

Pastors' and Theological Workers' School: Regent Baptist Church 21-22 May 1991

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Study One

The Pastor as Shepherd of The Flock

The "Pastor" is a shepherd (poime-n), and the unique use of the translation "Pastor" in Eph.4:11 probably reflects the unique reference to function rather than office. A Pastor is what you are when you do it. Cf. 1 Pet. 2:25; Acts 20:28; Phil.1:1; 1 Tim.3:2; Titus 1:7.

The Pastor Shepherds the Flock

In the New Testament the people of God are sometimes called a flock, poimne- (Matt.26:31; Jn.10:16; possibly 1 Cor. 9:7), although the diminutive poimnion , "little flock", is also used (Lu. 12:32; Acts 20:28-29; 1 Pet. 5:2-3).

The Pastor is Christ's Gift

Christ is bringing his people to fulness and maturity (Eph.1:3-5, 10, 13-14, 22-23; 2:10-22; 3:16-19; 4:1-16 etc), and "Pastor" occurs in this context (Eph.4:1-14). Pastors and teachers are Christ's gift as the fruit of his triumph and as a manifestation of his ministry. "The good shepherd" (Jn.10:11,14), "the chief-Shepherd" (1 Pet.5:4) is at work.

Cf. Acts 20:28, "take heed to yourselves and to all the (little) flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers".

The True Pastor Reflects the Character of God

Ezek.34:(1-10) 11-16. God is the true shepherd and so is he who bears the very stamp of his nature (Heb.1:3). As Christ, so the under-shepherds must reflect the character of the Shepherd (eg. 1 Tim.4:12). Cf. Isa.40:11 with 1 Thess.2:7; Jer. 31:10; Ps. 23:4 with 2 Tim.4:1-5.

The shepherd feeds the flock, so Ps. 23:1-2; cf. Eph. 4:11, where poime-n is linked with teacher, the one definite article is used for both nouns, and we may possibly translate "pastors even teachers". Thus 1 Tim.3:2; 5:17; 2 Tim.2:14-15. The principle is not imparting information but the utterance of God (Deut. 8:3; cf. 1 Cor. 14:1-5 etc). The Pastor must function in the dynamic of the word in order that he may impart that. He dare not impart mere memories of the living word, either his own or others.

God, the Shepherd, is King

The language of shepherds and flocks does not derive only from quiet pastoral scenes. It was contemporary usage in the ancient world to describe the king and his people. Thus Ps. 23:1ff is a reference to God's kingship and its outworking (see also Matt. 9:36 cf. Num. 27:16-17). The references to "pastors" in Jeremiah (above) is a reference to kings. Likewise under-shepherds rule (1 Tim.5:17) although as examples of submission and godliness (1 Pet. 5:2-3; Heb. 13:17). The Pastor's authority is from God and his word the utterance of God. The people who set him apart can at best acknowledge this.