

Names of God from the Bible

48 – The Door of the Sheep Pen

We need to remember that every name of God is an eternal Name. So regardless of the time and place the Name is used, it is as relevant to us now as it was then.

Reading: John 10:1-21

Throughout the Bible, we find references that equate humanity with sheep. The older I get, the more I think the analogy is so apposite. We need leading, we need feeding, we need protection and to be given direction. Above all, we need rescuing. We are self-willed, overtly inquisitive and simple. We are gullible, senseless and fearful. We are definitely not the supremely wise and discerning people that we think we are. Arrogance too often hides our ignorance and stupidity.

On the other hand, we discover in the Bible that God likens Himself to a Shepherd, the one who cares for the sheep. By inference, therefore, the sheep pen is where God lives – Heaven – the place of security, peace, joy and, above all, the presence of God.

Jesus often used parables to convey spiritual truth. Those parables related to events in everyday life. Jesus lived at a time where agriculture was not only the main industry but, for many, a way of life.

Predominantly, the livestock was sheep. So Jesus highlighted a common feature of life. Sheep were kept in a sheep-pen at the end of the day for security and protection. It was the place the shepherd led his sheep to. He would then lay at the entrance of the sheep-pen to protect the sheep from predators and thieves. The shepherd (who owned the sheep) would be prepared to give his life to protect his sheep.

Knowing that the shepherd would be guarding the entrance of the sheep-pen, robbers and thieves would try to get in other than through the door. They would attempt to climb over the walls or enter some other way, proving that they were not the true shepherds of the sheep. They were enemies of the sheep. However, the sheep would not follow them once they've got into the pen. This is because the sheep would not be able to recognise their voices. The thieves would have to violently drive the sheep wherever they wanted the sheep to go.

Jesus likened all the false religious leaders to thieves and robbers. They had come to deceive the people and to make them follow their agenda that was evil. Yes, they might use subtle language and offer a brighter future but their goals were always money, domination and destruction. As Jesus said, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy."*

Nevertheless, Jesus was not only saying that He was the protector of the sheep but He was also the entrance way to the sheep-pen. He was the way to Heaven, the only way for us to enter into the presence of God.

Jesus is the only Way for us to know God as our Heavenly Father. All the other 'ways', whether prophets, gods, religions, fortune-tellers, gurus and mind-improvement professionals, Jesus describes as thieves and robbers. False and blind guides. Spiritually blind themselves, they spend their time deceiving others, and pretending there is another way or many ways into God's presence. Jesus exposes the lie. There is only one door into the sheep-pen and that door is 'guarded' by the Shepherd.

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Yes, the thief comes to steal, to kill and to destroy but Jesus came to give us life and help us experience life to the full. Jesus is not an imposter, a thief or a liar. He is the genuine Shepherd who gave His life for His sheep.

Later, Jesus was to expand this concept by saying, *"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no-one comes to the Father except through Me."*

We all want to go to Heaven. It's just that there is only one way to get there. We have to use the door of the sheep-pen and He is Jesus.

What does that name mean for us today

Jesus is not only our security, our redeemer and Saviour, He is also our guarantee of direct access to God as our Heavenly Father. We can approach Father at anytime through Jesus Christ, the door of the sheep-pen.

Prayer

Thank You so much, Jesus, for being the door of the sheep-pen and our one and only access to God as Father. Thank You too for laying down your life for me so that I can know true life in all its fullness. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Psalm 100
- Ezekiel 34:1-31
- Luke 15:1-7

Questions

1. Why is it important for us to know there is only one door to the sheep-pen?
2. Has Jesus revealed Himself in this way to you? How and when?
3. What is the significance of that Name for you?