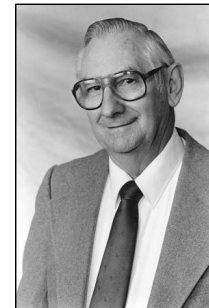




**The unabridged writings of Fred Morris,  
Manna Publications**

## **The meaning of... Pictures of Jesus in John's Gospel**



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**MANNA FOR ALL**

**To the reader:** Have your Bible open as you study these notes. Remember that they have not been edited by the UK editorial team but are part of Fred's legacy of Bible teaching literature he wrote after his retirement to the USA in 1990. These notes also serve as the legacy of the late Jim Norman, Manna Publications UK, who checked and formatted and archived Fred's writings for him. Invite a friend to study with you. You will be blessed.



In John's Gospel, Jesus tells us who He is and why He came to earth to die. In almost every chapter, Jesus gives us a different picture of who He is. John tells us of many times when Jesus said; "I AM....."

"I AM the bread of life."

"I AM the light of the world."

"I AM the water of life."

"I AM the Good Shepherd."

"I AM the True Vine."

"I AM the resurrection and the life."

"I AM the way and the truth and the Life."

"I AM in the Father and the Father is in Me."

## JESUS IS THE WAY TO THE FATHER

**Bible Verse:** Thomas said, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father (God) except through Me" (John 14:5-6).

Just before His death, Jesus talked to His disciples. They were troubled and wondered what would happen to them.

Jesus said, "Trust in God, trust also in Me." Jesus' words tell us that He is the way to eternal life in heaven. The only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ. There is no other way (Acts 4:12).

He told the disciples, "I am going to prepare a place for you..." He has already prepared the 'way' to eternal life. The only matter that remains is for us to believe that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life...as He said.

These verses are rich with precious promises. Here Jesus told His followers, "I am going there to prepare a place for you." And, "I will come back and take you to be with Me."

All the details of life after death are in God's hands, so we need not fear. And Jesus is in heaven making preparing a special place for you and me to live with Him after we die.

## HIS TIME WOULD SOON COME

Jesus had told the disciples again and again that His hour of suffering and death would soon come. Finally He said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (John 12:23-33).

"It was for this very reason I came to this hour," He said. "When I am lifted up from the earth (on a wooden cross), I will draw all men to Myself." He said this to show the kind of death He was going to die.

But the disciples still did not understand.

holy...washing her...through the word" to present her one day "as a radiant Church, without stain or wrinkle or any blemish, but holy and blameless..." to the Father (Ephesians 5:25-27).

God demands that we live holy lives. But He knows our weaknesses, that we are but dust (Psalm 103:14). And He gives us grace "to help in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Draw near to Him in prayer. Call on His holy name. There is power in the name of Jesus.



## TALK ABOUT

1. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?
2. God offers you this wonderful relationship if you only believe.
3. If you are a Christian, what does God want you to do (Matthew 28:19-20)?
4. Are you obeying Christ's last command?

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## **JESUS WAS TEACHING FOR THE LAST TIME**

Jesus was teaching His disciples. He was soon to die on the cross. He told them, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you really knew Me you would know My Father as well" (John 14:6-8).

But then Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Jesus answered, "Don't you know Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father."

A man who does not know Jesus Christ cannot have a true knowledge of God (John 8:19). Jesus told His disciples, "If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because He neither sees Him nor knows Him" (John 14:16-17).

We can be sure of this truth because the things of God are taught to believers by the Spirit of God. Paul wrote, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians. 2:14).

## **GOD GIVES US HIS SPIRIT**

Every believer is "born again by the Spirit of God" (John 3:1-8). God seals each new son or daughter with His seal, the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote, "Having believed, you were marked in Him (Christ) with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance..." (Ephesians 1:13-14).

It is by the Spirit that we can understand these truths. And the greatest of them all is that God has come to us in Christ. All the prophets of old said Christ Messiah would come. Then. "when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under Law, that we may receive the full right of sons" (and daughters) of the living God (Galatians 4:4).

## **HE IS PLEASED TO CALL US SONS**

Jesus came into our world to offer us a relationship. So Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers. He is able to say, "Here am I, and the children God has given Me" (Heb 2:11-13; Isaiah 8:18).

Because we are children of the Son, we are children of the Father. God accepts every Christian because Jesus died for that person. And one day Jesus will present each one to the Father. He is the Head of the Church, the family of God's people. Christ loved the Church "and gave Himself up for her to make her

## **LORD WHERE ARE YOU GOING?**

Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the dead. The religious leaders were troubled because all the people listened to Jesus. They wanted to kill Jesus. So He stopped speaking in public and went away from Jerusalem to spend time alone with His disciples.

When Jesus spoke of leaving them, Simon Peter asked Him, "Lord where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later" (John 13:36-38).

Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow You now? I will lay down my life for You."

Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

## **HOW CAN WE KNOW THE WAY?**

Thomas said, "Lord, we don't know where You are going, so how can we know the way?"

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father?" Jesus answered, "Don't you know Me Philip, even though I have been among you such a long time? If you have seen Me you have seen the Father. How can you ask, 'Show us the Father?'" (John 14:8-10).

Jesus was the visible, physical image of the invisible God. They could see and touch Jesus! If you know Jesus you already know something of what the Father God is like. Jesus was the complete revelation of what God is like. He was God in human flesh.

## **"IF YOU TRULY KNEW ME"**

Jesus says to all of us, "If you truly know Me you know My Father as well... you do know Him and have seen Him." We see Him by faith. Jesus said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

The only way to know the Father is through the Son. Jesus is the one who will present us to the Father – He is the only way! We find the Way by telling Him we are sorry for our sin and turning away from it.

When Adam sinned mankind was cut off from God. In Adam we all sinned. Because Adam sinned, we were born sinners. Our sin cuts us off from God. Jesus is the only one who can stand before God for us. His death for our sins can bring us and God together again.

“There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. – who gave Himself as a ransom for all men – the testimony given in its proper time” (1 Tim 2:5-7).

Jesus was the only person in the universe who could act as our mediator (or go-between) because Jesus is both God and man. His sacrifice brought new life to all people who believe in Him.

Jesus paid the price to set us free from sin. A ransom was the price paid to set a slave free. By His death, Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin. His precious blood set us free!

Jesus prayed for Himself, for His disciples and all those who follow Him. “Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

## **THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST**

Those who read this book about Jesus face the big question: Was Jesus God? Jesus did claim to be God. When He was on earth, He did the works of God. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind and raised the dead to life again. We can agree or disagree with His claim. Everlasting life can be yours if you make the right choice.

Jesus said, “The Father who sent Me has Himself testified concerning Me...” At His baptism, a voice came from heaven saying, “This is My Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

## **OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST**

We were created for fellowship with God. God created us (both male and female) ‘in His image’. What does this mean? From the very beginning the Bible places men and women at the very top of God’s creation. God wanted to walk and talk with Adam every evening. He came to the garden in Eden to do this. We are valuable to God.

God is a spirit. He does not have a physical body. We too have spirit that reflects God’s glory. He is our Creator, yet we have the ability to reflect his character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness and faithfulness. If we trust Him, He will make these grow in our lives.

## **GOD LONGS FOR PURE WORSHIP**

God searches for the sheep who will worship Him. To rescue them, gather them safely into the fold. He promises to feed them, lead them beside still waters and make them lie down in green pastures. He guides them in paths of righteousness and accompanies them through the valley of death. His goodness and love follow them all the days of their lives and they will dwell with Him in the heavenly house of the Lord forever!

This is a picture of God and man restored to perfect fellowship, the same fellowship that Adam and Eve enjoyed with God in the Garden in Eden, which was a paradise. They lost this fellowship when they rebelled against God and sin and disobedience entered the world.

After Jesus rose again from the dead, He appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:10-18). Jesus appeared to His disciples when they were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews (John 20:19).

He appeared to Thomas (John 20:24-30).

Afterwards He appeared to His disciples for the third time by the Sea of Tiberias. They were in their boats fishing when He called, “Throw out your nets on the right side of the boat and you will find fish!” Then He called them to come and have breakfast. They knew it was the Lord. He also took bread and gave it to them.

Jesus did many other things..... so many that the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

## **THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL**

The Apostle Paul said – It is important for us to remember that, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and he was buried, and raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

This is the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was raised from the dead on the third day with a glorious new resurrection body. We, too, have been promised a robe of white, a glorious new body – one that will never die – so we can live with Jesus forever in heaven.



### **TALK ABOUT**

1. Jesus said, “If you have faith, you will do greater things than these” (John 14:12). What did He mean?

## **JESUS WAS AND IS GOD IN HUMAN FORM**

Jesus said, “I am in the Father and the Father is in Me” (John 14:10). All through John’s Gospel, he records Jesus’ words about His unity with the Father in heaven. Jesus and the Father are one.

“He who has seen Jesus has seen God” (John 14:9)

“He who honors Jesus honors God” (John 5:23).

“He who hates Jesus hates God” (John 15:23).

“He who accepts Jesus accepts God” (John 13:20).

“He who puts his faith in Jesus puts his faith in God also” (John 12:44).

Lazarus' sickness. Then she expressed great faith... "I know that even now God will give You whatever You ask."

Jesus said to Martha, "Your brother will rise again!"

Martha knew Lazarus would rise again at the end of the world, but Jesus meant He had the power to bring forth the dead even in this life. He could give Lazarus new 'physical' life.

Death must come first to this old earthly body, then God will give every believer a resurrection and a new body. That is what Martha thought Jesus meant.

Lazarus' body lay in a rocky tomb. A heavy stone covered the opening. When Jesus gave the command, "Take away the stone!" Martha couldn't believe what she was hearing.

For the benefit of the people Jesus prayed... "Father, Thank You for hearing Me – You always hear Me."

Then he called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

The dead Lazarus came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and a cloth around his face.

"Take off the grave clothes and let him go!" Jesus commanded.

### **JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE**

Jesus had said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this Martha?"

Martha replied, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

Martha spoke deep truths that day even though she could not imagine the full meaning of her testimony. She knew Jesus her Lord.

Paul lived every day expecting Jesus to come again for His followers and we should too! When Jesus comes "on the clouds" God's redeemed people will receive new, imperishable bodies fitting them to live in heaven. Paul continues, "We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

All believers whether alive when Jesus comes again, or in the grave, will receive new, resurrected bodies! God will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body (Philippians 3:21).

### **PERFECT FELLOWSHIP**

The Risen Christ said, "I will give you the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7).

Jesus said, "So do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me and you also may be where I am" (John 14:1-2).



### **TALK ABOUT**

1. Is Jesus the only way to heaven? How do you know this?
2. Some asked, "Who is the Son of Man?" How did Jesus answer (John 12:35-36)?
3. Why were the disciples troubled (Matthew 16:21)?
4. What did Jesus tell them (John 14:2-3)?
5. What did Jesus answer when Philip asked "Show us the Father" (John 14:8)?

### **JESUS SAID, "I AM THE TRUE VINE"**

**Bible Verse:** Jesus said, "I am the true vine and My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit" (John 15:1-2).

The grape vine is a sturdy plant. It grows easily and well in Middle Eastern countries. Grapes are a valuable crop and very good for your health. In the Old Testament the grape vine is a picture of God's people, the nation of Israel. Grapes are a picture of Israel's fruitfulness in doing God's work here on this earth.

God chose the people of Israel. They were His vine and He planted among the heathen nations.

Moses wrote, "The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession" (Deuteronomy 7:6).

### **ISRAEL'S MISSION TO THEIR NEIGHBORS**

God wanted a people who would love and worship Him and make Him known to the other nations. He wanted them to show forth His holiness in a dark world. This was Israel's mission to the world. This is what they were supposed to do! They were chosen to witness and to show God's love and mercy while they lived among people who worshipped idols.

God prepared a perfect place for the people of Israel to live. He planted them in the land of Canaan, which is called "the Promised Land!" God said He dug up the ground and cleared it of stones. Then He planted in it the best grape vines. He built a watchtower to protect His people and cut out a winepress. Then He looked for a crop of good grapes, but Israel yielded only bad fruit. (Isaiah 5:1-7).

Israel did bear fruit, but it was 'bad' fruit. Instead of being the witness God wanted them to be, they went after heathen gods, the idols of the people groups around them. They embraced witchcraft, child sacrifices, adultery and homosexuality. God hated these things!

So God asked, "What more could have been done for My vineyard than I have done for it? Now I am going to tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there."

### **BY THEIR FRUIT YOU SHALL KNOW THEM**

Just like the men of Judah – and the people of Israel – we too are the 'garden' of His delight. God is the gardener; Jesus Christ is the true vine. We are the branches. God is the gardener, the One who cares for the vineyard. The branches are all those who claim to follow Christ. Every true Christian is joined to the Vine, Jesus Christ and draws his or her strength and life from Him.

Fruitful branches are the true believers who live in union and communion with Christ and produce 'good' fruit. Good fruit means believers who will carry on His work on earth, they uphold His law, to carry out justice, to be kind and loving, to be like Jesus!

Pruning. Every branch that bears fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. Fruitful branches are cut back in order to produce more fruit. The cutting process in our lives can be very painful. God chastens us in order to correct our faults. The fact that he cares to discipline us is evidence that we are accepted as His children.

When God disciplines His children it is just and good for them. The Bible says, "Do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves" (Hebrews 12:5, 6).

No fruit: Branches that do not produce fruit will be cut out of the vine. Those branches are dead and will be burned (John 15:6).

Some believers had "lost their first love". This was the problem with the Christian Church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:4).

Others had allowed worldly pleasure to overtake them. In a sense we can easily see what Jesus would do in our situation.

Paul wrote, "The grace of God that brings salvation.... teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11, 12).

Again Paul wrote to Christians, "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think how to gratify the desires of your own sinful nature (Romans 13:14).

## **JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE**

**Bible Verse:** Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live; even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:1-25-26).

A man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the brother of Mary and her sister Martha. They were Jesus' friends.

This was the same Mary who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.

The sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord the one You love is sick."

When Jesus heard this, He said to His disciples, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it (John 11:4).

### **JESUS WAITED TWO MORE DAYS**

Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary, and her brother, Lazarus. Yet, when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed where He was for two more days (John 11:6).

The sisters were sure Jesus would come at once to come to Bethany and heal Lazarus. He did not do this. Lazarus died and was placed in a tomb. Jesus told the twelve disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has 'fallen asleep' but I am going there to wake him up!"

The disciples did not understand. Jesus was speaking of death, but the disciples thought He was speaking about natural sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

They were puzzled? They did not understand, but they were willing to follow Jesus back into the dangerous country of Judea.

### **PAUL EXPLAINED, DEATH IS LIKE SLEEP**

When Christians die, they wake up in heaven (1 Cor 15:5-51). They are with Jesus. That sounds like heaven to me! Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). The thief had repented and asked Jesus to remember him.

Solomon wrote, "The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit of man returns to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

### **MARTHA RUNS TO MEET JESUS**

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming to Bethany, she ran to meet Him. She did not scold Jesus for being late. She only said, "If You had been here, my brother would not have died. She was sure that Jesus would have healed

"I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too shall listen to My voice, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd" (John 10:16).

These other sheep were the non-Jews, the Gentiles. They will all be together, one flock. Jesus came to die for the sins of the world (John 1:29). God's plan is to have one flock made up of people from every nation and tribe and language (Rev 7:9).

God wants everyone to know the Savior... that not one should die without Christ, the Good Shepherd (John 3:16).

Churches build fences. They say, "You must belong to us. We do things right! Cults build fences. Other religions build fences to keep their own people in darkness.

God's truth cannot be limited by man. He told His people to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Matt 28:19-20).

Jesus said My obedience, My willingness to die for the sheep - That is the reason My Father loves Me, "No one takes My life from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again" (John 10:18).

The Pharisees and leaders could not capture or kill the Lord Jesus without He agreed to let them. He willingly gave up his life. He was made sin for us, He who knew no sin, that we might have the righteousness of God (Romans 6:23).

## BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

John saw Jesus coming and said, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Jesus was the Lamb of God.

Every morning and evening a lamb was sacrificed in the temple for the sins of the people. The High Priest chose the lamb to be offered.

Now, under the New Covenant, God chose the sacrificial lamb. He chose the Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for our sin. Paul said, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

To reconcile means to make peace between two parties.

Jesus used the words of the prophets. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be led to the slaughter like a lamb. (Isaiah 53:6-8). He was the Messiah of Israel.



## TALK ABOUT

1. What does "to reconcile" mean?
2. Why did John call Jesus "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29)?
3. Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?
4. What did Jesus' death do for the world?
5. And for you?

Some did not truly trust Jesus Christ in the first place. Jesus said others were "neither cold nor hot." He said, "I wish you were either one or the other. So because you are luke-warm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of My mouth" (Rev 3:15-16). That was the same as saying God will "cut off every branch in the vine that does not bear fruit."

## CUT OFF AND UPROOTED BY THE EAST WIND

Israel, the vine, was full of branches because of God's care and abundant water... "It was uprooted in fury and thrown to the ground. The east wind made it shrivel it was stripped of its fruit; its strong branches withered and fire consumed them" (Ezekiel 19:10-14).

Ezekiel prophesied that Judah would be 'cut off and uprooted' by the 'east wind.' This meant the land would be invaded by Babylonian armies from the east. Because of their 'bad' fruit God gave His people into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar for 70 years. The military might of Judah's kings could not save the nation.

Hosea also prophesied that Israel's 'bad' fruit would lead to destruction and separation from the living God (Hosea 10:1-2).

Israel prospered like a spreading vine under King Jeroboam II. Their army and economy grew strong. They prospered as a nation but they lavished their bounty on themselves and pagan gods. They neglected the love and devotion God demanded. It seems that the more God gives to His children the more they spend on themselves. We want bigger houses, better cars and finer clothes, more gadgets etc. Things – lots of things – the things the world offers lead to our destruction and our separation from God too.

## PSALMIST BEGS GOD TO SEND THE MESSIAH

The writer in Psalm 80:16-17 begged Jehovah to send His Son – "the Man at Your right hand" - the Son of Man that You have raised up for Yourself because Your vine is cut down and burned with fire (destroyed). At Your rebuke your people perish".

Send the Messiah – Your righteous One – and restore Your mercy upon Israel... "These are the people you chose to bring your message into the world."

Then Jesus came to earth. He told the world, "I am the true vine". He told the nation of Israel, "I have come to show you the sort of obedience God requires. I will teach you how to live a righteous life. But you can only live that life if you are joined (remain) in Me" (John 15:10-11). You must give yourself to Me fully and trust Me in everything.

God said the corrupt vine, Israel of old, would not be cast away completely. There would always be the few who remained faithful. He did allow their

enemies to plunder their land and finally He allowed Nebuchadnezzar to take them captive to Babylon.

God's purpose was to make His salvation available to the Gentiles also. In Jesus all race and nationalities disappear. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all ONE in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

## **GOD IS GLORIFIED WHEN WE BEAR MUCH FRUIT**

Jesus said that when a branch bears much fruit God is glorified. God brings forth the sunshine and the rain to make the crop grow. We are nurtured by God's Word so that we too can grow!

What a glorious harvest when the crops are brought into the barns! Joy overcomes the disappointments of life. It is good when the rains come, but what of the drought? When our lives are joined to the VINE He will help us walk through the dry places. He will help us manage good times and bad for His glory. Love, joy, peace and answered prayer – all are fruit for the master gardener.



### **TALK ABOUT**

1. Why did God call the people of Israel His vine (Isaiah 5:1-7)?

## **JESUS – THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

**Bible Verse:** Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:1-2).

Jesus is the Good Shepherd and those who follow Him are His sheep. Sheep are silly things. They are easily led. They need to be cared for all the time because they quickly wander away. They must have a leader! Sheep are an easy prey for their enemies. They remain silent as the shearers throw them down and cut off their wool.

But the sheep recognize the VOICE of their shepherd. They will not follow a stranger or any other voice.

The Shepherd knows each one by name. He finds the good pastures and good water for his sheep. He is willing to suffer hardships to protect his sheep. He protects them from the wolves, the lions and the bears! He does not run away when his sheep are in danger, or in pain. He stays with the sheep. He comforts His sheep. The shepherd goes out before them and they follow Him!

In Palestine, during the night, the sheep were put into a sheep pen or fold to keep them safe. The shepherd often slept inside the sheep pen or at the gate to protect his sheep.

## **THE PHARISEES DID NOT UNDERSTAND**

Jesus told the story of the shepherd and his sheep to the Pharisees who listened to Him, but they did not understand. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, cares for His flock. The flock are all those who follow Him. He calls His sheep by name.

He knows your name. If you follow Jesus, your name is written down in the Book of Life. The Risen Christ promised in a letter to the Church in Sardis – "He who overcomes – will be dressed in white – and I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and His angels"(Rev 3).

What an introduction awaits us!

The Shepherd is also the gate and the door. Jesus also said, "I am the gate – whoever enters through Me shall be saved". Many don't like this bold statement. They will not believe that Jesus is the only way to God. Jesus said there is only one door.

Jesus is God's Son – why would we want to try and climb over the wall into the sheep pen, or dig under the wall, to get into the sheep fold when we can enter through the door?

Thieves come only to steal and kill and destroy the sheep. Jesus protects our lives for Satan and evil.

## **JESUS LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS SHEEP**

When the hired hand sees the enemy coming he runs away. He works for money, not out of love for the sheep. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

The 'hired hand' is a picture of false teachers and false prophets who do not care about the sheep. They have their own motives. A desire for money, fame, and fortune come from the real enemy (Satan). They tear down and destroy God's sheep.

"Satan prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour".(1 Peter 5:8).

"The hired hand' scatters the sheep." He brings division, strife and turmoil! We see this in so many of our churches today.

## **A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP**

Jesus said, "I know My sheep and My sheep know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father..."

We, God's sheep, have an intimate relationship with the Father, as we have with the Son. Jesus prays for more sheep.