

3 Figures of Speech Describing The Church of Christ:

We have studied that the church is described as both the kingdom of God & the temple of God. Now we will see there are 3 more figures of speech the flock of God, the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ describe the church of Christ.

The church is also described as the flock of God

The Messiah or Christ will be a gentle Shepherd cf:

Isaiah 40:10-11, Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him. 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.

The Lord will save flock of His people Zech. 9:9-11 & 16

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. 9:10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth. 9:11 As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein *is* no water.

Zechariah 9:16 And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they *shall be as* the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.

Beware:

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Jesus quotes the prophet about Himself & the flock

Matthew 26:31-32 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. **26:32** But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom

Luke 15:4-5 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? **15:5** And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing.

John 10:1-18 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

Entereth not by the door ... Christ is the true door (John 10:7) of access to the sheep who are the true Israel of God. It was Christ the door who fulfilled all of Old Testament prophecy concerning Him and whose coming into the world was the only reason for the existence of Israel as a chosen people. On the other hand, the vicious, secular priests then in charge of Israel had usurped authority over God's Israel, having not entered through Christ the true door at all, but having climbed up by political and coercive means.

The same is a thief and a robber ... This may not be doubted. Jesus referred to the same men as having made the temple a den of thieves and robbers; and here they are compared to violent outlaws who climb the wall to plunder the sheep belonging to another

John 10:2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

All religious authority of any actual validity derives from Christ who came into the world to redeem it. He was the true door of access to the spiritual Israel. The Father sent Him; he came in his own character through the true door which was Himself.

John 10:3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

In the first parable, Jesus is the Shepherd entering into the fold and calling his sheep. In the second, Jesus is the door by or through which the sheep enter the fold of God.

Similarly, Christ is the door in two senses: (1) the door of access to the spiritual flock, and (2) the door of access for the sheep themselves into fellowship with God. This usage of the same symbols for different meanings, occurring sometimes in the same sentence, creates confusion unless this is taken into account

John 10:4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

The whole service of caring for the sheep stands for the salvation and security of them that follow the Good Shepherd.

John 10:5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

The voice ... is mentioned three times here in six verses and refers to the distinctive quality of Jesus' teachings. The voice of strangers brings philosophies, theories, and speculations; but only the voice of Jesus brings salvation. People who really desire salvation are turned off by human pride and sophistication, and they will flee from every voice except the authentic one. That is why you the poor, the meek and the downtrodden are sitting here today.

The poor blind man in the proceeding chapter 9 is a perfect example of a sheep who heard and followed the true Shepherd's voice. The strangers the Sanhedrin court indeed had called him, demanding that he deny glory to the Lord; but instead he worshipped Jesus.

John 10:6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

This parable ... The word thus rendered here is Greek: paroimia, sometimes translated "proverb"; but it may be logically viewed as an extended metaphor, or comparison. The Pharisees whom Jesus had already called

"blind" John 9:39 did not have the slightest idea about what Jesus meant by these teachings

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

Jesus is the means of access to the true spiritual children of God, as explained under the above six verses. Jesus to this point had not categorically called himself the door; but here he stated it plainly.

John 10:8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

To the rulers who fattened themselves at the expense of the flock, the Sad-du-CE-an high priests, and Phar-i-SA-ic doctors, the Herods and the Roman procurators - all these wicked shepherds (Ezekiel 34) had climbed into their place of domination over the flock by illegitimate means; and it was they who conspired against the Divine Shepherd, who would lay down his life for the sheep and who would gather together into one flock the scattered children of God

John 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

I am the door ... has here a different meaning. In John 10:8, it referred to the access of the Lord to his flock; here it refers to the access of men to salvation, or, in terms of the metaphor, access to the sheepfold. Here is the mixing of the metaphor and the reality for which it stands in the same sentence. Sheep do not find salvation, and Christians do not find pasture; but both concepts are in this verse. Remarkably, the same mixed metaphor is in the Old Testament,

Psalm 79:13 "So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever"

Sheep do not give thanks people do, so here is another mixed metaphor.

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

The religious hierarchy of hardened Israel was the murderous thief intent on killing and destroying, and Christ is the true shepherd who came to bring abundant life to the people of God.

Abundantly ... How grotesque and unreal are the ideas of those who think the Christian leads a life of boring inhibition, sitting out his years in the chilly twilight of monastic gloom, forbidden to do anything that everyone else wants to do, and always cowering in fear before an angry God! On the contrary, the Christian life is the happy life, free, abundant, and overflowing, adventurous and exciting beyond any other kind of existence.

Why cannot men believe their Creator, to the effect that the way of Christ is the way of joy and fulfillment?

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

This portion of this metaphorical passage dominates the whole passage and bears the principal weight of meaning. A background knowledge of the Old Testament concerning the true shepherd of Israel is vital to a proper understanding of what is meant by Jesus here.

Almighty God appears throughout the Old Testament as the true shepherd of Israel. Note:

Ps 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd ...

Ps 79:13 We are thy people and the sheep of thy pasture

Ps 80:1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock

Ps 95:7 For He is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand

Moreover, the whole 34th chapter of Ezekiel is given over to this metaphor of God as the good shepherd and the false leaders as the evil shepherds. This great chapter is the key to all that is spoken here.

“Layeth down his life for his sheep ...” What is this if not a prophecy of the cross? Here the reality far surpasses the metaphor; for, while it was true that shepherds were known to lose their lives in defense of the sheep, there is no record of any having consented to do so voluntarily. Jesus willingly gave himself up to die for men.

John 10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

The contrast here between the hireling keepers of the flock and the Lord who truly loved the sheep, enough even to die for them, has an application far beyond this. In the church of all ages there have been both evil and good shepherds in the full character of these on view in this verse. Hireling ... is not just a reference to all those who work for wages, but it denotes a class of persons who merchandise holy things, not out of regard for sacred values, but purely from selfish and carnal worldly motives. The wolf ... was Jesus' usual designation of false teachers (Matthew 7:15ff); and the modus operandi of such is always that of scattering the flock. The surest evidence of such a wolf is that which derives from this very characteristic. A "church buster" who slanders, causes strife and divisions is invariably a wolf, regardless of his pretensions.

John 10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Careth not for the sheep ... The true shepherd is one who cares for his charges. This contrasts with the heartless and pitiless disregard of such religious leaders as those who cast out the blind man in the hope of advancing their own nefarious schemes.

John 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

This verse should be read in close connection with the next, because the union between the Father and Christ: is like that between the Lord and his church

John 10:15-18 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The Church is also described as the body of Christ

One body with many members

I Corinthians 12:12-27 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? 20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more

abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: 25 That there should be no schism (SKI-sm) – **short “I”** in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

There is but one body:

God's device of accounting people righteous is that of forming them into a corporate unity, of which Christ is head, all the saved being members of it, the body itself being identified as "Christ," and therefore partaking of the perfect righteousness of the Son of God himself.

The great lesson is that various members of Christ's spiritual body have many various talents, perform many different services, some (in the eyes of men) receiving distinctions and honors; but no member of the holy body should be envious of any other. All are necessary; all are genuinely a part of the sacred whole. Each Christian is a member of the body of Christ.

Romans 12:4-5 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

the Church is called the Body

Ephesians 1:22-23 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

There is but one body therefore, one Church

The church comprises the spiritual body of Christ is among the most important teachings revealed to man. God's device of accounting people righteous is that of forming them into a corporate unity, of which Christ is head, all the saved being members of it, the body itself being identified as "Christ," and therefore partaking of the perfect righteousness of the Son of God himself.

Ephesians 4:4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

One body ... This is the spiritual body of Christ, the church, made up of Jews, Gentiles, all people and even includes the saved who no longer live on earth.

And one Spirit ... The reference to the third person of the Godhead seems to anticipate "Lord" (Ephesians 4:5) and "God" (Ephesians 4:6). In any case, the Spirit here is that being called "the Holy Spirit" in the New Testament, who like Christ and like the Father, dwells in Christian hearts.

One hope of your calling ... This is the hope of eternal life in Christ. There is simply no other lesser thing that may correctly be defined as the "one hope" of Christians.

Ephesians 4:11-16 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Colossians 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

The Church of Christ is described as the Bride of Christ:

Isaiah 62:2-5 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. **3** Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. **4** Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. **5** For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin, *so* shall thy sons marry thee: and *as* the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, *so* shall thy God rejoice over thee.

II Corinthians 11:2-3 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. **3** But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Revelation 19:6-9 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. **7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. **8** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. **9** And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

The Spirit and the bride say, Come ... "The Spirit is the Holy Spirit, and the bride is the church (**Revelation 21:2,9**). It is the testimony of the church empowered by the Holy Spirit." Note that there are four invitations in this verse, yet there is only one. "It is not as though the Spirit says, Come; and then also the bride says, Come; but the Spirit moves in her, and she is moved by him."

Come ... This is what people have to do if they wish to be saved. This verb implies that unless men shall "come," they shall continue to be lost. This means that God in Christ has already done everything that even God can do to save people, and that the next move is up to them. This also inherently teaches that it is possible for people to do this. No enabling act on God's part is necessary; it is the human will that must respond to this call.

Sources: KJV, theWord.com, Coffman's Commentary,