

Doctrine of Sheep

1. Most of us have had little association with sheep. There are in Scripture many characters whose jobs were care givers to sheep. We call them shepherds and many great men in the Bible have held that position at one time or the other.

1.1 Abel was the first shepherd and the first victim of murder; where were the sheep when he needed them? It should not surprise us that sheep are not very useful in subduing an assailant, they cannot even protect themselves.

Gen 4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

2. Little wonder then that God often used sheep to describe mankind.

2.1 In Syria Jacob tended sheep while working off his dowry for his wife Rachel.

Hos 12:12 And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

3. Moses when he left his lofty position in Egypt became a shepherd in Saudi Arabia.

Exo 3:1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

4. David was ridiculed at times for being a shepherd and the list goes on.

1Sa 16:11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

1Sa 17:28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

1Sa 16:19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.

5. Shepherds were not considered the profession of choice and yet many of our heroes in Scripture were shepherds; Jesus even said of Himself, I am the good shepherd Who is willing to give His life for the sheep.

5.1 Christ, as the Good Shepherd not only gave His life for the sheep, He still watches over His sheep.

6. Sheep are mentioned more than 175 times in the Scripture which is significantly more than any other animal. In Scripture sheep are the favorite analogy in describing people and their relationship to the Father.

7. Sheep, of all the domestic animals, require the most care and supervision.

7.1 Sheep, be it day or night, if left to themselves will get into all kinds of trouble. Shepherding therefore is a full time job.

7.2 It should be comforting to know that God never sleeps but watches over us day and night.

8. Sheep are gregarious, i.e., sheep succumb to the mob instinct. Sheep take their clues from others, they are peer pressure susceptible and think as a group.

8.1 Sheep follow the leader even when being led astray into danger.

8.2 We often follow the most popular trends, for example it is common place for Christians to believe growing numbers are prima facie evidence we are on the right track and in tune with God.

8.3 This in spite of ample evidence that denominations replete with false doctrine seem to grow faster than churches teaching sound doctrine.

8.4 Eyes and ears attuned to the Shepherd's voice (The Word of God) is our only protection.

8.5 Sheep are very susceptible to fear. The average sheep is a coward. One roar from a lion, one howl from a wolf will send a flock in every direction away from the Shepherd.

9. The details of life can be daunting; we must rely on the promises of God which teach us "His rod and His staff" are always there to comfort and protect us.

9.1 When confronted by danger sheep will run an impotent defense because sheep are not fast runners. The best protection for the sheep is to relax and trust the Shepherd for protection. Waiting as over against running is also often difficult for us. When our lives seem to be falling apart we often panic thinking something has to be done.

9.2 Our Shepherd does exactly the right thing at exactly the right time for our maximum benefit. Waiting for the Shepherd's deliverance is superior; it rescues us from those "frying pan to the fire" reactions that can open the door for even greater troubles.

10. Sheep are very destructive. They are very hard on pastures biting down on the grass, pulling up the roots stem and all.

10.1 Ingratitude for the Shepherd's provisions can really "stink-up" our life and reduce our "pasture" to a barren no-man's land of discomfort.

11. Sheep are also stubborn, selfish and bold with one another. Sheep will push and shove one another away from the food source and each will eat until they become as "fat as pigs." We must work against our sheep-like propensities.

12. Being kind and tender to one another in the local assembly produces beautiful and enriching results. Obeying the Shepherd's command to love one another cannot be an option but a daily response.

13. Loving one another in any local assembly (ours is no exception) often means simply putting up with each other. Local assembly memberships like everything else in our lives have been carefully orchestrated by God in eternity past for our proper functioning in time.

14. Sheep are vulnerable to predators and need a shepherd. Sheep are weak, slow, stupid and defenseless. As noted they lean toward panic. Sometimes just from their nature, they will make problems for themselves.

15. Our enemy, the devil, walks about seeking to devour the weaker sheep; we like sheep can become vulnerable when pressures occur and this includes both prosperity and adversity.

1Co 11:14 And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

1Co 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

16. The power of Satan therefore is so great we as "humankind" without Bible doctrine cannot identify the wolf because of the sheep's clothing.

17. It is not unusual for a sheep to charge a barbed wire fence repeatedly trying to break the wire; seemingly for no reason except it is there. A far greater danger for the sheep in the midst of "wolf land" is their lack of true introspection. Most sheep have no idea how vulnerable they are until it is too late.

18. After yielding to a particular sin emanating from our old sin nature's area of weakness we sometimes think "boy I won't do that again" and then it happens, the same temptation and the same sin.

18.1 Only our Shepherd's restraining grace staff (Naom - favor) can keep us from falling. We need grace, grace and more grace on a moment by moment basis and grace can only be accessed by utilizing the two power options.

18.2 Sheep wool keeps a sheep warm in winter and hot in summer therefore the sheep relies on the shepherd to shear at the proper time; without the shearing the sheep is miserable.

18.2.1 Wool is the natural production of the sheep; divine good should be our natural production. When we fail to manifest divine good we, like the sheep, become miserable failures, casualties in the angelic conflict and objects of God's divine discipline.

18.3 Sheep have an incredible ability to get dirty. The wool of the sheep when sheared is dirty beyond description and must be repeatedly scrubbed before processing.

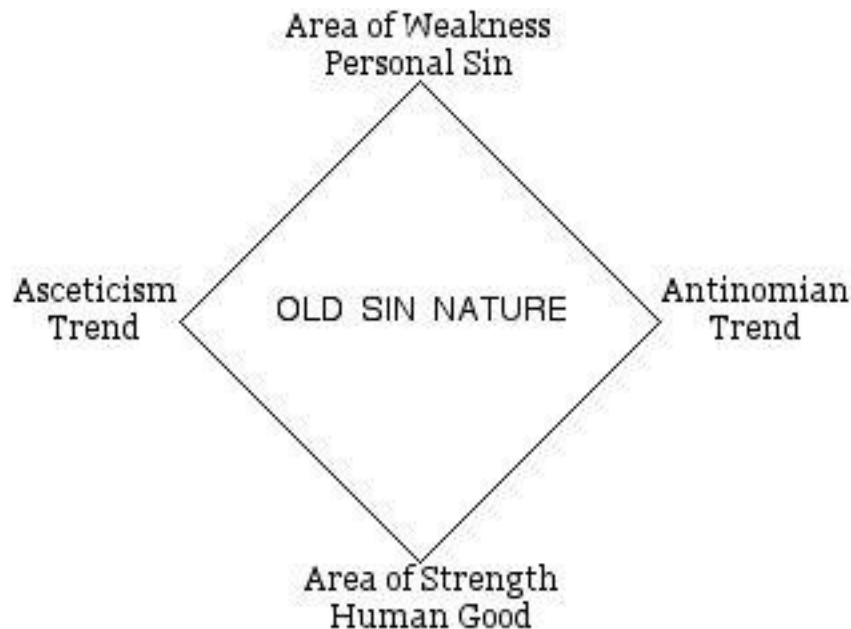
18.4 Fortunately for us our scrubbing is a direct result of rebound.

1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

18.5 The sheep does not decide to get dirty; the dirt accumulates because of the nature of the sheep's system. Sheepskin is full of lanolin which collects dirt; in fact when a sheep lays down, grass, dirt, burrs and everything imaginable collects to its coat.

18.6 The sheep's lanolin is a good analogy for our Old Sin Nature. Lanolin traps all manner of dirt just as our old sin natures tend to scoop up large quantities of sin and evil.

18.7 Sheep, therefore, are walking Velcro strips; the accumulation of filth is facilitated by the lanolin which secretes from within, likewise, the products of the Old Sin Nature regularly secretes both sin and human good.



18.8 Sheep are clearly God's favorite animals. God has chosen to use the shepherd and sheep metaphors to describe our relationship with God.

18.8.1 The great news is: the Shepherd loves us unconditionally. He knows how His sheep will behave and yet He stills loves us with an incomparable divine love.

18.8.2 In spite of our deceitful natures and evil propensities, our beloved Shepherd loves us, protects us, feeds us, fights for us and heals our infirmities.

18.9 Seven hundred years before the coming of Christ, Isaiah prophesied:

HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES ... AND WITH HIS STRIPES WE WERE HEALED.

18.10 It was the greatest complement to the Lamb when Christ was called “the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world.”

18.11 In New Testament times sheep were the prime source of protein. Sheep provided milk which was used for both nourishment and the quenching of thirst. Likewise our obedient manner of life and the production which God wishes to manifest in us is available to enrich the Body of Christ.

18.11.1 Sheepskins were used for clothing and shelter. Sheep provided wool for keeping people warm in winter. Wool was the most expensive cloth; though plentiful it was in great demand.

18.12 Sheep fertilize the earth wherever they go, preparing the earth's top soil by providing nutrients lost in the planting and harvesting process. Similarly we are the salt of the earth.

18.13 But only when we choose to feed on His Word will we provide the savor the earth needs.

18.14 Even when the path is through a rough valley we can rest in the presence of our Shepherd, ever mindful of His guidance and protection. We can rejoice as He feeds us in the presence of our enemies and enjoy His anointing.

18.15 Our joy can overflow as we remember that goodness and mercy attend us; as we dwell in His Word all the days of our lives.