



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 10:11-18

“Jesus Speaks of His Death”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading today is found in the 10th chapter of the Gospel of John, and I hope you will turn there and listen as I read beginning with verse 11 through verse 18. John chapter 10, verse 11 through verse 18, this passage is found in the context of the healing of the blind man in the 9th chapter and forms an address that our Lord gave to the blind man and to the Pharisees who have in the course of contact with Jesus Christ reacted so differently. In the case of the blind man he has finally come to faith in him, and the Pharisees lack of faith has been manifested even more directly and they have now become more opposed to his ministry. And our Lord tells three little parabolic illustrations in order to illustrate the truth that he wishes to get over to them. That there are some people who are sheep and there are some people who are not sheep. And that in the final analysis we have an explanation of life in the distinguishing grace that marks out the sheep from those who are not sheep. The passage that I'm going to read is part of that discourse and beginning with the 11th verse we read,

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 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 hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knows me, and I know the Father.”

Now you can tell from the way that I’ve read this if you have an Authorized Version that I have made some modifications. If you have a Modern Language Version the chances are that your text has structurally at least been somewhat similar to that which I have read. I am translating from the Greek text in my mind and so I want to go back over this and point this out because some of the things that I am going to say are going to hinge upon the translation that I am giving.

Let’s look again at verse 14 and verse 15, and if you have a pencil and you don’t mind making a little mark in your Authorized Version you could put a comma at the end of verse 14 instead of a period. You could change the “even so” of verse 15 to “and,” and you could reverse the “know I” that follows “even so” to “I know” making those three simple little changes the meaning becomes quite different. And let me read it in order to show this. “I am the good shepherd, and I know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father.” “I know my sheep, and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.” “I know my sheep, and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.” Now that is of the greatest significance and when we get to the exposition I’ll stress it and I hope it becomes plain. It’s a little difficult to read something differently and then to get the force of it at first reading or second or third reading. This is something you must ponder.

Now he continues, verse 15,

“And I lay down my life for the sheep. 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 flock, and one shepherd. Therefore (or for this cause) doth my Father love me, because I

lay down my life, that I might take it again. 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."

The words of the passage that we have read for the Scripture reading this morning yield most important results for the Doctrine of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. For example, atonement is seen to be a divine provision from the Father, as well as a divine accomplishment from the Son. That is evident from the statement in verse 18 after our Lord has spoken about his death when he adds this commandment have I received of my Father. And also atonement is seen as the absolutely self moved and voluntary death of the Son. He says in the 11th verse, "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." He says in the 15th verse, "I laid down my life for the sheep." Perhaps I should have read that "I lay down my life for the sheep." In the 17th verse he says, "I lay down my life that I might take it again." And in the 18th verse to allay all questions about the voluntary character of his death, he says, "I lay down my life of myself."

And third it is evident from reading the passage that atonement is the express grounds of the Son's right to the sheep. That is evident because he says, "I am the good shepherd and I know my sheep and I am known of mine." And in the 11th verse he says, "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And in the 17th verse after outlining the ministry that he has for the sheep he adds, "For this reason doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. In other words, our Lord's sovereignty over the sheep rests upon his sacrifice for the sheep.

There is an old story which Bible teachers have used, I presume it has a foundation in fact, of a little boy who was given a boat by one of his parents or grandparents, and it was a lovely model boat, a work of some art and he loved it very dearly. He often played with it, but one day he lost it. For a long time he didn't see his boat. One day he was walking upon the streets of the community in which he lived and

he walked by a pawn shop and there in the window was the little boat. He walked in. He told the proprietor, "That's my boat. I want it." The proprietor said he was awfully sorry he couldn't give it to him because it belonged to him now. But he would be willing to give it to him if he paid a certain price for it. And the little boy much discouraged went out and determined however to buy the boat back and when he had enough money he walked in, he put the money down on the counter and said, "I want my boat." And the man gave him the boat and as he walked out of the little shop he was heard to say, "Now boat, you're mine twice. You were given to me, and now I've bought you back." Now that illustrates, in a sense, what has happened to the sheep of our Lord Jesus Christ. For they were given to our Lord by the Father and though it may appear that they were lost through the fall, they have now through the atoning work of the shepherd been bought back. And therefore having been bought with a price we belong to him in a twofold way, given by the Father, bought by the blood of the Son.

The words that we are looking at are the third of a beautiful series of parables about shepherd life of the east. The passage is the source of a number of illusions in the New Testament to the shepherd work of the Lord Jesus. I don't have the slightest doubt in my mind, I cannot prove it however, that when Peter wrote in the 2nd and 5th chapters of his first epistle words about sheep and shepherd, he had this passage in mind. He said, "You were as sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the shepherd and bishop of your soul." In the 5th chapter he comments concerning the Lord Jesus and describes him as the "Chief shepherd." It's very appropriate that we should be called sheep and our Lord should be called shepherd.

Shepherd suggests ownership. In the east a shepherd ordinarily did not have a home. He did not have sheep that he left in a fold, went home to property in the city. If you were to ask one of the shepherds of the east, "How much are you worth?" He wouldn't say I have a hundred shares of General Motors. I have a hundred and fifty shares of Dow Chemical. I have five hundred shares of Texas Instruments." And so on

down the line reeling off the items in his portfolio. He would say, “You can easily see how much I’m worth if you’ll just look at my flock for my inheritance is in my flock. That’s my wealth.” For the shepherd owned the sheep in the east. He didn't serve under a master, but he owned them. They were his flock. So when one thought of a shepherd, one thought of an owner. And that’s very fitting for our Lord Jesus for he owns the sheep. Now of course you have to be one of the sheep to be owned, but he owns the sheep.

Furthermore shepherd suggests fellowship. The shepherd spent his days upon end with the sheep. He not only knew them and they not only knew him in the sense that he spent his days with them, but he spent his days and his nights with them. The shepherd and the sheep had the most intimate of relationships possible between animals and men. The shepherd knew them when they were little infant lambs. He knew them all though the stages of their life. So the idea of intimacy, the idea of fellowship was suggested by shepherd, and of course, solicitude for he protected them. He kept them from the wolves. He led them. He guided them. He feed them. The most intimate relationship and the most exclusive duties are suggested by the term shepherd, very fitting for our Lord Jesus Christ. And sheep, what a suggestive and fitting term for us who have been redeemed.

Now I would be tempted to say, but I don't know you very well, I would be tempted to say that this word is so fitting because no animal is more stupid than a sheep. [Laughter] But that would be insulting you. So I shall only think it rather than say it. [Laughter] Sheep in the Bible are clean animals. Now, of course, sheep is therefore a figure of those who are clean on account of the word as our Lord will speak in the 15th chapter. There are those who have been redeemed. They have been given to the Son. They have been redeemed in time and they have been by the Holy Spirit quickened and brought into vital relationship with the shepherd. So the sheep suggests a clean animal. Sheep also suggests the helpless character of the Christian. Of the sheep you can say the

same thing that our Lord says in the 15th chapter of his believers, “Without me, ye can do nothing.”

I came in on the tail end of Mr. McCrae’s message this morning. And he was commenting on this very fact that it is impossible for us to do anything of ourselves that is satisfying to God, and sheep is a beautiful word to use of a Christian for we are helpless. And further and finally, sheep are prone to wander. There are many expressive pictures of the lost in the Bible. We are said to be enemies of God. We are said to be prisoners of sin. We are sold under sin. We are said to be prodigals who have wandered away from the Father. We are said to be wanderers. We have strayed, but sheep is the best term that I know because a sheep wanders and wanders and wanders farther and farther and farther from the shepherd until finally he loses any sense of being lost at all. And that is such a beautiful characterization of men in nineteen hundred and seventy-four that I would not want to add anything to it. They are lost sheep. We have a hymn that we often sing. It has a little stanza that I like because it expresses exactly how I feel so often, “Prone to wander Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.” That’s because I’m a sheep.

Now our Lord Jesus in speaking to the sheep and of the sheep first addresses a word to the condition of the shepherd as over against the hireling in verses 11 through 13. He unfolds the relation of the sheep and the shepherd against the background of the healing of the blind man, and the Pharisees hostility. When I get to heaven one of the men that I want to see is the blind man because I think he is one of the most interesting characters in the New Testament. And I am glad that John recorded the incident of his healing in the 9th chapter. And the way in which he dealt in the simplicity of the new life with the Pharisees is so pointed and so effective that it is almost comical, but the chapter concludes with the blind man at the feet of the Lord Jesus worshiping him and the Pharisees more hostile than ever before because he has had some words that have brought the blind man to the knowledge of the one whom they regard as heretical. He

said that he has come into the world for judgment and in the judgment of his ministry one can see on the one hand the distinguishing grace that delivered the blind man from the company of the nation as a whole and set him apart as one of the sheep from the judgment that rests upon those who are not his sheep and who manifest it by their hostility to the Son of God.

So he has come for judgment and then in explaining his ministry he uses these three little stories, you can call them parables, parables of the east, to illustrate his ministry. In the first part of the chapter he speaks about the fact that the sheep are in a sheep fold. They have a porter at the door who represents, undoubtedly, John the Baptist in the historical scene, and the shepherd comes to the sheep fold. The porter recognizes the shepherd who is our Lord Jesus, opens the door, for he is the ambassador of the Lord Jesus. He opens the door of the sheep fold as the porter, and the shepherd, the Lord Jesus, goes into the sheep fold composed of Jewish people, in the historical context, and begins to speak. And he calls out the names of those who are there.

Now I don't know the names that shepherds call sheep, whether they call them personal names like Mary and Alice and John and Frank, or whether they call them stubborn, or woolly haired or what, I don't know, but anyway the shepherd goes in among the sheep and he begins to speak and in his speaking he calls out the names of his own sheep and they follow him out of the sheep fold. And the text of Scripture says, as our Lord explains, “When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”

Now he's explaining this of the blind man, of course, he's saying to the Pharisees, this is precisely what has happened. I have come in the midst of Israel. I have preached the word of God, and my sheep have heard my voice, and the blind man has come out of the sheep fold, of the Jewish unbelievers and he has become attached to me. It is of course a word designed to have great application to the Pharisees, for he adds, “And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of

strangers.” And my sheep are now at my feet worshiping me as this blind man and they will not listen to you unbelieving Pharisees.

Now I cannot pass this by as a preacher without saying to you that you have come into this audience this morning and it is possible that you have come in the audience in the same condition as the blind man and the Pharisees, and when you hear the voice of the shepherd as I hope you will hear from me, eternal destiny is wrapped up in how you respond to the voice of the Lord Jesus. “My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.” Now that is elemental truth for that truth distinguishes between mankind. Some are chosen and some are not. Some are sheep and some are not. It is just as simple as that.

Now coming to the shepherd and the hireling specifically, he first of all speaks of the shepherd’s faithfulness. He says in the 11th verse of the 10th chapter, “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” It came home to me about six or eight weeks or a couple of months ago when I first re-studied this passage that in this passage the Lord Jesus engages in something that you and I would not countenance of anyone else for he praises himself. If I should come into this audience and begin to speak about how what a great preacher I am or what a great teacher I am or what a great man I am, most of you would know, of course, that it was lies. The rest of you if you had any sense at all you would immediately wonder if I had gone bananas, but our Lord Jesus is the kind of person who comes with praise of himself upon his lips, and it’s not a little thing either. I’m a pretty good shepherd. I’m pretty good as far as shepherds go, but I am the shepherd. I mean the good one is what the Greek text says in its emphasis. I am the shepherd, and I mean the good one. He praises himself. And every Christian, every sheep, has no problem about that at all because we know that is precisely what he is, the good shepherd. And as a matter of fact in the hearts of those who are like the Pharisees, not his sheep, even though they’re hostile, even though they suppress the truth that has

come to them, even though they fight against it, even though they ultimately reject it, they cannot help but say I find no fault in this man.

Now in these words there are three great truths of the atonement that I want to briefly mention, stressing one of them. He says, "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Now that suggests the voluntary character of the shepherd's death. Our Lord Jesus was not forced to die. He died voluntarily. And four times in our passage he states the fact that he died voluntarily. Any theology of the death of our Lord must include the fact that he died voluntarily. The text says he died "for the sheep." In the original text it might be argued that this is not substitution, but most commentators who have studied the use of the term "uper" in the Gospel of John are agreed that in this passage substitution is suggested. There are many cases in Greek literature and many cases in the New Testament in which the word must have that meaning although it does, upon occasion have other meanings. But it is impossible for the shepherd to give his life in behalf of the sheep if he does not die in their place. Other facts reveal this. You will notice too it says he dies for sheep. He doesn't die for the seraphim. He doesn't die for angels. He doesn't die for goats. He doesn't die for good men. He dies for sheep. "I have given my life for the sheep."

But there is one other thing that I think bares repetition and stress. He says that he gives his life for the sheep. Now that suggests that our Lord Jesus Christ's death is not only voluntarily. It is not only substitutionary, but it is also a means by which the justice and holiness of God is satisfied. The holiness of God requires judgment upon sin, and our Lord died as a penal satisfaction to the justice of God. There are many Christians who believe mistakenly that when we have said that Christ died a substitutionary death for the sheep that they have given an accurate preaching of the atonement of Christ. That is not true. It is possible for us to believe in the substitutionary atonement of Christ and still not believe in New Testament atonement. For New Testament atonement teaches not only that our Lord died voluntarily, that he not only died vicariously or as a substitute, but he

died under penal judgment. There are men who like to say that he died as a substitute, but he did not die as a penal substitution because they do not like to think of a God in heaven who requires of the Son of God punishment for human sin. They don't like that kind of God, and so they don't like the idea of penal satisfaction.

Let me illustrate. Professor A. B. McCauley was for many years Professor of Theology at Trinity College of the University of Glasgow. That is the divinity college of the University. About thirty-five years ago he wrote in the maturity of his life his fully developed views concerning the atonement of the Lord Jesus. And according to A. B. McCauley he said, "Jesus did not offer a satisfaction for sin, although he did die as a substitute." He died as a substitute but he did not offer a satisfaction for sin. Professor McCauley meant he died for our sins in the sense that he realized in himself, in his mind and heart, to the full as he alone could, the guilt of sin and the divine reaction to it. And so he stood in our place as one who realized in his mind and in his heart the divine reaction to sin, but nothing is said about penalty. And Professor McCauley explicitly denied that Jesus died as a penalty. It was enough, he said, for our Lord to stand in our place and realize to the full the guilt of sin and the divine reaction to it and in that recognition we would be redeemed. That is not true because something must be done about the past. So you see in order to preach the doctrine of Jesus Christ completely we must preach he died voluntarily. We must preach he died as a substitute, but we must preach that he died as a substitute under penal judgment from God.

Now our Lord has a word for the false shepherd, and I won't say anything about them but pass on to the second part of his message in which he speaks of the shepherd and the sheep. There are four things that he stresses in the words that he speaks to the Pharisees and to the blind man in verses 14 through 16. He speaks first of a complete character. He says, as I have said before, "I am the good shepherd." "Creation," Mr. Spurgeon used to say, "Is too small a frame in which to hand his likeness." Our Lord is so infinitely great that our conceptions are inconceivably inadequate and our

utterances are unutterably inadequate to express the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ. “I am the good shepherd.” Then he speaks of complete knowledge, and this is the thing I want to stress for a moment or so in verses 14 and 15.

Now we retranslated the text for you and I hope that you have before you something of what our Lord says. In effect he says, “I know my sheep as the Father knows me,” first. That’s the first thing he says. “I know my sheep and I am known of mine as the Father knows me and I know the Father.” So let’s take out first he knows us as the Father knows him. He knows me as the Father knows the Son.

Now that is not so surprising because we recognize that our Lord is the divine Son, and it’s not surprising to read that he knows us as the Father knows him. And since the Father knows the Son perfectly, of course, he knows us perfectly. That means he knows everything about us. He knows our number. He knows exactly who the sheep are, past, present, and future. He does not have to get acquainted with us. The Greek word used is a word for an experiential kind of knowledge, an acquaintance that is personal and intimate. “I know them as the Father knows me.” The sheep are no surprise to him. He has known their names from eternity. It was no surprise to him when thirty years ago I turned in faith to the Son of God and became justified. It was no surprise. That was known from eternity. He knows our number. As a matter of fact the Bible stresses this so much that it even says he knows the hairs upon our head. That means young people that the fact that you have grown all of these extra locks over the past generation, that is no challenge to the omniscience of the shepherd. [Laughter] He knows everyone of them, even the unnecessary ones. [Laughter]

Now you can tell that I resent that considerably because I am not much of a test at all any longer since I have so little left. Our Lord’s knowledge of us is so intimate that he knows us down to the hairs upon our heads, those that you comb out in the morning ladies and those that fall out on the wash basin men as you shave and wash. He knows them all. It’s not a surprise to him. He knows us in the most intimate way. He knows us

as persons therefore he knows our feelings. He knows what I am thinking of you right now. He knows my fears. He knows my frights, and he knows my sins. He knows me completely. “My sheep hear my voice and I know them.” If you have come to Christ recently, as I say, it is not a surprise. He doesn't have to erase the number and say now there are so and so. He knows the exact number.

I heard a story about a census taker some years ago that was taking census in a heavily populated area of New York City. And he spoke to a woman who didn't have a whole lot of money but she had a big family. And he said, “How many children do you have?” She said, “Well, there's John and there's Frank and there's James, and there's Mary, and there's Alice, and there's Ophelia, and there is Frank and Lewis.” He said, “Ah, well you needn't give me all the names, just give me the number.” She said, “Number? We haven't gone to using numbers yet, we haven't run out of names.” [Laughter] Our Lord knows us most intimately. All of the affairs of our lives are open to him just as open as your most intimate thoughts. He knows what sore temptation mean for he has felt the same. And all of the feelings that you have, our Lord knows.

Now the second truth is even more significant than the first. Pat Booth is writing down the first. You better write faster Pat because this one is shattering. As country preachers are saying these days, fasten your seat belts. I have something important to say. Now look at the second part of that statement. He says he knows us as the Father knows him. But he says, “And am known of mine,” that is the sheep know me as the Father knows me and I know the Father. So the text says that we know Jesus Christ as Jesus Christ knows the Father. Now that is a most amazing statement. I know I'm one of his sheep. I know the shepherd as the shepherd knows the Father.

Now, that is mind-boggling because, of course, the Son knows the Father infinitely. He is the eternal second person of the Trinity. There is nothing hidden from the heart of the Father that the Son does not know. He knows the Father intimately and perfectly, and yet he has said that we know him as he knows the Father. Obviously then

this cannot mean, since we are sheep and finite, this cannot be taken in a quantitative sense. It must be taken in a qualitative sense. That is the kind of knowledge that I have of the Son is the same kind of knowledge that the Son has of the Father. In other words, it is the knowledge of delight as the Son delights in the Father so I delight in the Son. It's the knowledge of sympathy. As the Father and the Son are in sympathy with one another, so I have been brought into the relationship of sympathy with the Son. As the Father and the Son are united, so I am united to the Son and in the Son with the Father, and as the Son perfectly trusts the Father, so I too am enabled to trust the Son. And here I think is one of the most significant things in the life of a true believer because you see what he is in essence saying is that the same kind of relationship that the Father and the Son have is the relationship that I have to the Son, and it is the most intimate. It is the most significant. It is the most precious relationship into which two people can possibly be brought, and this is why the finest sermon is empty if there is no Jesus Christ in it, whereas some of the poor sermons scientifically are some of the greatest because Christ is there.

Have you ever listened to someone preach and you've marveled at the eloquence and marveled at the power of expression and nevertheless you've felt empty when the sermon was over? Well one of the reasons, if you're one of the sheep, maybe because there was nothing about the shepherd and his saving ministry for us in it. And that is why when there is the simplest sermon that centers upon Jesus Christ and him crucified I don't think anybody should ever preach without mentioning Jesus Christ and him crucified. That's why when that comes through there is something within my heart that answers to it and I say it was good to be there today because that is what stirs the hearts of the sheep when they hear about the shepherd.

Now most of you who have heard me preach before, and I'm sure it's the minority of this audience, know that I have loved for many years Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Mr. Spurgeon at a time in his ministry became very much concerned over his relationship to

the Lord. In fact he had some doubts about his relationship. He said that while he was in this state of doubt he happened to chance in upon a sermon preached in a small church by a man who was not a very eloquent man. As a matter of fact, he was just a layman, a working man, he said, who didn't have great command of the language. But he gave a sermon concerning the Lord Jesus, and he said when the message was over and he had exalted the saving work of the Lord Jesus he said my handkerchief was sodden with tears, and I went up to the young man to thank him for the message. And when I thanked him for the message he looked at me and he said, "What's your name?" He said, "My name is Charles Haddon Spurgeon." He said the man turned all colors in his face. He said, "Why Mr. Spurgeon you know that the sermon I preached this morning was your own sermon." And Mr. Spurgeon said, "Yes I know. And that's why I'm thanking you because I've been troubled about my relationship to the Lord, and I discovered as I listened to those things that I have been preaching myself that there was an answer in my heart to the truth and I want to thank you that I've been brought back into the relationship that I should have with the Son."

Our Lord speaks of a complete sacrifice in the last statement of verse 15. He says, "I lay down my life for the sheep." So, there is a complete character, a complete knowledge, a complete sacrifice. Any man can die you know, but only our Lord can lay down his life and take it again. And then he speaks of the complete flock in verse 16. He says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." Rescued by the atonement to become his, his death secures our safety. Jew and Gentile now exist in one body and in this statement is anticipated all of the Pauline teaching concerning the relationship of the one body composed of Jew and Gentile in Jesus Christ. And I want you to notice here that in this statement, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring." We have a guarantee of the safety of all of the sheep even those who have not yet come to the Son of God. For you see the atonement of the New Testament is not an atonement

that makes it possible for men to be saved. It is an atonement that saves a definite number of people. For when Jesus Christ cried upon the cross and said, "It is finished," that determined the destiny of the sheep.

Now of course it will be time before all enter into the significance of the atonement, but that determined their destiny. Christ's death saved the sheep. That's what we preach. And all the sheep shall come, and not a one who is not among the sheep shall be there. Hard language? Of course it's hard. The apostles found it very hard. As a matter of fact, it was not hard to understand so much as it was that they understood it and it was hard to take. But Peter, manifesting the fact that he was one of the sheep, said, when our Lord said, "Will you also go away because you find these words hard to take?" He said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Now the passage concludes with an answer to the question was the shepherd impotent? Did he have to die? Well he had to die, but it was the necessity that arises out of the Father's will, not the necessity that arises out of human circumstances merely. You see our Lord must die in order to accomplish the redemption but he does it voluntarily. And further, he must die as a substitute and a penal satisfaction upon a cross. That's why the New Testament speaks of his death as being a death that involved the shedding of blood. It's not enough for our Lord to die for redemption to be accomplished. Our Lord must die a violent death for that is the force of the shedding of blood, violent death. If he had died of a heart attack there would have been no atonement. He must die in a specific way, violently, under the judgment of God. That's why the New Testament stresses the blood of Christ. There is no other way for him to die than violently.

Now I want to skip over a point or two and notice the last statement of verse 18. "This commandment have I received of my Father." I do not; I cannot help but feel that all of this arises out of the everlasting covenant of redemption that took place in the eternal past between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. And what we see worked out in the life of our Lord Jesus was determined in the councils of eternity when in the midst of

the councils of that eternity the Father, the Spirit, and the Son spoke. May I suggest to you the why in which they may have spoken as they gathered in that most awful and solemn occasion?

In eternity past, the Father speaks and says, “I, the most high Jehovah, do hereby give unto my only begotten and well beloved Son a people, countless beyond the number of the stars which no man can number, who shall be washed from sin by him, preserved kept and led, and by him at last presented before my throne spotless by virtue of the atoning blood. To them I will give a perfect righteousness, a righteousness that will even satisfy William Cunningham who said, ‘The righteousness of God is that righteousness which God’s righteousness requires him to require.’ They will have that perfect righteousness and they will stand before the throne of God. I will adopt them. I will make them my sons and daughters and they shall reign with me through Jesus Christ eternally.”

The Spirit speaks, “I hereby covenant that all whom the Father giveth to the Son, I will in due time quicken, bring to life. I will show them their need of redemption. I will cut off from them all groundless hope and destroy their refuge of lies. And I will bring them to the blood of sprinkling. And I will give them faith whereby the blood shall be applied to them. I will work in them every grace. I will keep their faith alive. I will cleanse them and drive out all depravity from them ultimately, and they shall be presented at the last spotless and flawless.”

And the Son speaks, and the Son says, “My Father on my part I covenant that in the fullness of time I will become man. I shall take the form and nature of man. I shall work out a spotless righteousness by means of the infinite merit of my work which shall be acceptable to Thee. In due time, I will bear the sins of all my people. Thou shalt exact their debts upon me. My chastisement, the chastisement of their peace shall be a chastisement that I will endure and my stripes shall be their healing. My Father I covenant and promise that I will be obedient until death even the death of the cross. I

will magnify the law, and I will see by virtue of my intercession that not one of them is lost and they all shall be here before the throne of the everlasting God throughout all eternity.” “This commandment have I received of my Father.”

Now Arminians cannot have a covenant like that. Their covenant cannot stand because the stipulation of Arminian covenants are based upon human will. And any covenant based upon human will cannot stand. That is why the covenant is a covenant guaranteed by God, carried out by God the Son, and administered by God the Holy Spirit so it is preformed an everlasting unconditional covenant that guarantees the salvation of the sheep. Pardon me, I want to say something. Hallelujah! [Laughter]

Now I want to close. My time is long up. Not only do we glory in the work. The Son glories in it. Have you noticed how throughout this passage he says, “I am the good shepherd; I lay down my life for my sheep?” It’s as if he delights in what he is doing and he sings this pastoral son with this four-fold refrain throughout the message just so that he can tell us that all of this has cost me is my delight. I love it. I love to do it because of what is involved in it. Great shepherd, do you mean to say that you have died for such as these? Look at them that you have died for such as these? Do you mean to tell me that you would die for people like this? He answers, “Not only would I, but I have died for them.” What, die for sheep, Shepherd? How strange that the shepherd should die for sheep, but that’s what’s happening.

And furthermore and finally whatever men may say about definite atonement, Jesus Christ is not ashamed of it. He says, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” And he distinguishes between sheep and non-sheep. For he says, “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold,” but he also says, “Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep as I said unto you.” So I close singing an Old Testament refrain. “The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.”

If you are in this audience this morning, and you are not one of the sheep, in your experience, you may become one of the sheep by responding to the message concerning

the death of the Son who died for sinners. And if you recognize that you're a sinner, you may come and put your trust in him and take your place the sheep mentioned in the eternal covenant. May God give you the grace to come is our prayer. Let's bow for the benediction.

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**