

Parable of a Shepherd

Reprinted from Servants' News Published by Norman S. Edwards (Perry, Michigan)

John 21:15-17 & Acts 20:28:

These Scriptures contain instructions to Peter to "feed and tend my sheep", and a group of elders to "shepherd the church of God". Some will claim that these verses set the leadership in authority over the people as a shepherd is in authority over his animals. They forget that our Savior is the chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4) and that believers are all His sheep (1 Cor. 3:23). We can easily demonstrate the relationship from a brief parable:

A prince hired a shepherd to tend and feed his sheep. He started the shepherd with 100 sheep, and told him he would be sending him 100 more each week for the next four weeks. The shepherd asked if he had complete authority over the sheep, and the prince said, "Yes, I am entrusting them to you."

At the end of four weeks, the shepherd gave this report: "Things are going well; the sheep are learning to obey. I have been feeding most of them, except the independent ones that try to eat where I cannot see them easily--I put them in a pen where they will not influence the others. They are getting thin and some of them have died--that is teaching the others that disobeying does not pay. We had a wolf come in once, but fortunately I woke up before he killed very many. Some sheep were so scared and stupid they got in a big pile and suffocated! A few of the old rams were fighting off the wolf, but I threw them out of the pasture for that--they should not be doing my job. I have not had time to mend the fence so we have had many run-a-ways. I catch the run-a-ways that I can find easily and punish them, but will not waste time on the ones that stray far--we do not want sheep like that here! Another thing that is working well: I have had a lot of nice lamb dinners and been able to stay warm with the skins when it is cold. I think we have nearly 200 sheep out there so just keep sending them every week and this flock will keep growing! Any chance of me getting a raise?"

The above story is about a bad shepherd. The Eternal sends him sheep (members), and he pretends to be a shepherd, but he hurts more than he helps, and the flock is destroyed and scattered. Our Savior gave the analogy of a shepherd tending sheep to His Church so they would understand the principle of taking care of others even when "the sheep" are hurting the shepherd or themselves. Shepherds have limited authority from the owner to help the sheep, not to use them for personal gain. "The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

The above is from "[How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?](#)" by Norman S. Edwards--Second Edition, August 1998--[Servants' News](#), PO Box 107, Perry, Michigan 48872.

Editors Note:

The shepherd in the above parable lost 300 sheep in 4 weeks, and he thought he did a good job and should get a raise for it. Do you think that ministers should continue to loose the sheep at the rate of speed that they loose them, and that all the people sitting in all of their congregations should just sit there frozen and watch, lest it be them, and never say a word of warning to anyone, because a minister says we must show a humble attitude? If I know a wolf has come in to devour my brothers and sisters, I will not stay silent, I will sound an alarm to warn them to the best of my ability. Laura Lee

**THIS HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO YOU AS A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT
SPONSORED BY THE SUSPENDED AND DISFELLOWSHIPED SHEEP**