

The Voice of the Shepherd

John 10:1-29

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Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/the-voice-of-the-shepherd/>

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This document was prepared by Heather Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please email us at transcripts@thesanctuarydowntown.org. Thank you!

Message

Video clips: A compilation of God's voice clips
The Ten Commandments (1956)
History of the World, Part 1 (1981)
Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975)

Wouldn't you like to hear the Voice of the Lord? A young minister was being interviewed by a church board for the position of pastor. One, old, hard-working Irishman who was on the board looked at the young man sternly and asked, "Young man, did God send you here?" He replied, "Well, I don't know if God sent me here. I am here trying to find the will of God and find out if you would like me for your next pastor." The board member replied, "Young man, did God send you here?" The young minister was somewhat at a loss for words and came back again, "Well, I just stopped by to talk with the board." The board member interrupted again, "Young man, did God send you here?" Finally, he got up his courage and said, "Well, I guess God didn't send me here. I just stopped by to see about whether we could get together." The old board member leaned back in his seat and said, "That's good. The last four said that God had sent them, and we have had nothing but trouble with all four of them." So, who was listening to the Voice of the Lord? Anyone?

I got this add in the mail: "Discover ten secrets to receiving divine guidance." You know the VOICE OF THE LORD can be extremely useful, particularly if you're a pastor or a politician. You can say: Vote for me or give me more money, BECAUSE God says so." BUT if God didn't say so, that's called "Taking the Lord's name in vain." It has nothing to do with vocabulary words and everything to do with using the phrase "God says" for your own vain purposes. It's false prophecy, and in Deut. 13:5, it's punishable by death. AND YET if God Did tell you to say something to someone, you'd better do it! As God said to Ezekiel, "If I tell you to warn them and you don't warn them, their blood will be required of you."ⁱ Or, like Jonah, If he tells you to speak and you don't speak, you might get swallowed by a whale and barfed up on a beach in Syria. So, hearing God's voice is terribly important, but can be profoundly stressful.

One day, when my son Coleman was a toddler, I told him that Jesus was inside of him. So, Coleman started talking to Jesus. When he didn't hear anything back, he put his fingers in his ears, and started yelling: "Jesus, I can't hear you! Where are you? Jesus, I can't hear you! I can't hear you!" I've read the books, taken the classes, and still stand there with my fingers in my ears, yelling, "I can't

hear you! Where are you?" I'm supposed to preach God's Word. It would be useful to hear God's Word.

For years, I used to pray, “God, I can’t seem to hear your voice. So, if I’m out of your will, would you please just break my arms?” Years ago, at a pastor’s lunch in downtown Denver, I sat next to an Old Pentecostal pastor. And in the course of our conversation, I asked him: “How do you hear God? I’m not very sure that I do.” He looked at me and said, “Well now, that’s a very strange thing to say... For in John Chapter 10, Jesus says, ‘My sheep hear My voice’.” And JUST THEN, someone called the meeting to order. So, for the entire lunch and long after, I worried: “What if I’m not a sheep?” In John 10, Jesus is talking to the Pharisees, having just healed the man born blind man, in chapter 9.

John 9:41-10:4:

“Jesus said to the [Pharisees], “If you were blind (if you saw that you didn’t see), you would have no **guilt [*hamartia*: sin], but now that you say we see, your **guilt** [*hamartia*: sin] remains. ¹ “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold [*aule*: courtyard, enclosure] by the door [*thura*] but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door [*thura*] is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the **gatekeeper** [*thuroros*: door keeper] opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.**

You can see why that would stress me out: If I don't hear, I'm not one of his sheep, because his sheep hear his voice. But in all of Scripture, Jesus doesn't tell any of us how the sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd. He just tells us that they do. He didn't say, "The Sheep ought to hear the voice..." just that "they do." So, am I one of his sheep? Acts 2:21, "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 1 Corinthians 12:3, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except in the Holy Spirit." John 6:44, "No one can come to me," says Jesus, "unless the Father who sent me draws him..."



I love this Far Side Cartoon. What we say to dogs: "Okay Ginger! I've had it! You stay out of the garbage." What they hear: "Blah Blah, Ginger, Blah Blah" A sheep must hear, "Blah Blah Blah, Fluffy, Blah Blah." Maybe I hear, "Blah Blah Blah, Peter, Blah Blah." When we led a tour of Israel years ago, we saw this all over the Judean hillsides. Shepherd boys would be walking and talking with twenty

or thirty sheep just following behind—The sheep just wanted to be wherever The Voice was. Each Shepherd would have a flock of sheep behind, but in front of them they'd have a group of goats that they would be driving with goads. Do you remember what Jesus said to Paul on The Road to Damascus? He said, "Saul, Saul, it's hard to kick against the goads." It sounds like, St. Paul, the Pharisee, was once upon a time, a goat. So, the sheep follow the Shepherd but not a stranger and the Shepherd calls each of them by name, each one a different name. So, Jesus called you and he called me, and where did we hear him speaking? Maybe on a camping trip under the stars, maybe through a friend that loved us well, maybe through Scripture, or maybe through a miraculous sign. God speaks in all those ways: Creation, People, Scripture, and Signs. Remember what John wrote in Chapter One: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

[Peter grabs a box labeled "Universe."] So, imagine that this box is the Universe and I'm God. I've got the whole world in my hands; I've got the whole world in my hands. If I speak into the box everything moves. When we preached through John three, I told you how I was shocked to discover that my newborn, when he was born knew my voice, and his name. The moment, I said "Skooter," He stopped crying. Every day of his life in that womb world he had heard my voice. And yet I wasn't a thing in that world. I couldn't be explained by that world. AND I asked you if there were things in this world that couldn't be explained by this world—things like Logic, Light, Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Life. You know God doesn't simply exist; God is existence. His name is "I am." And his Voice is his Word who is Logic, Light, Truth, Beauty, Goodness & Life. So maybe, like me, you remember a night camping as a kid, staring up at the Milky Way, wondering about existence and what Truth, Beauty, Goodness & Life ARE and it seemed like God was calling your name AND I bet he was. God Speaks through all creation.

Video clip: *Bird Steals Rabbit as Soon as It's Released*

UNILAD (2018, February 9, Facebook, www.facebook.com/watch/?v=4440741679282190)

A lady sets a baby rabbit loose that the family nursed back to health. As the rabbit hops away, a hawk descends, grabs it, and carries it off.

Sorry, that's a little jarring, isn't it? God speaks through all creation, but there's not only logos but chaos, not only Light but shadow, not only Truth but lies, not only beauty but corruption. There are other voices and it's not always easy to sort them out. God speaks through creation; God speaks through people and groups of people—The Shepherd shepherds' sheep in flocks. I know that God spoke to me through my youth group, my church, and a world of wonderful traditions. But these Pharisees are about to crucify Jesus according to their traditions and understanding of the law. They'll call for the first truly democratic vote, and the crowd will chant crucify, crucify, crucify; we have no king but Caesar. The popular vote can be profoundly wrong.

God speaks through Creation, through Groups of people, and through Scripture. At the very least, the Bible is this miraculous record of the best thoughts about God that most people have had for four thousand years. And miraculously, it's not flattering to the people that wrote it, and usually not popular at the time it was written. And that we have actual manuscripts dating back to a few hundred years before Jesus, prophesying Jesus, is absolutely astounding. For me, only God, could be the explanation for the Gospels and the Prophets, and the self-deprecating testimony of a nation of slaves, called Israel. In the next paragraph, Jesus will even say that Scripture cannot be broken. And yet he just told the Pharisees in Chapter Five, "You search the Scriptures for you think that in them

you have life and it is they that bear witness to me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.”

God speaks through all creation, through tradition, through Scripture, and through signs, wonders, and prophetic utterances. And yet all of that stuff has to be tested and interpreted... by you... a Sheep. 1 Thessalonians 5:19, “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything”—you, a sheep, are commanded to test everything. Sheep are stupid. How do we recognize the voice of the Shepherd? People with prophetic gifts like “words of knowledge” used to really freak me out, for I thought they heard from God, and I didn’t hear from God. But then I discovered that my wife was one of those people, and it wasn’t because she had extra-long quiet times. God just told her stuff and yet, it still had to be tested and interpreted. Many times, she’s quoted bible verses or biblical names that she didn’t even know were in the Scriptures, and I’ll say, “Yeah that’s Zechariah 2:4” or “Yes, the name ‘Melchizedek’ does mean something to me.” At times she heard voices that pretend to be Jesus, but aren’t Jesus, and she counts on me to help her sort them out. You know, when Susan gets “a word of knowledge,” the Voice of the Shepherd isn’t getting bigger, or louder, BUT IN FACT far smaller and quite specific. The Universe is constantly upheld by the Voice of the Lord, and yet that voice can become a single word in my wife’s head, or your head, or even a manger.

The Jews constantly sought signs. And these Pharisees just saw the fifth public sign in the Gospel of John. But these Pharisees don’t want to read the sign. All the signs point to the seventh sign that is the substance... “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up” and he was speaking of his body.” “This is the plan for the fulness of time,” writes Paul in Ephesians 1:10, “To bring all things together united under one head in Christ Jesus our Lord.” I think it’s our awareness of this eternal reality that allows us to read the signs in space and time. In John 1, John describes the creation of everything through the voice of God. And in Revelation 5, John hears all creation worshipping God and His Voice, who is the Lamb on the throne. All creation is alive and singing, animated by the Voice of the Lord.

As I’ve been telling you recently, I think I once saw and heard something similar. It wasn’t long after that lunch with the Pentecostal pastors. In the morning, I heard God audibly so, I know it happens. In the evening, I thought God was literally going to break my arms (it was the day I told him that I was leaving the ministry). Sometimes people will say, “I think God is trying to tell you something.” Well, if God wants to tell you something he is more than able. He held me to the floor, almost broke my arms, and yet revealed that this crazy experience was not the point, but that the point had always been that he was everywhere, all the time, loving me. So, “blah, blah, blah, Peter, Blah, blah, blah” was really “I love you, I love you, I love you, Peter, I love you, I love you.” And then, I just couldn’t stop worshipping.

It’s made me wonder how anyone could ever NOT hear the Voice of the Shepherd. Yet most of my life it seems that I have not I so clearly remember a moment in the Pep Boys Parking lot about 30 years ago: I was lecturing Elizabeth about being kind to her sister as we were walking back to the car. I turned around to see her with her fingers in her ears, singing, “It’s a small world after all; It’s a small world after all, it’s a small, small, world.” The Pharisees wanted a small world; one in which they always maintained control—And the Voice of the Shepherd just didn’t seem to fit.

In Genesis 3:8, after they take the fruit from the tree, Adam and Even hear—literally translated—“The voice of the Lord walking in the cool of the day and they hid themselves from the face of the Lord.” They didn’t want to see or hear the Voice. I think it’s because they didn’t want to know what they’d just done to the Voice—they were ashamed.ⁱⁱ Anyway, I’m one of his sheep. And so, I do hear

the voice. And I follow. AND I also haven't followed, for I haven't heard, & so haven't been one of his sheep. At times, I've even kicked against the goads! It's like I'm a sheep and something else. So, how do I discern the Voice of the Shepherd today, and follow? In John 10:1, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold [*aule*: courtyard (of the sheep)]. That word *aule* was used to describe the courtyards of the temple. So "the *aule* of the sheep," describes a sheep pen in the wilderness, as well as a sanctuary or temple for sheep, the garden of Eden for sheep.

John 10:1-10:9:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the courtyard of the sheep by the door [*thura*] but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door [*thura*] is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him ~~the gatekeeper~~ [*thuroros*: door keeper] opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am [*ego eimi*] the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers. ⁹ I am [*ego eimi*] the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

All! That means that even the very best of men, Abraham, Moses, and David, were "thieves and robbers." And if you know their story you know that's true. Each tried to take the kingdom of heaven with their own willpower, their own violence; they were thieves and robbers. Ironically, they were also Shepherds, and even more ironically, in spite of themselves, the Great Shepherd often spoke through them. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. What does that mean? They will go in and out of where? In a few chapters, Jesus will tell us to "abide" in him, as if he is a Sanctuary in the wilderness that we can enter, and then, from that place live our lives.

John 10:10-11:

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good [*kalos*] shepherd.

THE SEVEN “I AM THE” STATEMENTS

- #1: “*I am the bread of life.*” John 6:35, 41, 48**
- #2: “*I am the light of the World.*” John 8:12, 9:5**
- #3: “*I am the door.*” John 10:7, 9**
- #4: “*I am the good shepherd.*” John 10:11, 14**
- #5: “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” John 11:25**
- #6: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*” John 14:6**
- #7: “*I am the true vine.*” John 15:1**

I am the door of the sheep is the third I am statement in John. I am the Good Shepherd is the fourth, so Jesus is implying that he is God and the Shepherd, who in the Old Testament is God. The ancient Israelites were told to pray Psalm 23, “The Lord (Yahweh) is my shepherd I shall not want...” It immediately follows Psalm 22 which begins with this line, “My God my God why have you forsaken me?” and ends with these lines “all the families of the nations shall worship before you... before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, he has done it.” Next line, Psalm 23:1 “The Lord is my shepherd... he leads me in the right paths... even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” And then it contains this line “He has prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies...” So, the Great Shepherd feeds his sheep with something other than grass. Jesus says, “I am the (the one and the only) the Good [kalos] Shepherd.” In the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, Kalos, is used to describe the fruit hanging on the tree in the middle of the garden of Eden. Shepherds would sometimes eat their sheep, but the Great Shepherd feeds his sheep with his own beautiful self—and turns his enemies into friends.

John 10:11-14:

I am the good [kalos: beautiful] shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good, the beautiful [kalos] shepherd.

Jesus is the Shepherd. Jesus is the door of the sheep. So, who’s the door keeper that opens the door, that is also the Shepherd? Wouldn’t that be Our Father? It really wasn’t Pilate, Herod, the Romans or the Jews, that lead Jesus to be crucified in Jerusalem—It was His Shepherd and He is his Lamb. I hope you realize that we enter the New Creation through the wounds of our beautiful Shepherd. He is the Shepherd, the Door, and literally in him we are enfolded.

John 10:14b-16a:

I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. [aule: courtyard].

Literally “this court.” In Jesus day the temple was divided into courtyards, and the outer court was the court of the nations which, ironically, included the Samaritans—who were actually descendants of the ten northern tribes of Israel. Through Ezekiel God says “I myself will be the shepherd of the sheep... I will seek the lost... I will take the people of Israel from the nations (that’s the ten lost tribes) And I will make them one nation.” That’s one Shepherd and one flock. And that’s not the Israel you hear about on the news; that Israel is made up of the descendant of one tribe Judah—that is the Jews. In Jesus day, the Jews were the remnant of Israel, the one tribe that was left, but most of Israel had literally become the nations of the world. Ezekiel prophesies that the Great Shepherd will bring all of them back.

John 10:16b-17:

I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd (He’s quoting Ezekiel & they know it). ¹⁷ **For this reason** [*dia*: by means of, through (this)] **the Father loves me, because** [*hoti*: that] **I lay down my life** [*psyche*] **that** [*hina*: in order that] **I may take it up again.**

“For this reason,” I think that’s a bad translation for it makes it sound like God the Father didn’t love Jesus the Son until he died on the cross. But God doesn’t Love for a reason because God is Love and God is the reason for everything that’s anything. It’s a bad translation for theological reasons AND because it’s NOT the most literal translation. It should read, “By means of this, or through this, the Father loves me, that I lay down my life in order that I may take it up again.” I think he’s saying, In this is love, that I lose my life and find it... in all of you. So, the Cross does not make God love Jesus, or anyone. The Cross doesn’t make God love; the cross is the Revelation of Love, who is God and who never changes. God was not hating Jesus on the cross.

People will often ask, “Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?” And they’ll answer, “To satisfy Justice. You sinned and cannot pay for your sins. So, Jesus paid for your sins. That is, God hated Jesus on the cross, so he wouldn’t have to hate you forever in hell.” It’s called The Penal Substitutionary Theory of the Atonement. It’s actually forbidden in Scripture—Deuteronomy 24:16. It’s forbidden in Scripture, and it’s a complete misunderstanding of “sacrifice” in the Old Testament. Sacrifice was always to be about love. When one person sacrifices in a world that doesn’t sacrifice it looks like a naked man nailed to a tree in a garden. When two people sacrifice in a world that doesn’t sacrifice it looks like a marriage, may even feel like a honeymoon, and produce some life called babies. When all people sacrifice, when everyone loves, all people are home in the Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God, where no one is sad and all are alive

In the words of CS Lewis and George MacDonald, “When He was crucified He ‘did that in the wild weather of His outlying provinces which He had done at home in glory and gladness’. From before the foundation of the world, He surrenders begotten Deity back to begetting Deity in obedience. And as the Son glorifies the Father, so also the Father glorifies the Son.”

In other words, on the cross, God the Father was glorifying God the Son, and God the Son was glorifying God the Father, and they were both doing this by loving us—us, who had never loved and had no idea what love is. The Penal Substitutionary Atonement Theory is a late idea in western theology that the early church had never even heard of. Perhaps the oldest atonement theory, if you can even call it a theory, is the recapitulation theory. It’s the idea that on the cross the Last Adam, (Jesus), was undoing the sin of the first Adam, (us). BUT not simply undoing it, using it to make us all like himself—actually his very own body—his very own self. And this wasn’t Plan B; this was always Plan A: this is how God makes each of us and all of us in his image. “In this is Love” writes

John and “God is Love” and we are to be his image. We take his life, and see that he has always given his life, and so we surrender to him as his spirit descends into us and rises in us, such that we freely choose to love as he has always loved us.

God was not hating Jesus on the cross. We were all hating God on the cross BUT God will not stop loving us on the cross until we all join the dance of Divinity called Love. So, Jesus didn’t sacrifice, so that you would never have to sacrifice. Jesus loved, so that you would love. That you would pick up your cross and follow So why did Jesus have to die on the cross? He didn’t have to die on the cross; he wanted to die cross, because he loves loving us and he wants us to share in his dance of love that is eternal life.

John 10:17-18a:

Through this the Father loves me, that I lay down my life in order that I may take it up again. [We are the life he takes up again, we are the body that the Lord had prepared for him, his bride] ¹⁸ **No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.**

“I didn’t have to; I wanted to,” says Jesus. And, “Yes, you took my life, but only because I’d already given my life. I’ve always fore-given you my life—that is who I am: the Logic of Love.”

John 10:18b-27:

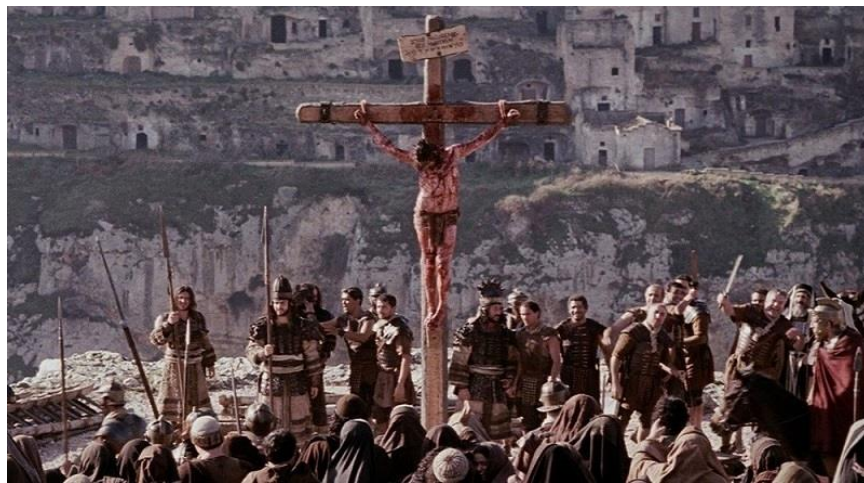
I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” ¹⁹ **There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.** ²⁰ **Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?”** [We have a terrible time understanding love like this. We can’t see it. We can’t hear it. We can’t speak it. We’re deaf, dumb and blind to it] ²¹ **Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”** ²² **At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem** [that’s Hanukah—celebrating the day that the temple is filled with light]. **It was winter,** ²³ **and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.** ²⁴ **So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”** ²⁵ **Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me,** ²⁶ **but you do not believe because you (pl.) are not among [ek: of] my sheep.”** ²⁷ **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**

You are not of my sheep. Wow, that’s harsh: That’s exactly what used to terrify me: “Maybe I’m not his sheep, because maybe I don’t hear his voice.” And now Jesus says that these guys don’t believe, for they don’t hear, for they are not of his sheep. They must be of their father the devil, like the Jews he was talking to in chapter 8—They’re not of his sheep. We don’t know if that means that they are sheep but lost, maybe in the wrong fold, OR if maybe they’re not even sheep. If they’re lost or in the wrong fold, their only hope is being found. Sheep just don’t find themselves. If they’re not even sheep, they can’t just simply decide to become sheep, that would take a miracle, like a death and a resurrection. Y’all are not of my sheep. And who are Y’all?

John just told us: verse 24) “The Jews.” AND, who are “The Jews?” Well, everyone in the Gospel of John so far, except the Samaritans. And remember what he said to them “Salvation is from the Jews.” Every commentary I’ve read says, “Well John didn’t really mean ‘the Jews.’” But I think maybe

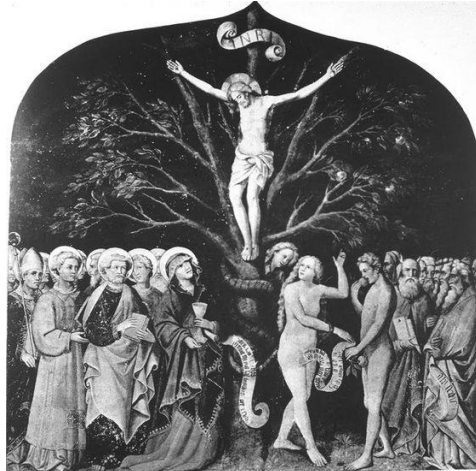
John really meant what he wrote: “The Jews.” Not “some of the Jews” or “the grumpy Jews,” or even “the Jews that reject Jesus,” JUST “The Jews” and YES, John is a Jew. And think about it, The Jews heard the Voice in Creation, the sky proclaims his handiwork, sang the Jews. The Jews, were God’s chosen tribe who together would worship saying, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” To the Jews belonged the Scriptures that Jesus quoted constantly, and the Jews seemed to entirely misunderstand. To the Jews were given signs, wonders, and prophetic utterance. In fact, Caiaphas, High priest of the Jews, in the next chapter of John will utter the greatest prophecy ever uttered, “one man will die for the nation.” And yet he didn’t have a clue as to what it meant. “The Jews” are the last best human hope for the kingdom of God on earth.

Remember how Isaiah saw the Lord, heard “the whole earth is full of his glory,” and was told to preach? He was to preach Israel down to 1/10th that remained in the land. That 1/10th was the Jews, BUT THEN he’s told to keep preaching until all that’s left is the Stump, which is the root, which is the Holy Seed, Jesus. 500 Years later, Zechariah is told to “Shepherd the flock doomed to slaughter”—that’s Judah, and Judah is the Jews. He’s even told to throw the 30 pieces of silver to the potter; that’s a picture of Judas, which means Jew, betraying Jesus. At the Last Supper, Jesus quotes Zechariah, saying to the twelve, “You will all fall away because of me this night for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered’” Ezekiel even sees “The whole house of Israel (That would include every Jew),” dead in the valley of dry bones.



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

Do you see? I think John meant to write “The Jews;” it was the Jews that gathered around Jesus and chanted crucify, crucify, we have no king but Caesar. And then they took his life on the tree in the garden?



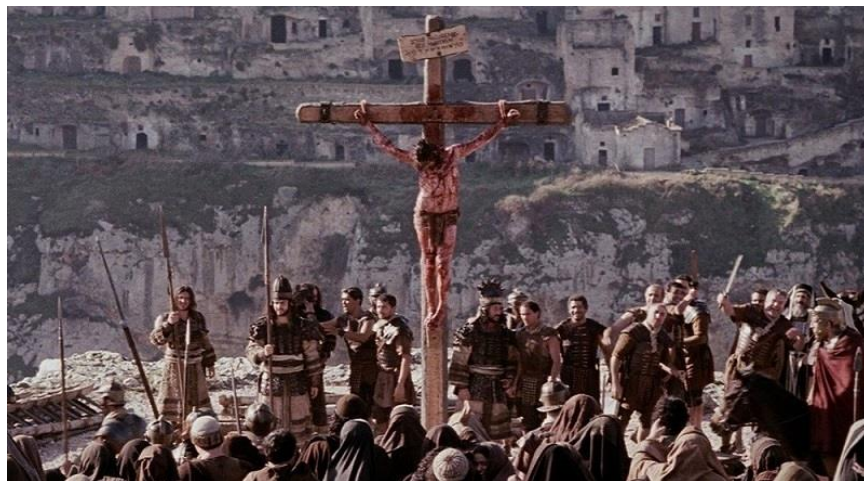
"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

But don't we all take his life on the tree in the garden?

John 10:27:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

What Sheep? In John 6, Jesus said "all that the Father gives me will come to me... and whoever comes to me I will never cast out..." In John 12, He'll say "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself. In John 16, He'll say "All that the Father has is mine" Jesus just quoted Ezekiel chapters 34 through 37 where God says through Ezekiel several times, "There will be one shepherd and one flock." And it's then in Chapter 37 that God says to Ezekiel "Son of man these bones are the whole house of Israel..." But then God says to Ezekiel, Prophecy to the bones, "Son of man," and say to them, "You will know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, and put my spirit within you, and place you in your own Land."ⁱⁱⁱ



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

How does God put his Spirit within us? Well, it's His Spirit that he delivers up on the tree. Isn't it obvious? Each and all have to die with Christ on that tree and then rise with Christ from a tomb that is actually a womb... which I thought was myself. We all have to lose our lives and find them; we all have to learn to love , for each and all of us are the image and likeness of God—WE are the Last

Adam, the Body of Jesus Christ our Lord. WE are the seventh sign that is the Substance. WE are the New Jerusalem coming down; WE are the Kingdom of God that is at hand.

John 10:27-29:

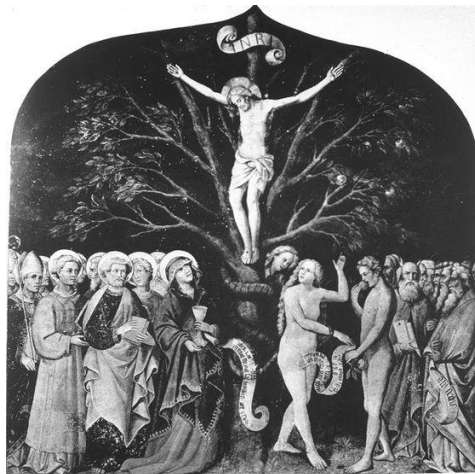
My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

So, his sheep, hear his voice, and follow. Those that don't follow, don't hear his voice for they're not of his sheep. But one day, John five, "The dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live." John 10: There will be one shepherd and one flock. And so why is Jesus telling us all of this? That's what's hard about preaching through John, Jesus is hardly ever telling us anything to do, only what God has done and is doing. So why is Jesus telling us all of this? Maybe so that when it happens, we'll be grateful. And maybe it's already happening? If you're grateful for the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, you hear the Voice of the Shepherd, AND don't let anyone tell you different

John 10:30:

"I and the Father are one."

God is Love. Both are Love—one Love. God the Father is Love, and God the Son is the Voice of Love. And both are the Great Shepherd.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

So, take a look at that tree in the Middle of the Garden. Do you see the Good in Flesh hanging on that tree? Do you see the Life hanging on that tree? Listen closely: That's the Voice of God hanging on the tree. If you think you can use the voice of God, to save yourself, create yourself, justify yourself and exalt yourself, you won't be able to hear the Voice of God; for you will have crucified the voice of God on your tree in your garden.

- The Voice of the Shepherd is not a book, or law, or magic word.
- The Voice of the Shepherd is a man that's rising in your heart.
- You may speak in the tongues of men and angels.
- You may memorize every Scripture in the holy book.

- You may be authorized, certified, and ordained by every denomination.
- You may fathom all the secrets of creation.

But until you surrender to the Voice of Love, you won't know what any of it means. And you will be nothing but a noisy gong or a clanging symbol.

Communion

So, on the night that the Voice of the Shepherd was betrayed by all the Sheep, He took bread and broke it saying this is my body given to you. He took the cup and said, this is the covenant in my blood, drink of it, all of you, and do it in remembrance of me.

To come to this table is to confess that you've taken The Voice of God to save yourself, create yourself and redeem yourself. And it is also to confess that The Voice of God has saved you, created you, and redeemed you because He is Your Lord. And so NOW, how do I discern the Voice of the Shepherd from amongst all the other voices?



Well, you know sheep are stupid. That's the point. They can't figure it out, they just recognize the Voice of the one who has loved them, and so want to be wherever He is, doing whatever it is that He does.

Endnotes

ⁱ Ezekiel 3:18-21

ⁱⁱ In Isaiah 6, Isaiah sees the Lord and hears that the whole earth is filled with his glory and, then, is told to *blind Israel* and *make their hearing dull*... Until all that's left is a stump, a tree that's been cut down to its root. And *The Root* is *The Seed*, Who is also *the Voice of the Lord*.

I think it's because the Lord wants us to see that we cannot control the Voice, but the Voice will set us free... on the day *it is finished* and *everything is Good*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ezekiel 37:14