

Shepherd & Beasts (Jn. 11:45-57)

1. Good Shepherd & Scheming Wolves (45-48, 53)

- a. Those who listen to the Shepherd (10:27) listen to truth v. 45 and are loyal to truth.
- b. Those who have no room (place) for truth are loyal to evil e.g. their own position, status, politics, acceptance, approval, convenience, pleasure, etc.
- c. The leaders (bad shepherds) scheme to derail the good Shepherd. Rather than consider the implications of the miraculous signs and compassionate healings (one in the same), they seek to discredit the beloved Shepherd.
- d. And there is always a way to “justify” such schemes. V. 48 “Romans” (only used here in the Gospel accounts!) is used to emphasize the continuous Roman government cloud of threat which hung over the Jews and their nationalistic theology. Certainly it would be a legitimate proposal to scheme against Jesus who, because of His radical teachings, would incite Rome to punish the Jews for promoting a king among them as only Caesar was king (Jn. 19:15!).
- e. It is true that they had already been plotting to derail Jesus and even tried stoning Him but here they commit to focus on and expedite His murder.

2. Scape Goat & Passover Lamb (49-52)

- a. The Prophetic Paradoxical Plot!
- b. Caiaphas suggests (profoundly in his own eyes yet super profoundly in God’s will v. 51) that it is better to kill Jesus than for many Jews to die.
- c. It is a case of Caiaphas using Jesus as a ‘scape goat,’ and execution of excuse to secure his and their own positions of authority, comfort, and esteem.
 - i. There is a bit of a parallel here even if as our contemporary use of the term is employed.
 - ii. There is another parallel, of which John has previously mentioned paragraphs prior i.e. 10:11, 15, 17-18 as the Shepherd who will, indeed, lay down His life for His sheep.
 - iii. Furthermore, Isaiah prophesied of such a vicarious sacrifice of the Messiah (Isa. 53:5-6).
 - iv. Moreover, John began his Gospel account with the prophesy of John the Baptist who said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29).
 - v. Finally, Caiaphas’ shrewd statement echoes Jesus’ own illustration of sacrificing temporal pleasures for eternal joy (Mat. 5:29-30).
- d. Even though God caused Caiaphas’ prophesy so as to affirm Isaiah’s, John’s, and Jesus’ statements of Jesus’ redeeming sacrifice of death, it doesn’t excuse Caiaphas’ words, deeds, nor plotting.
- e. Another irony is that Caiaphas’ enacted scheme actually served to induce the events which would lead to the destruction of Jerusalem. “Even if we put the best possible construction on Caiaphas’s motives, his method was entirely wrong. His calling was to fear God rather than the Romans. His duty was to uphold justice, not to sacrifice it on the altar of politics. For these very reasons, he failed miserably. By putting Jesus to death, Caiaphas did not secure Jerusalem’s safety but ensured its destruction. Having rejected the true Messiah, the Jews went on to follow false messiahs who led them in revolt against Rome, with the result of

Jerusalem's bloody destruction in a.d. 70. William Barclay writes, "The very steps they took to save their nation destroyed their nation."^{5 1}

- f. There is yet another irony. The parallel use of the term "gathered" contrasts the intentions and their ironic results. This is a motif in Scripture viz. God employs men's plotting for His purposes. The turning the tables switch-a-roo. They "gathered" to scheme Jesus' death, yet His death will serve to "gather" together His sheep of multi folds. See Jn. 1:12-13; 10:16; 17:20-21; Isa. 43:5; Ezek. 34:12. "OT prophetic literature also includes frequent depictions of the Gentiles as streaming toward the mountain of the Lord (Isa. 2:2-3; 56:6-8; 60:6; Zech. 14:16; cf. 1 Pet. 1:1), and the Jerusalem temple is characterized as "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isa. 56:7; cited in Mark 11:17). Thus Jesus is here shown to anticipate the Gentile mission (cf. esp. 10:16; see also 12:20-21, 32)."²

3. Beasts of Land & Sea (48-53)

- a. Another perspective which is theologically applicable – if not the main overall application – is that of recognizing and resisting the Beasts of Land and Sea. These so called beasts are presented in Revelation as respectively: Rome (the government/overt beast) and the false prophet (the religious/covert beast). We are to fear neither the ominous government's threats against our faith and convictions nor follow the convenience of perverted popular religious beliefs and practices. Caiaphas and the ruling Jews feared Rome's (govs.) rod and some Jews feared Caiaphas' (false prophet) excommunicating them. →
- b. Note: Caiaphas' prophesy was accurate but it was the LORD's doing in spite of him, not unlike Balaam's correct prophesies even though he was a cursed prophet for hire.
- c. Government (seas beast) seeks to usurp God overtly by coercion. False prophets (land beast) seek to oppose Jesus' true person and work and covertly undermine the Word.

4. Sheep & Wolves (54-57)

- a. The sheep are those who are not generally accepted, invited, or even safe.
- b. The wolves are those who plot against God himself because they want control. Such leads to trickery (skullduggery) of seeming virtuous while plotting to secretly destroy the influence of Jesus (Mat. 26:3-4).

⁵ William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 2:122.

¹ Phillips, R. D. (2014). *John*. (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.) (1st ed., Vol. 2, p. 65). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

OT Old Testament

esp. especially

² Köstenberger, A. J. (2007). *John*. In *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (p. 469). Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos.