

Intro May 3 4<sup>th</sup> Easter

Peter tells those who are listening to him: Hear the words of the Lord. And he adds, just as Isaiah did, that . . . *“the promise is made to you and to your children and **to all those far off**, whomever the Lord our God will call.”* [As John says 10:16 *I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They **too will listen to my voice**, and there shall be **one flock and one shepherd.**]* Interesting that Peter speaking to the Jews of Jerusalem mentions OTHER SHEEP, far from Jerusalem, will also **listen and become members of the SAME FLOCK as the Jews, by Baptism.**

Remember Luke, who wrote ACTS, was writing in *Antioch*. Antioch, because it was cosmopolitan, became the center of various tribal and linguistic forms of Xtianity. Roman and Greek Pagans lived there with polytheistic tribals, Jews and new Xtians. So Luke is sure to mention the ‘all inclusive’ message Peter delivered in his sermon.

Even today Antioch in Syria has: Syriac Orthodox and Syriac Catholics, Antiochian Orthodox {there is one in Ligonier, PA}, Melkites (Catholic), Assyrian Church, Maronites (Catholics of Lebanon; Our Lady of Victory Maronite Church in PGH Pa), Malankaras, and more. Besides Xtians there are 5 branches of ISLAM found in Antioch Syria!

This may explain some of today’s chaos in Syria and Lebanon. You think?

*The Good Shepherd* Psalm 23 appears AGAIN for the THIRD time this year. Remember early Xtians knew shepherds; they would have gotten a vivid picture! Here are the images SS wants to portray: 1) The Sheep’s Gate and 2) the role of the shepherd—a GOOD Shepherd.

\*\*[at the end I have links to TWO hymns on Psalm 23. One by Marty Haugen, American Lutheran and the other by Christopher Walker, born and educated in England. Both follow the Psalm closely.]

There are actually TWO GATES!

One is the Sheep’s Gate at the Wall of Jerusalem. At this gate the sheep were examined to see if they were “Without Blemish”—fit to be offered as a sacrifice in the temple. Here the shepherd brings his BEST to offer in the Temple. Xt says that no one ‘enters’—is seen as fit for Heaven— except through HIM. I am the Gate.

This pic is from 1934!



**“I AM THE GATE.”**  
Sheep’s Gate of Jerusalem

1898, yes 1898

Sorting to see which are fit.

2<sup>nd</sup>) Sheep’s Gate in a Village Pen

There might be a permanent walled enclosure, with a gate. In order for a thief or wolf to come in he would have to climb over the Shepherd at the door. A Shepherd would “lay down my Life for my Sheep.” However at times, in the fields, a temporary wall (of

some bushes and rocks, pic below) would be enough protection because at the opening the Shepherd would lie down there, For a thief or Wolf to come in he would have to climb over the Shepherd at the door. A GOOD Shepherd is always with his flock, even out in the fields. The Good Shepherd protects his sheep WITH HIS BODY! Eucharist?

Here are some examples of Sheep Gates. I did NOT take any of these.

This is a simple permanent shelter. The 2nd is a kind of temporary shelter (it is from Nazareth Village, a Historical Reconstruction today ON THE SITE of the Nazareth of Jesus.) I was there.

Uses the natural formation, adding a protective entrance--where the shepherd would sleep On guard!



A Sheep's Pen in the village. How would the thief, or the “Big Bad Wolf”, get them?  
*“Whoever . . . climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber.”*



The ‘shepherds’ at Nazareth Village dress in authentic clothes. I was in Nazareth Village but I didn’t take this picture.



The Shepherd did **not** FOLLOW the sheep to KEEP THEM IN LINE.

He walked **in front**. If he picked someone else’s sheep to take out to pasture, he would walk singing or talking through the village and the sheep would file out of their owner’s huts, JOINING the Flock, following the shepherd.

If two or three shepherds took their flocks out to pasture together, no problem. At the end of the day EACH Shepherd would simply ‘call out’—and the sheep would RECOGNIZE THEIR OWN SHEPHERD’S VOICE and follow HIM.

*“But they will **not follow a stranger**; they will **run away** from him, because they do not recognize the **voice of strangers**.”*

ONLY Pharisees?  
You really think  
they are the only ones  
who “don’t get it”?

Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

“I know mine.”

H. R. P. Dickson, a son of the English Consul, lived in Lebanon during the early 1900's. In 1949 he wrote a book, *The Arab of the Desert*. He died in 1959. Dickson visited the desert Arabs often because he had an ARAB wet nurse as an infant, which made him a “member” of the tribe. He witnessed an event that revealed the amazing knowledge which they have of their sheep.

One evening, shortly **after dark**, an Arab shepherd began to call out one by one the names of his fifty-one mother sheep. He was able to pick out each one's little lamb and unite it with its mother to suckle. To do this in the light would be a feat, but this was done in complete darkness, and in the midst of the noise coming from the ewes crying for their lambs and the lambs crying for their mothers.

[His book, 1949 is a free download on the net.]

This is the picture painted in this week's Gospel.

We too often think the Pharisees were “bad guys”. I think this is wrong. They were conscientious religious believers. But they thought they were the ONLY “good ones”. That was their problem.

Think of what Peter preached. “. . . *all those far off, whom ever the Lord our God will call.*” Even in his first preaching Peter EXPANDS the “People of God” beyond the Jews, beyond those living in Jerusalem. To the contrary, those I call “fundamentalists”, like the Pharisees are more interested in EXCLUDING people who don't measure up!

And besides, the Pharisees thought they were **good enough** as they were. They didn't need Yahweh's help and forgiveness! Here they don't respond to Jesus because they see Him as **a stranger**. How and Why? My guess is they didn't NEED to belong to the FLOCK: they didn't need a shepherd.

You probably know people, even relatives, who don't need the Church. “I am doing good, without going to Church, Thank you.” Like the Pharisees, good people who don't need a Shepherd, don't need to belong to HIS flock. They think. Really!

I DID take these 4 pics at Nazareth Village.



A *Watch Tower* [if you ever met a Jehovah's witness].  
Protection from the sun; to protect the FLOCK by day!

I assume you can pick out Janice, my sister-in-law!  
My favorite sister-in-law!



Here are two versions of Psalm 23

*Shepherd Me O God*, by Marty Haugen, American raised Lutheran, now United Church of Christ, with a graduate degree in Liturgy from St. John's in MN, a Catholic school. Still writes hymns for the Lutheran Church in America, ELCA.

First BAPTIST Wilmington NC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOlm1Ubae2A> 5 min

Marty Haugen HIMSELF plays the guitar; w WORDS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFgZGIZ5t80> 4:30

First Congregational Elyria OH

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSzwpvW71ZY> 4:15

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**Christopher Walker** {British born and educated; now lives in the USA} views his music as a way of “teaching” and evangelizing, of spreading the Good News.

I think Walker achieves the “mood” of Sheep contented to be with their Shepherd.

*Because the Lord is my Shepherd* by two Scottish Episcopal women.

I used to be able to play the 12-string guitar too. No more though.

While musically *amateurish*, a nice rendition. It was made just **this April 2020!** 4:45  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_cmSUwGQJwU&list=RD\\_cmSUwGQJwU&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cmSUwGQJwU&list=RD_cmSUwGQJwU&start_radio=1)

audio with pictures; superior musically—and with words!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhA4g6faRpo> 3:15

solo guitar player, Chris Brunelle. Good interpretation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilC1Qb8voQg> 3 min