy task, he somehow managed to keep his sheep out of the road and from possible danger.

In His fourth “I Am” statement in John’s Gospel, Jesus likened Himself unto a shepherd. Twice, like the other “I Am” announcement in this chapter (“I am the door”), Jesus repeated this claim, “I am the good Shepherd” (10:11, 14). In fact, giving us a little insight into this grand theme and a basis for our thoughts, He used the title “good Shepherd” three times in these two verses.

Jesus is the good Shepherd in His character before the sheep! The emphasis set forth in the first occurrence of this title is that Jesus is the “good” Shepherd (10:11). The statement might be rendered, “I am the Shepherd, the good One.” Without question, the Lord Jesus is good in His actions and in His deeds. But He cannot help but be expressively good because He is essentially good. From the inside out, through and through, Jesus is good in Himself, in His nature, in His character.

Jesus is the good Shepherd in His concern for His sheep! The second time we read the words “good Shepherd,” Jesus describes Himself as the One Who “giveth His life for the sheep.” Unlike the thief, who comes “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy,” or to take away life, Jesus gives and nourishes life. He further testified to this, saying, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (10:10).

Jesus is the good Shepherd in His communion with His sheep! In the third usage of this name, Jesus admitted, “I . . . know My sheep, and am known of Mine” (10:14). Having no relationship with the sheep, the “hireling,” one hired to watch the sheep, abandons them when the wolf attacks (see 10:13). But knowing and loving His own, our good Shepherd promises to commune with and defend them in all circumstances. Ah, Jesus is the Shepherd, the good One! Dear friend, are you following Him?

