

# Why It Had To Be Shepherd

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1     Guess I'm kind of a long-winded preacher. And without education, I guess I don't sound much like a preacher to some people. And I don't even claim to be a preacher, I just kind of a spare tire. But I feel that I have a message from God, that in my way (that only way I have to present it), I'm trying to present it to the world. And if I didn't stay with that message, I'd be a traitor to God and a hypocrite to you. A person that will say one thing and believe another, it's hypocrisy. We must always speak the truth from our heart. That when people look upon us, even though they disagree with us, we want to be honorable men and women: that we speak from our heart, that which is true in our heart.

2     Last year, or year before last, I had the privilege of speaking a Christian ... or pardon me, a Christmas message, here at the Ramada. And I believe I spoke on the subject, either here or Phoenix, on: Why Little Bethlehem? And I believe then it was here, last year, I spoke on: We Have Seen His Star In The East And Have Come To Worship Him.

And, you know, we read the Bible, and we wonder, those "Why's?" And tonight I thought, if you would bear with me a while, and pray with me, I would try to give you my Christmas message. God only knows where we'll be next Christmas, if there is a next Christmas after this. So being that this might be the last Christmas we sit together, until we sit at another table. And it will not be one of this type, but it'll be when we eat and drink the communion anew with Him, in the Father's kingdom at the end of the road. And then, let us approach it tonight as if this was the last Christmas message we'd ever set together in, in the deepness of sincerity.

3     I want to speak tonight on a unusual subject, but sometimes you find God in the unusual things. He does things in a unusual way. Not the usual way, it's the unusual way, unusual times, unusual scenes, He's unusual. And I want this ... Lord willing, I want to speak on the subject of: "Why It Had To Be Shepherds."

And now just before we approach the Word, which I believe that is God, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

4     As I said, last week, or week before last at Phoenix, "It's proven that there is subjects of this earth, people, passing through this building now." Television proves that. It's in another dimension, our natural eyes and our five senses cannot pick that up. It isn't that television manufactures anything, it only channels. You cannot make a move with your finger, you cannot bat your eye, but it's proven to be recorded forever. I might be standing.... Or a man in Australia, would have a television screen here, not only that but the man could speak, move his finger, bat his eye, or even the color of clothing that he's wearing, would be projected here on the wall; and he in Africa, Australia, around the world. See, there is a cycle of ether waves. I cannot explain it, but I know it's there. I don't think anyone could really explain it. So, television can pull this in and make it a reality by some instruments, that they can reflect it on the wall.

5     Now, that same thing was here when Adam was here. Television was here when Elijah set on Mount Carmel. It was here when Martin Luther, that young priest, threw the communion on the floor and said, "It's kosher! And the just shall live by faith." It was here then, but we are just now finding it. And it's also so, that in our presence tonight is God, angels, supernatural beings that's unseen to our natural sense of sight. But someday it'll be a reality just as television is now, and just as common. Now, there's why I believe the Word.

Jesus said, "Whosoever shall add one word to this Bible, or take one word out of it, his part will be taken out of the book of life."

6     So, let us bow our heads then, before we even read it. So solemn! Any man that's got physical strength could turn back the page, but only God can reveal it.

And with our heads bowed now towards the dust from whence we were taken, and some day shall return, I wonder.... And in this solemn moment, as we're approaching

Christmas, if there is some here that really feel unworthy and would like to be remembered in this prayer, would you (without raising your head) just raise your hands to God and say, "Remember me, Lord, this Christmas"? God bless you.

7 Most Holy and gracious heavenly Father, Almighty God, He that was from the beginning, before there was a star, or a atom, or a molecule. You made all things by Jesus Christ your Son, and has given us all things freely in Him. We thank Thee, tonight, Lord, for this opportunity that You have given us to assemble ourselves together, to be warned and taught by the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit takes your words and reveals them to us, for Jesus said, "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will remind you of these things that I have said and also show you things to come."

God, there is not one in our midst, neither is there one upon the earth, who is worthy to try to interpret your Word, for it is written that "the Word of God is of no private interpretation." Therefore, Lord, we pray that the Holy Spirit will give to us tonight, each and every one, the portion that we need to satisfy that hunger that's in our heart for a closer walk with Thee. We are unfit, unclean, unworthy. Let the Child that was borned in Bethlehem, that lived the most perfect life, and was the only perfect man upon the earth, and gave Himself a ransom that He might cleanse us unclean sinners and to bring us into relationship with the Father, grant tonight that his Holy Spirit (through the preaching of the Word) will do that for us.

8 Lord God, there is many sick in the land today, in the face of the best medicine that we ever doctored with, and the best medicine and the best hospitals. And yet in all of our great scientific discoveries, yet there is more sickness than the world ever knew, because there's more sin and unbelief than the world ever knew. Help us tonight, great physician, and heal the sick that's in our midst.

And give us the Spirit, the true Spirit of Christmas. When today ... that when pagan ceremonies, Christmas trees worshipped, fiction stories of a man named Santa Claus, and of our Easter rabbits, and the different fashions that the commercial world has capitalized on, may it be laid aside, God. Let us enter into Christ the Word, for we ask it in His name and for His glory. Amen.

9 If you will turn with me for a reading in the Holy Writ, St. Luke, the 2nd chapter. Can you hear me all right? Is there any transposition in the microphones? Can you hear me in the back all right? If you can, raise your hand. Thank you. The 2nd chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke:

*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.*

*(And this tax was first made known ... was governor of Syria.)*

*And all went to be taxed, every one to his own country.*

*And Joseph also went up from Galilee, into the city of Nazareth, into Judea, ... the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)*

*To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.*

*And so it was, that, while she was there, the days of her accomplishment that she should be delivered.*

*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in the manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

*And there was in the same country shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night.*

*And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around about them: and they were sore afraid.*

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring ... good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

*And this shall be a sign unto you; You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, laying in a manger.*

*And suddenly there was the ... And suddenly there ... with the angel a multitude of ... heavenly host praising God, and saying,*

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

*And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us go now even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us.*

*And they came in haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger.*

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child.

*And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.*

*But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.*

*And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.*

May the Lord add His blessings to the reading of His Word.

10 Now, it's a.... Why this great event was revealed to shepherds? That would be kind of an astounding thing for us. I have some scriptures written here, and a few notes that I will try to turn over, to explain to you why to the best of my knowledge. And maybe then after this, that the Lord with His grace, tonight, will take the why's away from us. But did.... Most all of us, I suppose, at one time or other has wondered why that this greatest event of all times was revealed to shepherds. Why was it revealed to shepherds and not to the theologians of that day (they were the one were trained to hear it)? And why did it come and bypass the rich, and come to the poor? Also, why did it bypass the learned and wise, and come to the humble and unlearned? There is a few questions of why in this.

11 And another reason I might say, notice, the babe was borned in Bethlehem. Which Bethlehem in the Hebrew interpretation, as we had a couple years ago here, Bethlehem means the "house of God's bread." And we proved in the Scriptures, He could not come any other place. Bethlehem was founded by Rahab and her husband. Rahab was a harlot that a general courted from the Israelite army, after they had taken Jericho.... And by faith she believed the message of God, in her condition, and she was saved. And from there, when Joshua divided up the lands of where each one would be....

12 And there's a great lesson that sometime I hope to be able to bring at Tucson, of those Hebrew mothers giving birth to those babies. When she groaned at the birth pain of the baby, she called the name of the baby and that positionally placed it in the promised land, it's tribe. The great thing, all the Word of God fits right together. If it doesn't fit together, it's not God's Word that's misfit, it's your thought is misfitting to the Word. It all fits together.

13 So, then, He was the bread of life, as we taught last week in Phoenix, or week before last. And being the bread of life, He could come no place else but the "house of God's bread." And that was the why. Now, here, Jesus is borned in Bethlehem, and in Bethlehem there was synagogue, great religious leaders lived in Bethlehem. David the great king shepherd was born in Bethlehem, his father Jesse was born in Bethlehem, his grandfather Obed was born in Bethlehem. Also, all the way back, he came from Bethlehem.

And here, Jesus the Son of David is born in Bethlehem, right under the shadows of the great cathedrals. Then if those people are trained, and had been looking for the Messiah for all these years; four thousand years, the Messiah had been prophesied to come. And then if the Messiah be born in the shadow of the cathedral, why did they have to go plumb back up into the mountains to a bunch of unlearned, untrained shepherds to bring the great message, the first message? And commissioned shepherds! Not the wise and trained, but shepherds. It's a strange thing, isn't it? But there's got to

be a why somewhere.... There is a why, now there's got to be an answer why! And no man knows the answer save God. He's the One that knows the answer.

14 Now, remember, the Messiah was already in the city, born in the city, in a stable; right by the great cathedrals where the high priest ... and the great priests, and the theologians, and the wise, and the trained, all was there waiting for the Messiah. And there He was, right in their midst! But why then did they go to the ... out on the hills of Judea to unlearned, untrained, uncultured, poorest of all? Looked like the most unfit person for such a task, to reveal the message and send them out to bring the message.

You know my opinion? It might not amount to very much, but I want to pass my opinion: I believe it's because of the wisdom of God, that He knew they wouldn't receive such a message the way it come. It wasn't in the taste of their learning. It was different. It wasn't what they had been trained to believe He would be like. It was contrary to their theological understanding. All their training, all their learning was bypassed, become naught. I believe it was the wisdom of God that knew that they wouldn't receive such a message.

15 So the Messiah was here, and there must be somebody recognize it. And He knew those who hadn't been mixed up in such stuff as that. He would be more able to get His message to a unlearned group, than He would be to a mixed-up group that was so set in their ways that nothing could turn them, not even the Word of God.

And now, Christian friend, let me ask this question, with all sincerity and love. I just wonder if He would make the same act tonight, and send to us in this generation the promised Word that's promised for this generation, I wonder if our theologians, and educators, and wise, wouldn't turn the message down just the same as they did then? Man doesn't change, neither does God's Word change. He's the unchanging God, He doesn't change!

16 Notice, Angels coming and.... Angels coming and giving their message to men of such low estate, when there were men there much more (earthly thought of) qualified than these poor, illiterate shepherds. The shepherd was the most illiterate of anybody, he didn't need to know nothing but just about his sheep. He didn't need to know mathematics. He didn't need to know how to split an atom. He didn't need no scholarship. He just had to know his sheep, that's all that he needed to know. And God, the great wisdom, and the fountain and resource of all wisdom, would choose such a person as that (persons rather, as that), and bypass all the well-trained scholars that's trained to know that. It speaks one thing, that they were trained in the wrong field. Passing up all the important of the land; there were important people, great teachers, Caiaphas the high priest, many other great men, all Israel's mighty learned, all the denominations, and all the boasting theologians, God bypassed everyone of them! Now, that's God's wisdom.

17 Notice, the highest heavens hastening to honor earth's most humble and unlearned. The highest of heaven came down to make Hissself known to the lowest of the earth, bypassing all between to make Hissself known to common herdsmen; coming to give these common herdsmen the greatest message of all times. There had been many great messengers. We would think of Noah's day, and the prophets, and the great priests, and so forth, had been in the days gone by. The great learned men, kings, potentates, monarchs, but here He comes with the greatest of all the messages. What was the message? "Messiah is here now!" See? And to make that known, He bypassed all the trained, to make it known to humble shepherds.

Think of it: all of the clergymen, all of the church men, all of the teachers, all of the theological training, all the money had been spent, all the churches, and the doctrines, and the denominations, was all bypassed! All the learning that they had spent on all the—all the missionaries, and all the proselyting, all the membership, and everything that they had thought they had done honor to God, yet the key message of all if it was bypassed from them. Strange! Why? See?

18 And notice, not only that, but the most unlikely place for such an event. The shepherds, now, was the one who received the message. And now notice where the message was: in the most unlikely place that anyone would expect it to come. And I wonder, tonight, if we were looking for the true message of the Lord Jesus, I wonder if it would be in a unlikely group, a place that was ... that the great, high cultured world and

the church today would think was a bunch of, oh, heretics? I wonder if that wouldn't be where we'd find Him? The most unlikely place, and to the most unqualified speakers. Shepherds knowed nothing about speaking, only calling sheep; well, maybe that's why it come.

19 But it was a promised Word. Notice, it could do that again.

It bypassed all the nobles of the land. It bypassed all the nobles, and was revealed to the nobody's. All the nobles that were decorated with great doctor's divinity and psychology, and highly educations, and great cathedrals and things, it was all bypassed and revealed to nobody's. The wisdom, the infinite wisdom of Almighty God did it, to make known to them the greatest message ever was, "The Messiah is now on earth." What a wisdom! Could only come from God who knows wisdom! All the wisdom and all of the schooling, and everything, was now laid to waste and bypassed by the great wisdom of God. I keep repeating that because I want it to go down deep. All laid to waste, it was of no good. Bypassed it all to let God's wisdom have the right of way, that God takes the nothings to make the somethings.

20 We could stop here and speak of John. We could stop and speak of Elijah. Nobody knows where Elijah come from. All they know, he just appeared on the scene. The prophets back through the ages, they were nobody's. But God took that to ... and bypassed the ethics of the church, and the teachings, to make ... show that He is God. He takes something that's nothing, to do something with it. He shows His wisdom and His Godhead by doing so, that He takes the nothings. When He first made a man, He just took a ball of clay and made a man out of it. Where it was nothing but clay, but He made a man. And God takes the nothings now, to do the somethings with. And as long as we think we're somethings, then we cannot be used in the hand of God. We must forsake all we ever knew or learned. Like the great Saint Paul, he said he had to forget all he ever learned, that he might know Christ.

21 All their schooling, all their teachings, and so forth, was working out to the worst for them. It finally denied Him! The very schooling that they had had for Him, to believe Him, turned around and become His most critical enemy, and crucified Him!

Do you know that history repeats itself every so often? It's a noted fact. It could happen again right by the side of us. "Oh," you say, "If I'd've lived then,..." Well, now, if you want to know what you'd have done then, look at your present state now; and you can see what you'd have done then, because it certainly is revealing.

22 Trained to believe His Word, and then when His Word was vindicated before their very eyes, they denied the Word that was made vindication. When God proved that He would do, and said what He would do, and proved that He would do, then they turned around and called this man an "evil spirit" (which cursed them all). Think of what taken place! Think of what caused them; their training caused them not to recognize the very Word made flesh for their day; the very training that they had in their schools, with the very best of teachers.

And you say, "Well, we wouldn't do that today." Their teachers were far supreme to ours today (superior, rather, to our teachers), and they failed. They didn't have 996 different organizations as we have today. They had about three. And in the three, followed down to three, and none of the three recognized it! Just goes to show that what man does is foolishness to God, see.

23 Now, they failed to recognize it. Now ... and they'd do the same thing again.

Man.... Intention is good, it always is good. And man never changes his posture, he never changes his ways much; I'm talking of the man of the world. Man is always praising God, religious man, for what He done, and always pointing people to what He's going to do, and then ignoring what He's doing! See? That's just man, he's made that way, he's always been that way. And you Bible readers tonight know that that's according to the Word. Right. They always praising God for what He has done, saying what He will do, and ignoring what He's a-doing. That's just a habit of man.

24 The reason that they had did this, the teachers, to my opinion now: they had interpreted the Word, 'cause they all believed in a coming Messiah. All Israel believed it, they do yet today. But the reason that they didn't recognize Him, His message wasn't according to their ecclesiastical fit. They ... their interpretation that they had of the

Word, the Messiah never manifested Himself in the way that they had interpreted that He would do it. So, and therefore, they did not recognize Him because it didn't fit their interpretation. As I have said before, and say again, "God doesn't need anybody to interpret His Word. He is His own interpreter."

25 Now, the Bible says.... Let me prove to you now that that is the truth. Isaiah the prophet, seven hundred and fifteen years before this happened, Isaiah the prophet said, "A virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a child." There's no doubt that everyone in that age thought their daughter would be that woman, because Isaiah said it. But, you see, it was seven hundred years later. But when ... God didn't need anybody to interpret His Word, when He'll do it, or how He would do it. He said He would do it, and He did it!

26 God promised that He ... over in Isaiah, also, I believe the 28th chapter, about the 18th verse. And also in Joel 2:28, that in the last days, the last two thousand years, He'd pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. He said, "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions. Your old men shall dream dreams." And the things that He would do, Isaiah said, "With stammering lips and other tongues will I speak to this people, and this is the rest." But they wouldn't hear it. They wagged their heads and walked by it. He said, "All the tables of God would become full of vomit, and there would be nothing clean." And if that isn't a picture of Jerusalem, and the church of that day at the coming Messiah, it's a picture today the same. It's just repeating itself.

Now, when God says He'll do a thing, He did it. Regardless of what anybody else thinks about it, what anybody says, when God speaks of something, He's duty bound to interpret that Word Himself. And His vindication of the Word is His own interpretation. Notice, vindicating His Messiah's message. He promised what the Messiah would do when He come. And when He came....

27 Even when the wise men in the east had looked down southwestward, from where they were at in Babylon, and they saw a majestic star. Did you know there's not a speck of history, nowhere, that any observatory (where they even kept the time by stars, great men who studied these stars).... There's not no history says that any of them seen that star at all. Why? It wasn't given to them, they wasn't looking for such. But these wise men knowed that there would be a star of Jacob rise, and they were looking for it, and it passed from the time that Jesus was borned in Bethlehem....

Now, I know our Christian traditions, its just like our churches, it has things topsy-turvy. You go out here and you see wise men coming to worship a baby; there's not such a thing in the Scripture. Two years later they got there, coming down through the plains and across the Tigris River. They never come to worship an infant, but a young child about two years old. Why was it, at the same time, Herod slew all the children from two years old under? That he might catch the Messiah. You see, they ... God had vindicated by His Word.

28 And when these wise men came to Jerusalem.... The star led them to the religious capitol of the world, Jerusalem. And as soon as they entered those gates, that star (the supernatural that had led them) refused to show them any more. Up and down the streets these fine men, rich men with fine draped camels, and so forth ... up and down the streets saying, "Where is He that's born King of the Jews. We saw His star in the east." And that great religious capitol, after two years of the shepherd's message, still didn't have the answer or knowed nothing about it. The head of all the denominations didn't have the answer.

So it disturbed the Sanhedrin, and they called for the scribes to come read. And they read Micah's story, the prophet which said, "Thou Bethlehem, art thou not the least of all the princes of Judah (the least), but out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people, Israel." And after the Scriptures being read, and still being vindicated before their eyes, they still didn't accept it, though the Scripture said so. I doubt very much they would today, if the Scriptures that's promised for this day would be made manifest. I may never preach to you again, but I want you to get this. Still they wouldn't believe!

The great wisdom of the Father makes man's wisdom so foolish that He belittles the man. He actually comes to the place to where it makes man feel so ashamed of himself, and he's not big enough to admit that he's wrong. He still stays with his story, no matter how much the Father proves that His Word is true and He's doing just what He promised

to do. Man thinks his wisdom is so superior to God, if it don't come according to his wisdom, "Why, it isn't so." That's true in every age, still does it. See how fitting the whole matter was, now?

29 What inspiration to those herdsmen! The angels coming down to speak to herdsmen, angels of God coming to speak to a bunch of shepherds.

I wonder if you ever had the privilege of talking with a shepherd or being with one, awhile? If you would, I don't like to say it because of my remark I'm fixing to say after awhile, but the shepherd stays with the sheep so much until he even laughs like the sheep (bleating), he talks like the sheep, and he smells like the sheep. That's right, because he's with the sheep. That's all he knows, is his sheep.

30 Now, the vindicated Word of truth. When these shepherds, humble, uneducated men.... What a honor, how fitting it is to a shepherd to receive a message of a new borned sheep. It could come to nothing else but a shepherd. That's why He was born in a stable, and not in a house. Sheep are not born in a house, or in a pink decorated hospital room. See? They are born in the barn, and in the fields.

That's the reason He was led to Calvary. You cannot make a sheep walk the gangway to the slaughter. Did you know that? In the slaughter yards, they have a goat that leads the sheep. And when he gets up to where the killing place is, he jumps out and lets the sheep go on. A sheep has to be led, he can't lead himself. So, therefore, it had to be the shepherd coming for his sheep. When they found the God-baby exactly where the messenger said He would be, and when they found this message of the messenger in the manger, exactly where the angels said it would be.

31 Now, I heard people say, "An angel spoke to me, He said, 'thus and thus.'" How ridiculous sometime; and I've heard people say that a angel spoke to them, and told them "thus and thus" which was absolutely contrary to the Word. Now, how could an angel do that? It just couldn't be. And if God told you a certain-certain thing would happen (you say He told you that), and it doesn't happen, then it wasn't God speaking to you. Just remember, that's right. God doesn't lie. He's not found in a lie.

32 When they found the baby, what a joy it must have been to them. Because the angel that gave them the message, they found it just exactly the way the angel said it would be, and just in the place where the angel said it would be. What a thing that must have been to them!

In a manger, why? See how at ease these herdsmen was in the stable? What do you think a theologian would have been in there? He'd have put a pin over his nose, and said, "Get me out of this place." See? He would have been so out of place, he'd been in misery.

But, you see, it was just at home to the shepherd. God knows where to send His message, see. Just exactly right. In this state the shepherds was in then, in their stable with their Lamb, a vindicated message that they had heard. How beautiful! In the presence of the Messiah, vindicated Word of their message. When the shepherds heard that the Messiah was on earth, and came into His presence, right in their own environment, (and found the message to be true, was vindicated there) how that must have made those men feel, to find that God had done this great thing for them.

33 Why, scholars would have been so out of place there, under such circumstances, they'd have left right quick. Why? The messenger's coming to common herdsmen. Maybe they could have not even.... Some of these herdsmen, might not have even been able to have signed their own name—very doubtful. You know the herdsmen that Jesus chose when He was here on earth, to herd His sheep, "Lovest thou Me, Peter, more than these?"

"Yea, Lord, Thou knowest I love Thee."

"Feed My Sheep." And the Bible said that Peter was an ignorant and unlearned man. Still choosing shepherds.

34 The church members of those past days, and priests, and well-trained society in that day would've been so out of place in a stable. Now, I'm not quite sure that many of you could understand (maybe, you city people) what a Judean stable smelled like, what it looked like, as the animals in that stable, and what it would've been. Why, some of these classics of today would be so out of place there, they wouldn't even enter the

door. But it pleased God, by infinite wisdom, to reveal it to such as would receive it. The scholars, and wise men of that day would certainly would not have received it. They'd have been so humiliated to be caught in such a place.

Why, the first place, if they would've went back to their church, and would've witnessed that they attended such a meeting, and believed a bunch of uneducated shepherds bringing such a phenomena, they'd have been excommunicated from their church. They'd have been throwed out of the society of Bethlehem, if they'd have been caught listening to such an unlearned bunch of people as these shepherds was. Humiliated, they certainly would've been. If they'd have been associated with such common people, and being ... accepting such heresies as to believe that God would bring His message to an uneducated bunch of shepherds, when they had everything all prepared for it. They would've lost their affiliation, they'd have had to give in their papers, and would not have been able to have been recognized among the society of their groups of that day; because they had associated with such a thing, and not with a better mind.

35 "How dare you!" the priest would've said. "You come into my sanctuary here with such a heresy, with such a foolishness, that some unlearned bushman out there that doesn't ... didn't go to ... through the primer. And would believe such a message that a angel come down and spoke to them."

But what if the man would've said, "I saw his message vindicated"?

He'd said, "Let me quickly give you your papers. And get out of this society!" Times change, but people don't. It would've probably happened again today, they would have been throwed out of their churches.

36 But the shepherds felt completely at ease in that place with God's Lamb. And any good shepherd does the same thing. When a good shepherd over the sheep can see the Word of God made plain and vindicated, of what He promised to do, that shepherd's right at home. I don't care what anybody else says, there's "God promised it, and God did it."

They say, "The days of miracles is past. There's no such a thing as the baptism of the Spirit. There's no such thing as the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that was for the apostles."

But let a true shepherd of the Word preach it, in the power of the resurrection, that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Peter said on the day of Pentecost, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to them that's far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Wherever He calls, the promise and the same blessing is true. And let a genuine Word-feeding shepherd see that vindicated, all the theologians in the world can't take it away from him; because he knows God said so, and it happens. That's all. It's just God's Word always. His Word was made flesh and was dwelling among them, and they knew it not.

37 He promised the same thing in this day. I wonder if we would recognize it? The proud and wise had never received such a thing as that. And they believed if there was such a thing as the Messiah on earth, it would certainly have to come to their denomination. It would be their group would receive it, or "It wasn't right." Now, just think right hard. If it ain't in their group, then.... Did you notice, then? God never chose any out of their group, but He chose that who wasn't connected with any of it. Because one group would said, "You see what we did?" And they'd do the same today. But God chooses the nobody, that's the reason He chose the shepherd. The shepherds was completely at home with the God-lamb in their midst, His Word made flesh among them. The proud and wise never received it, passed by them.

38 And we could say as much for today, or in any age. It was the same things in the days of Martin Luther. Same thing in the days of John Wesley. It was the same things in the days of the Pentecostals. But God stops for no man's organization! He moves His Spirit right on to vindicate His Word! It would've had to be and come in the class of their own council or they wouldn't receive it. As they're so headstrong today, all the churches, that they are "going to do such-and-such, and unite all the churches together." If they're looking for a messenger now, who can unite all the Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox, everything together, make one great church.

39 Now, brethren, I've had the privilege of preaching to hundreds of different religions, and there's good men in all of them. But now, you remember, I am prophesying, "Every organization will have to accept this, or not be an organization. It's forcing you." Did you read the Tucson paper today where Catholic priests help ordaining, in the paper ... help ordain, in Missouri, a Protestant clergyman? And who was it recognizing it? Presbyterian, Baptists, Lutheran, and Assemblies of God. It's in the Tucson paper today.

Oh, it's shocking! It's not the men in there, it's them ecclesiastical, governmental heads that twist the thing in there, the system that throws you into it whether you want to or not. You can no longer be an organization and escape this wrath that's coming upon the earth, and you see if that isn't right. I may be gone when it happens, look back on one of these tapes. And then if it wasn't, I'm a false witness. If it was, I've told the truth.

40 They would have called it some kind of a working of an evil spirit against their positive thinking. You hear so much today about positive thinking: you just put your mind on anything, and think positive on it. The devil can do that! There's only one thing that rules over all, and that's God's Word. If you are thinking contrary to the Word, forget your thinking. Think on the Word.

"Messiah," they thought, "would not be found in such a place, a mess as that."

Could you imagine a fine, great high priest, or clergyman, all polished in theology, would come down to a stable full of manure? And accept the message of a poor, humble shepherd that had no education, and would come say "See, I can prove it to you, this is the baby, this is the messenger"?

And you know what them people would've said? "The man is honest, he's very sincere in what He's saying, but he's absolutely wrong!"

41 I've seen people live such good lives until people wouldn't believe, couldn't say nothing about them, but they say "He's sincerely wrong. He just doesn't know what he's talking about. God, He wouldn't do such a thing as that."

But here they had the evidence! And after the evidence, "Go up there at the stable and see if that baby isn't laying there."

They'd say, "You've been bewitched by some evil spirit, that's caused you to say such." Yet it was according to the Word of God! And they were too blind to see it, because their theology had blinded them. What a tragedy!

"Caught in such a place? In such a mess as this was? In a stable?" When they had a beautiful place for Him to come, they had everything fixed for Him to come, and then to think that He would come down (and go) and not bring their teachers the message. "And would give it to a bunch of unlearned shepherds? And then bring His own Son, and have Him born in a stable? A common livery stable? Well, in a manger of hay? Why, it couldn't be so!" They wouldn't believe it, because it was so humble.

42 And it's so simple, that's how the wise always overlooks it. It's so simple, it confounds them. They looked for a God way out there, when He's right here. See? They're looking for something way yonder, when it's right here with them now: Christ, risen from the dead, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

All their great things was bypassed. But it sure was the truth, that "there was the Messiah." We know it today. We believe it today. We accept it today.

But then if God promised something for this Christmas, promised something for this day, and proves that it's so, and we'd still walk away from it, we're just in the same class them was back there at that day, that bypassed it; because it don't—does not come in our denominational taste. That's why we're in such a mess this Christmas.

43 Jesus Christ is not dead, He's alive. He's here today! The Bible said, "He's the same yesterday, today, and forever." He said, in St. John 14:12, "He that believeth on Me..." (not he that makes-believe, he that says he believes) "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also. And more than this shall he do, because I go to the Father." And I've seen Him, in my own life, do more of the same works that He did then, than is written in the pages of this Bible. And it goes over the top of the head and the wise today, and revealed to babes such as will learn; as Jesus prayed for. It is true, He's done more than He ... I've seen in my day, of my thirty-three years of ministry, I've

seen Him do more than I have read of Him doing in the Bible; more of the same thing.

44 But no matter what He did then, do you think the Sanhedrin believed Him? "Well," they said, "you're bewitched." But, find out, where they made their mistake was to find out ... in finding out, not what their creed said, but what the Word said Messiah would do in their day. There's where we make the mistake today, not searching the Scriptures. Jesus told them, "Search the Scriptures, in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me. They tell you who I am."

45 Notice, God foreknew they would do this, that's just why He had to take it to shepherds. He knew they wouldn't do it, they wouldn't receive it. Now do you see why it had to be shepherds? Why shepherds? Theologians wouldn't receive it. Why shepherds again? Would it come contrary to His Word? No! They were shepherds, they knowed sheep; and that's what He was born, a sheep, a lamb. Notice, He was the lamb. They were the only kind that would accept Him. A shepherd was the only thing would accept a lamb. They knowed how to take care of it, and so is it today when we get the Lamb's message.

46 Now the striking! The most humblest, uneducated man adoring Emmanuel in a stable. The most.... And there were people out there, at the same days, teaching their theology. Great crowds, drawing everywhere, from all over the land, they come to sacrifices which Jehovah said was "a stench in His nostrils." And here was humble shepherds, in a stable, adoring Emmanuel; God Himself made flesh, and laying in a stable. See, how we with our great learnings, and our head sticking back like we know something, and God bypasses the whole thing. He does what He promises to do, and He always does that. But think of these lowly shepherds out there now adoring Emmanuel in a stable. It's most striking. Sure is!

47 Then out.... After they had adored Him, and realized that the message that they had been preaching was vindicated, there they were out praising God with the most incredible message of an angel. Now compare that with today. Just stop a minute and think. Men out adoring God, and praising Him for what they had seen, what they heard, what they knew was the truth, with a message that was incredible to the intellectual mind. It was contrary to all ecclesiastical thinking, and yet it was the truth! It's the truth! They believed it. And now, how foolish can the wisdom of man be! Then saying that a angel choir sang to them the first noel. Could you imagine that? That a shepherd that couldn't write his name, smelling like a sheep pen, walking down the street, hollering, "Glory to God in the highest! We know that He's on earth!"

The priest said, "That man's out of his mind. Look upon the books and see if he's a member of our congregation. He certainly embarrasses us by his unethical teachings. Get him away from us. We will not be embarrassed amongst the people.

Well, you can be embarrassed amongst the people and glorified in the sight of God; or take your choice, 'cause, remember, the ecclesiastical taste of the day don't fit God's Word. There not no nine hundred and sixty-nine different tastes of it. It's one taste, one Word, one God. That's all.

48 Saying that angels sang the first noel to them, and also saying that they "got a message from an angel." An angel appeared to them, give them a message, and they went and found out that message was truth. And saying, "Besides that, the angel sang the first noel to us."

"Could you imagine?" They say, "That poor fellow." They'd never had anything like that to happen among them, you know, so it was kind of strange doctrine to them. And that's the reason they couldn't find it in the Scriptures, it wasn't for them to find it. Incredible to the wise, no such experience had ever happened to them. Unbelievable, but still it was the truth. It's the truth, we know it's the truth. Think! Christ's first converts and first congregation was sheepmen, not clergymen; sheepmen, herders. Why shepherds?

49 Notice! Out praising and glorifying God for what they had seen and heard, heard angels sing for their first time to a human being. Angels had never sang to a human being before. And look at the choirs, how they had stood and trained and trained those voices, "they'd sing at the birth of the Messiah," and they were all bypassed! And angels came down and sang to common sheepmen, not with clergy clothes on, but with shepherd's clothes on. And look who got the first message, it's incredible.

And where it was given, not in the cathedrals, but in the wilderness, out in the wilderness where the angel of the Lord came. Not in the church, in the wilderness. He wasn't even welcome in the church. They thought He was, and they thought they had it, but God proved that it was wrong. "He's able of these stones to rise children to Abraham." That's right.

50 The first time angels ever sang at a celebration, it was in heaven. If you'll look in Job 38:7, (as I see some of you taking notes), when God first planned on making His first creation, the earth. Job was a great, smart man, and he had all kinds of wisdom. He said, "When I go up to the markets, the young princes, they all bow before me, and just want a moment of my wisdom." And he couldn't figure out why he had to be treated the way he was.

And so God asked him, said, "Gird yourself up like a man, because I'm coming down to talk to you." And when God came down in a whirlwind, He said, "Job, where was you before I laid the foundations of the earth? When the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy, where were you then, Job?" And he was deflated at that time. "Where was you?"

See, the first time angels ever sang at a celebration, was in heaven. But the first time they ever sang on earth, was to shepherds at the birth of God, Emmanuel on earth; first human beings ever heard an angel sing, was humble shepherds.

51 When we take our painted-faced women, bobbed hair, wearing shorts, and swing some kind of a church robe around them, and stand them up and sing like something, and then we think that God has to listen to that? He's got angels back yonder who can entertain Him since before He ever made a human being. Get out and live, and wear clothes that's an abomination to God, and how can you expect that to be of God? You say, "Well, I belong to...."

"Where was you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me where I fastened them to. Where is the axle that they turn on? Where were you then?" You think God has to ask us for some of our wisdom. Our wisdom's only foolish to Him. He does what He says He will do.

52 Now notice, God is fixing to make another creation. He creating mortal earth, mortal life. Angels sing in heaven. But here He's creating a new life, eternal life for man, and He's singing to His subjects through angels; on the earth, not in heaven. Heaven had eternal life, see. And He sang ... they sang to the heavens, when the mortal creation come in; and here the immortal creation is coming in, and now they're singing to earthly people. The first time, to shepherds. Striking, isn't it?

53 He had started a new creation. What was it? A creation of Himself. God was made flesh and dwelt among us. That's.... The Bible said, "In the beginning of the creation of God." God was created in human form; in Jesus Christ, His Son, God dwelt. He built His tabernacle of flesh and bones, and lived in that tabernacle; God, Emmanuel, "God with us." He built Himself a house, to live in it, so He could reflect His Word to His subjects through that. You know what God is, when you see Christ.

54 Remember, there is always singing at the birth of a king. How many knowed that? Of course you did. Well, now, do you think if this King would've been borned down there, a woman would've come running into the cathedral somewhere, and said, "Make a bed ready right quick, and get the doctors, because I'm going to bring Emmanuel to the earth"? A poor woman out of Nazareth, the lowest city, the ... meaner than Tucson or any of the rest of them, and yet this little woman comes running up there to the great high priest and said, "I'm fixing to give birth to Emmanuel." They'd have throwed her in jail. They sure would. They certainly would. Of such a heresy as that to be brought amongst his people, he wouldn't have stood for it. Neither would he today. But just the same it's happening, just the same.

55 Notice, there has to be singing. Kings were.... He wouldn't have been sang to. The people wouldn't have sang to Him, because they didn't believe Him. And that's the reason.... Here it comes, you might as well get it. That's the reason today that people's ashamed to praise God, they're ashamed of Christ! The great cathedrals won't receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, they're so set in their ecclesiastical way that they will not receive it. God's going to find somebody that He can get praise through. "He's able of these stones to rise children to Abraham," as I quote John again.

Notice, His subjects must sing to Him. And His subjects then was His angels, and they sang to His shepherds which was to take His message.

56 Who should hear it first? Of course, His subjects. That's who would hear the King's singing first, would be His subjects. And what was His subjects? Kind of striking, isn't it, brethren? It wasn't His clergymen. It wasn't the theologians. That's right. It wasn't the denominational people. No, it was shepherds. Why? There was a sheep born, that's the reason, see. His subjects heard it, who God knew would believe. God sent His message to those who would believe it. He's all wisdom; He knows where to send His message, who will believe it. The highest of heaven sent to the lowest of men upon the earth.

Jesus said, in Matthew 5, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Mary, in.... If you're putting scriptures down, that's Matthew 5. And if you're putting scriptures down ... that's what I have written here, is scriptures.

57 Mary said, in Luke 1:52, when she was anointed with the Spirit, the Holy Ghost upon her, she said, "He has exalted them of low degree." Mary said that, the mother of Jesus, said, "He has exalted those of low degree."

Luke also said, "The common people heard Him gladly." Not the elite, the theologians, the doctors of the law of divinity; but the common people heard Him gladly, people of low degree.

Throughout all sacred Scriptures, the message of redemption has been given by shepherds and through sheep.

Now I have to come to a close, because we're getting time to close. I'm bypassing many scriptures just so I can get you to this thought.

58 Throughout all Scripture, redemption has been represented through shepherds and sheep. That's right. We all agree to that. Why? It was in shadow and type. And anything.... If I never had seen my hand, and I looked down here at my hand's shadow, and I see I had five fingers, I would know that it was reflecting; the negative was reflecting a positive. And that's why the message always came through redemption by sheep, because from the very beginning ... and it was through sheep, and by shepherds, that He revealed Himself. All was shadows and types.

59 Now let us look at the beginning. Adam and Eve, standing there in the presence of God to hear His message to them, they had draped about their loins the skin of sheep. The first message was ever heard, was given over the top of a dead sheepskin, that God had slew and wrapped Adam and Eve in it. After they tried to make their own religion of fig leaves, it wouldn't work. Sheep sacrifice has been instituted for atonement since the very beginning, sheep sacrifice.

Now we're going to close this off now, and show you why it had to be shepherds; and why it had to be, He had to be a sheep.

60 Now, the prophets of the Old Testament draped themselves in sheepskins (we know that, uh-huh), signifying their faith in His Word of the coming perfect Lamb. That's why the prophets.

Now, the Word of God does not come to a theologian, there's no ... he's the one messes it up. That's right. There's no such a thing as ever saying.... You saying, "Well, this guy's a theologian." That just puts him farther away from the Word than anything I know of. See? The Word of the Lord God, the unchanging God, never does change. Anywhere in the Bible, the Word of God always did come to prophets. Not to theologians or doctors, to prophets! And they always, every time, was refused and rejected.

61 Prophets was usually herdsmen also. Prophets draped themselves in sheepskins, because they wore the skin of the sheep they were herding. And the first message, to a condemned generation, was over the top of sheepskins. Prophets, I say again, wore sheepskins draped around themselves, 'cause they were testifying by that, that they believed that there was coming a perfect lamb for that sacrifice. And the Word of God came to them over the top of sheepskins. These herdsmen ... or these prophet's usually were herdsmen. Abraham was a herdsman. Isaac was a herdsman. Jacob was a herdsman. Moses was a herdsman. David was a herdsman. All of God's representatives usually were herdsmen.

62 Now we're going to find out why it come to shepherds. They knew the sheep is

helpless without the shepherd to guide them. They ... a sheep is perfectly helpless, he cannot go by himself. That's the reason God likened His believing children unto sheep. They've got to be guided. But watch what's guiding you! Don't get a goat, he'll walk you to the slaughter pen. God never give us a goat, He gave us His Son, the Holy Spirit, to guide us. He is our guide, not some man-made herdsman, but a God-given herdsman who feeds the sheep upon sheep food.

63 Now, you take a pig, and you say to this pig, "I'm going to make you a lamb." And you wash him. And you paint his toenails, and so forth. And give him food like a sheep, give him some kind of a diet. And put him out on the floor or out in the ... where the sheep herd, in the alfalfa field or something. And if there's a mud hole anywhere, that hog will go just as straight to that mud hole as he can go. See? Why? Is because his nature is still a hog.

And that's the reason that church members, today, indulge in the things of the world, see, is because their nature hasn't been changed. They'll eat any kind of a ecclesiastical, theological slop, but the Word of God they can't stand it. They'll go in and listen to the Word....

64 You know, the biggest hypocrite in the world, is an old crow. In the Bible, there were two let out of the ark. The old crow went out and he never did return, because he's a vulture, a scavenger. He set on the bodies of the dead carcasses and filled his belly with the dead carcass. But when he turned the dove out, the dove could not stand that stench, so she returned back to father's house and Noah, and beat at the door until Noah let her in.

Now, a crow can set out here and eat on a dead horse, all day, and fly out there in the field and eat grain with the dove. But a dove cannot fly over there and eat on the dead horse, and then eat grain; it would kill him. See, the dove don't have any gall, and he can't digest it.

And when any dove of God, any Word-eating dove or sheep, a clean beast, when you go to give them the things of the world, they know their master said, "He that loves the world or the things of the world, the love of God's not even in him." You give him something contrary to that Word of God, he cannot stand it. But the Devil can take that and the world too, and call it all God. You can't mix oil and water, it just won't mix.

65 They, all these shepherds, they knew the sheep was helpless without the shepherd. And they were shepherds, and knew that he must be guided.

What a pity it is to see, today, that they try to feed sheep, slop. But a sheep won't eat it. No, sir! See, they was trying to feed sheep, back there, slop. And when the Word come, they had been so used to slop, they didn't know the Word. And that's what it is today, when the same thing vindicated and proved that God would do a certain thing. Then they're so used to slop, and slop-fed, till you ... well, there isn't no talking to them, they just won't listen to it, that's all. The dog.... Bible said, "As a dog returns to its vomit, and a hog to its wallow, so do they."

Hear the Word, and go back right to the same old wallow! And say, "Ah, it's fanaticism. Don't believe such a thing as that."

66 God's sheep does the same today, they must trust in the Word diet. They will not take any other diet. You can't give them an ecclesiastical diet, the real sheep. No! No! You go tell them, "Now look, we'll all be together. Now, Jesus prayed that we all might be 'one.' " You just heard the same thing in Tucson not long ago, a few days ago, but it's a lie! Jesus never prayed.... How did He.... How can you make the Word condemn itself? Backfire on itself, then God's no more than any other man.

Jesus said, "How can two walk together 'less they be agreed?" How you going to take Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Catholic, and throw it all together and be one? You might be one under man's head, but Jesus said, "That they might be one even as I and You are one." Now, He wants us all to be one in Him which is the Word! Amen! There it is, "One with the Father." And the Father is the Son, is the same. And it's the same Word, the Word manifested, displaying itself in this day as it did in any other day, that you might be one.

67 Notice, He said, "As the Father sent me, so send I you." The Father that sent Him, went in Him to confirm the Word. And the same Jesus that sends His people, goes in the

people that He sends; that's saying, "The works that I do, shall you do also." Sure, He prayed that we might be one; one with Him, not one with an organization. Not one with a system, but one with God. For God and His Word is one, and Jesus and God was one, and you and I and the Word must be one. That's right. We must be one in agreement with the Word. Not what somebody else says, it's of no private interpretation. Take it, what it says, and believe it; and God will vindicate it, and prove that it's right. You think it's just for disciples only, take His word for it, go try it once and see. You'll fine out that it will work for you just the same as He promised. Yes, sir!

They won't eat on slop, they have to have a sheep diet. St. John 10 declares that, "My sheep know my voice." And if He is the Word, then what kind of a voice does He have? "My sheep now my voice, strangers they will not follow," see. Jesus said, "A strange voice they would not follow." So, His sheep doesn't follow a stranger's voice. They won't follow them.

Prophets, shepherds, and sheep, all testify of the coming.

68 Now see the unchanging God in His unchanging plans of His Word this day. Now just think a few minutes: the unchanging Word.

Now look! If Moses would've come with Noah's message, it wouldn't have worked. If John the Baptist would have come with Moses' message it wouldn't work. If Jesus would've come with Moses; or Noah's message, it wouldn't work. And Wesley come with Luther's message, it wouldn't have worked. If the Pentecost come with the Wesleyan message, it wouldn't have worked; we just heard that testify. Now, God just keeps moving. Just watch the Word, you see where we're at.

69 Then why should not the shepherd's first announcement.... If all these prophets, all these great men were shepherds, then why should God, the unchanging one, change His method right here, and bring it to theologians? It was shepherds. The arrival of the perfect Lamb, the sin-offering, should come to the shepherd.

The shepherd knows his sheep better than anyone else. There's no one knows a sheep like a shepherd, he's trained to it. Also knew what kind of food they would eat. He knew what the sheep would eat, and he knows his sheep by what they eat. You'd see a sheep go out to a slop-pen and start eating slop, you'd say, "Get that scavenger away." See? So God knew where to send them.

70 Now let us call one of Jehovah's great shepherd-prophets, to confirm that God was in these prophets under the sheepskin. Watch now. We will call, first, Moses. Let's look at him. His ministry will show us Jehovah in His shepherd-prophet. Now, we'll just take maybe one, if we have time, for about the next ten minutes. We'll take two of them, but maybe this one will be all right.

Moses; Jehovah displays Himself here, in this shepherd-prophet. He was given three gifts to vindicate his ministry and calling to the elders of Israel, and to Pharaoh. Notice this shepherd-prophet, now. He give, always, His prophets, the supernatural sign, to vindicate that it was God in them; for there cannot be the presence of God without supernatural things happening. Never did Jehovah ever appear without supernatural following Him. It has to be. So He always a-vindicated Himself that He was with these prophets, by confirming what they were prophesying of, if it was according to His Word.

71 Now, the first sign He gave to the ... this prophet-shepherd (look), turned his rod to a serpent.

Second, his hand turned to leprosy.

Third, to take water out of the Nile River in Egypt, and turn it to blood.

Now, He give him three signs to vindicate to Egypt, and also to Israel, that he was God's spoken Word.

Now, remember, Moses called into creation! That's right. Picked up sand and throwed it up in the air, and said, "Let fleas come," and fleas came. Said, "Let flies come," and flies come. "Let frogs come," and frogs come. He brought into creation! Now, a man cannot create, but it wasn't man to begin with. It was Jehovah in His prophet-shepherd! Amen!

72 Watch! The third sign He give him was not related to his occupation, nor either was it related to his person; his third sign. Notice, the first two signs related to him, hisself

and his occupation. And they was the only two signs that the Bible says that "had a voice." The other sign didn't have a voice. But the two signs that was given from his own person, and to his people, had voices. But the third sign, now notice, it was given ... the sign, the third sign, was the sign of death: water turning to blood. If your blood would turn to water, then you would die. And where there's blood, shed blood, is a sign of death; so it was to Pharaoh. The third was to turn the Nile water into blood, was to show his message to Pharaoh that our God is God over the Nile, over the God of the Nile. He's God over everything, and He's going to bring death to that nation. And that's what the sign of blood was. Oh, my! Direct sign of death: blood!

73 But the other two had voices of prophecy. I hope you're reading now, between lines, what I'm saying. But the other two signs had voices of prophecy to Israel concerning their future. Now to you that was up on the mountain not long ago, when the rock was threw up....

Now, and going ... he was going to change nature, to make it work for them. Watch the pole, watch the serpent, watch the Red Sea, and whatever that He did, now. Look at that shepherd's goad making a way for them to go. That stick that was in the shepherd's hand, bypassed every bit of theology and all the things the priests had said, and that shepherd's rod led them right on down through every impossible thing to man. When Pharaoh tried to think that "the cataracts erupted up in the mountains and threw the water, then made it turn into blood," then God rained fire out of heaven. And He rained hail out of heaven, and He rained lice upon the earth, and everything.

74 What did He do? By that shepherd's staff, not a textbook. Not a theologian's idea, but a shepherd's staff! We're coming to it in a minute; a shepherd's staff, He did it. Not a denominational's prayer book, but a shepherd's staff. Shepherd's rod guiding his sheep, making the way clear as they went towards the promised Word in the land. What a beautiful thing that is today of the Shepherd's staff, today, guiding His sheep to the promised land; bypassing all theology and everything else of this world, and the things of the world, the denominations, everything; opening up the way, and proving His Word to be the truth; the shepherd's staff going ahead.

75 And notice, that same shepherd's staff that was guiding the sheep.... Do you believe that? He certainly did guide the sheep, he delivered them out of Egypt with that staff in his hand. We could say much more about it. But to hit the highlights, he guided the sheep and sent judgment upon the rejecting of it! The same staff that become a blessing to one, become a curse to the others. The same waters of Noah's preaching that saved him, condemned the world. The same staff that led Israel to the promised land, condemned those who refused to follow the prophet-shepherd. That's right, become a stick of judgment.

Nature; notice how God speaks in His nature. If we just had time. I wrote a note there: God speaking in His nature. We haven't time to prove it.

76 But proving later, by the brass serpent on the shepherd's sheep-goad, that he wrapped this snake around, in the wilderness, this speaks of true atonement coming for sickness and sin.

That staff itself had turned into a serpent before Pharaoh, and the same Pharaoh tried to mimic by magicians. And so does the modern Pharaohs of today, and make-believers, carnal impersonators of the message, try to mimic the same thing without knowing where it's coming from; and throw it into some denominational something, when it's as free from it as the air is from being penned up. Sure! But try to mimic, make a mimic.

But, notice, this same shepherd's staff eat up the other snakes. Where was them snakes at? They were rods on the floor, and there was only one rod picked up. "Both heavens and earth will pass away," said Jesus, "but my Word shall not." Speaks of true atonement coming for sin.

77 Also, Israel's future offered ... know how it spoke of Israel, now in the future. There they were offered deliverance from bondage of death by a prophet-shepherd. They were brought out of bondage by a prophet-shepherd with a staff, see. It was speaking of Israel's future deliverer, from death and hell, by a shepherd-prophet that we'll speak of.

Now, to all that ... all as we know Israel, did not receive the prophet-shepherd's

Word, all of Israel didn't receive it. Now, notice, they was complaining. "Oh," when he was performing the miracles, "he was a great fellow," but when it come to his message, "that was different." All great signs follows a new message coming. We know that. In the wilderness they complained, in the wilderness, and died by the thousands. Frankly, there was only two of them that ever went through that was saved out of two and a half million, two out of two and a half million.

You say, "That.... What happened to them?" They're eternally gone.

"All of them, Brother Branham?" Jesus said so.

They said, "Our fathers eat manna in the wilderness, and they drank from the rock."

And He ... Jesus said, "And they are, every one, dead," eternally separated, see, every one.

78 Notice they complained about God's provided way, was the reason they died. (Now, closely, don't miss these last few remarks.) They complained! What made them die in the wilderness, they complained about God's provided way: by a one-man message, a prophet, a leadership of one man. Tell me when God ever used a group to lead. You won't find it in the Bible. One man, they.... The Word came to Moses!

Korah; we all know that he got hisself together and complained about God not being just to do a thing like that, to make one man with the message. He said, "We're all holy. Why can't we have a denomination? And why can't we have ... set up this, and do this, and do that?"

God told Moses, "Separate yourself from him, I've had enough of it." And remember, Jude speaks the same thing, in the last days. That's right, "They perished in the gainsaying of Korah." We also know what happened to Korah and the rest that questioned God's Word and God's wisdom of that one-man leadership: every one of them perished.

79 Now, we will notice God in the shepherd-prophet, showing his future plans in the next sign voice. Now, watch. We see it there, now let's watch it in the next sign.

Now, notice, he was sent to his brethren in slavery, under bondage, with a message of deliverance, with a God-given sign to prove his claims. Israel went for his message, they believed it, every one of them, but in the evening time.... They went for his miracles, but in the evening time when they ... he gave his message, "It was different." All that did not believe that message, died. That's right. What was the message? The message was of the coming judgment. At the evening—at the evening time God went out through the camp of Israel to find if the people had believed His shepherd-prophet's message; and all had not believed it, perished.

80 Now notice, we're going to bring it over to the great shepherd just in a few moments, see. Notice the great shepherd-prophet's ministry. Of His miracles, every church opened and would receive Him. They wanted their sick healed. They wanted to do great things. His popularity was great. But when the evening time came, one day after He had turned water to wine, and had fed thousands bread, and had performed miracles, He begin to set down and talk to them. And He said to them, "I and my Father are one. Why sayest thou, 'Show us the Father'?"

"Oh, brother! This man making Himself equal with God?" That was too much for their ecclesiastical thinking. But it was the truth, He was! See? But when they did, many did not follow Him.

Then He turned around and said, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

Now, what do you think a smart, intellectual person would thought? I imagine the priests that had Him in the temple was very ashamed of them having Him there. "To think that a man would stand up and say a thing like that, 'Except you people eat my flesh, and drink my blood.'" Said, "This is a human vampire, see, 'Eat my flesh and drink....' Why, he's a cannibal. You good thinking people will ... you'll get away from such a lunatic as that."

He never explained it, He just said it! He did it to stumble them, to separate His sheep from goats. He did it to throw them off. And then nobody wanted to cooperate

with Him. They had no cooperation from then on.

81 Notice, at the evening time, God went out through the camps and seen who had believed. And He did the same thing in the days of the great shepherd. Notice the great shepherd-prophet's ministry, but notice this, to believers of his message, but not.... This evening message, they wouldn't believe it. They wouldn't believe that He was God. They wanted to make Him a nice man. They wanted to make Him a prophet. He was a nice man, and He was a prophet, but He was more than that. That's the common teaching today, that "He's just a good man, He was a prophet." He was nothing short of Emmanuel! He was God manifested in Jesus Christ His Son, making Him and the Father one. That's all He could be.

82 Zechariah 14:7, I might say this, speaks of the evening lights and message again at the end time. Did you notice that? As many as followed Moses, seen the pillar of fire that identified him on Mount Sinai. He had testified of, and spoke of this pillar of fire being in a bush and had told him this message, many of them wouldn't believe it. But as many as followed him out of Egypt (come up out of the world and crossed the sea of separation, and went into the wilderness), saw the same pillar of fire that he spoke of vindicating that shepherd-prophet to be the shepherd of the sheep. They saw it, and many of them still didn't believe it after they saw it.

83 Notice how, again, the never-changing God, the great shepherd-prophet, took them that stayed by Him and with His ministry to Mount Olive; the great shepherd-prophet, the one we're speaking of, Jesus. Seen and heard the Father, the same pillar of fire, vindicate Him, that vindicated Moses.

The same God that Moses spoke of, come over Moses and proved by a pillar of fire that He was Jehovah that was leading Moses. God was in His shepherd-prophet.

Here He takes the other shepherd-prophet, the great prophet, the real sheep, Jesus, and takes the choice of three men, and takes them up on top of Mount Olives, and there a-vindicated Jesus. And even ex-commuted Himself from all other people, said, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him!" And when they looked up, they saw no man save Jesus only. That's right. He was the one. Now, that settles it, as far as I'm concerned, see.

84 [Blank spot on tape.].... The Shekinah [Blank spot on tape.] ... face. Moses was in the presence of the Shekinah on Mount Sinai. It changed his face. When he come down, he had to put a veil over his face, the shepherd-prophet Moses; who Jehovah was in in a portion, just a portion, his face. He had the Word in his mouth.

But notice when the great shepherd was in the presence of the Shekinah. What did it do? It changed his whole countenance. He wasn't just part of God, He was all of God! He was Emmanuel.

Why did it have to be shepherds?

85 Look! See, now, God Almighty patrolleth ... portraying Himself, rather, in Moses the shepherd-prophet. Watch how God made Himself known. This is my last remark. See Him standing anointed in the presence of the pillar of fire! Nobody on the mountain at all but Moses and Jehovah. Amen! Amen means "so be it."

Watch! "Put thy hand in thy bosom!" But, watch this second sign now with a voice. "Put thy hand into the bosom." We have no reason to believe that Moses was left-handed, so he must have put his right hand into his bosom, 'cause most men are right-handed. He put his right hand.... Now watch! What a picture we see here, of Jehovah in Moses the shepherd-prophet! Moses representing God, 'cause God was in Moses. Watch him put his ... "Hand in thy bosom." What a sign!

86 Now, there he stands, holding his right hand over his heart, standing like this, where the hidden secrets of the redemption had been hid since the foundation of the world. Here's why shepherds. Jesus is God's right hand, we all know. Here's Moses portraying Him exactly. He held the secrets of the Father, and has showed them to us. Notice, watch him pull from his bosom his right hand smitten with deadly leprosy. Showed what God would do with his right hand. Notice, the leprosy has no cure. Notice, again, it wasn't just common leprosy, it was in its last stage, white as snow; his hand was smitten with a horrible thing. How Moses must have felt when he pulled his right hand from over his heart, out of his bosom, and his hand was smitten with leprosy!

Leprosy symbolizes sin, incurable, and especially in its last stage.

87 Brethren, that's where the world was when God pulled His right hand from His bosom! The world was smitten with deadly leprosy, and no cure at all for it. So is it tonight, because they won't receive the remedy. The remedy was made at Calvary, but people wants to take some man-made prescription in the stead of God's prescription for sin.

Notice it never gradually come on, as the course of leprosy does, but all at once! When he pulled his hand, it was smitten, it was full of leprosy. Notice what God said, "Now, you won't gradually drift into sin; but the day you eat thereof, that day you die." And that's right, "The day you eat of it."

88 Notice, it was the prophet-shepherd that smote himself. He took, by the commandment of God, and put his own hand into his bosom, and pulled it out smitten with leprosy. The prophet-shepherd did it himself. And the great prophet-shepherd, Jesus, did it Himself, "I lay my life down, no man takes it from me." He was the great shepherd, the great prophet-shepherd, "No man takes it from me, I do it of Myself." Notice it didn't gradually come, it come in a minute. The great shepherd Himself, took our guilt and smote Himself, took our sins and laid it upon Himself. No wonder the poet wrote:

Mid rendering rock and darkening skies,  
My Saviour bowed His head and died;  
The opening veil revealed the way  
To heaven's joy's and endless day.

89 That secret had been in God's bosom all these years, covered by His right hand, Jesus. The great shepherd took upon Himself our guilt for us. Isaiah 53:6, said, "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquity. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And with His stripes we are healed." The secret of God's healing laid in the bosom of Jesus Christ, or God, He was on the right hand of God, that's the only sheep that held in His bosom the secret. That's the reason the foreshadows of it had to always be a sheep! The first was a sheep, the last was a sheep. That's the reason it had to come to a shepherd, to know how to take care of His sheep. You get it? Notice, "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquity, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him."

90 Notice, it came quick; and it left quick no sooner the right hand was drawn from the bosom the second time. The deadly disease was gone, when he drew it the second time. And when the great shepherd, the sheep-prophet, when He said.... On Calvary's cross, when He had paid the penalty of sin for us all, He said, "It's finished." Sin was over, the penalty was paid, debts were settled! It didn't take a year, or finally come into it in the days of some other reformer or something, it was finished right then!

91 Sin came in a moment, by transgression of God's law, by breaking one word. Tonight, my brethren, your soul is over hell on a chain. And that chain is not some theological seminary's teaching, that chain is not some denomination or some creed that you're living by, that chain is God's Word! Jesus gave the human race his Word to live by, and Eve only broke one little link of it. And the ... any chain is no stronger than its weakest link. When you take one word out.... That was the first of the book.

Jesus came in the middle of the book, said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." That was the middle of the book.

The last of the book, He said, "Whosoever shall take one word (mistranslate one word), take one word out of here, I'll take his part from the book of life." You're passing over hell, hanging on the Word of God. Don't you let somebody squeeze something into you that's not thus saith the Lord!

92 Oh, I see.... Well, they say, "Surely, all we've done. All we've done!" That's what maybe the high priests and them thought in the days of the great shepherd. That's what Eve thought. That's what Satan told her, "Surely God will not." But He did, 'cause He said He would. And that's the reason He'll do it again today.

No wonder, as He said, "As it was in the days of Noah, wherein eight souls were

saved, by water, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of man." See, very few, "For strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there'll be that'll find it." That's right. "Cause broad is the way that leads to destruction, many will go in thereat."

93 When the great shepherd was smitten, the great sheep-prophet when He was smitten back there, He said, "It is finished!" And that minute, as soon as this shepherd was smitten, it was over. Sin is settled, there was no more sin. They were clean, the penalty was paid. The believers whose names were written in the book of life, predestinated from the foundation of the world, it was finished that very minute that Jesus said it was finished. He, the great shepherd, had come for his sheep. It was finished, God's right hand was pulled from his bosom, smitten. Then on Easter He returned it, amen, raised it up again to his bosom, and extended it down to you and I, in the form of his Word, to redeem us back to the original garden from which sin took us from. The hidden secret of his great heart was revealed by a prophet-shepherd. It was revealed by a shepherd, prophet-shepherd.

94 No wonder the mountains jumped and shouted on that day. No wonder the sun hid its face and screamed for joy. No wonder all nature broke loose; the wind shook the trees until they shook and shook and joyed, and jumped. They seen the prophet-shepherd, on the mountain, redeem every name on the book of life. And they seen that their own nature was redeemed! They screamed, and jumped. And the world went into an earthquake. And the mountains rent, and the rocks fell out. And the sun went down. And everything taken place. Like any meeting, when the Shepherd reveals to you that "it's finished!" There....

95 I've seen jumping spells, and joy spells, but there was nobody hurt. The mountains rung out, and they ... the sun went down, and everything took place, but there was nobody hurt. And I've seen meetings where the power of God was revealed to the people that they "were free from the world and the things of the world," and the joy of the Lord filled the congregation. They stood and screamed, and cried, and shouted to the top of their voice, for the glory of God. I never did see anything disorderly, they was always right in order; because they had recognized that their name that had been written on the lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world. The great prophet-shepherd had brought them the message, and they were delivered, the prophet-shepherd. No matter what the other ecclesiastical realms said about it, they knew what had happened. Just as them shepherds did back there, they knowed what took place.

96 No man has a right to enter the sacred desk to preach the Word until he has did as Moses did, meet God, himself, upon grounds where that there's no theologian can explain it away. Moses was there! No matter how Israel's messengers said, "oh, it was a nonsense, you just imagined you saw this; it's nonsense," you couldn't take that away from him, he knowed! He was there! He was the one it happened to! And no man by a theological degree or some doctor's degree has a right behind the pulpit, to claim the message of Jesus Christ, until he's first met God face to face in the pillar of fire. He has no right to call himself a messenger, 'cause all the theologians in the world couldn't explain that away from you. It happened to you! You were there, you know about it. Care what anybody else says, or how much they can say, "the days is gone, it isn't so," it happened to you, and it's according to the Word.

97 Yes, that's the reason Moses knew this voice had spoke to him, was a Word voice. He knowed that God had told Abraham, "Your seed shall sojourn for four hundred years, but I will deliver them." And he knowed the four hundred years was up and he was called to do it.

Men and women, God promised in this last days that He'd pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. He promised He'd send the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and He'd call a bride without spot or wrinkle. He promised to do it, He'll do it. Don't listen to these hireling shepherds, they'll lead you astray. The Holy Spirit is the shepherd to feed you sheep food from this Word. It always comes by the shepherd. He is our shepherd. Listen to Him, you are the sheep of his fold; if you are, you hear his voice. Not what somebody else says, you hear what He says. A strange voice, you know nothing about it.

98 Oh, my, listen to the mighty shepherd-prophet again interpreting and introducing to them. John, when he stood in the river of Jordan, look what he said. Was standing

there preaching, he said, "The hour is coming...."

Notice, John was a priest's son. They always followed the line of their father, that's the way we got our names. By whatever they did, they called them that. And John was supposed to be a priest like his father.

And, you know, this mother, when she had (been) conceived, after the angel of the Lord met his father Zacharias, and went home to Elizabeth, and she was already six months in ... to be mother. But she had had no life yet, she was scared 'cause the baby hadn't moved. That's subnormal.

99 And the Holy Ghost, the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary, and told her that she was "going to have a baby, knowing no man," and told her about Elizabeth's condition.

She went up the hills of Judea, to tell Elizabeth. And when she met Elizabeth, she told her that she was going to be a mother. And she couldn't understand it, knowing no man. But she said, "The Holy Spirit overshadowed me, and said that this Holy thing that'll be borned of me will be called the 'Son of God,' and I'll call his name 'Jesus.'" And the first time that the name Jesus was ever spoke in a human lip, a little dead baby, in its mother's womb, leaped for joy and shouted; and jumped in the womb of a mother, and it never had received life yet.

The name of Jesus Christ spoke life into a dead baby. What ought it to do in a church that claims to be borned again?

100 And we set as sour as the bumps on a pickle, and let such things go on. And afraid to raise and testify your conviction, and condemn all this nonsense, make Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. It's Christmas time, get out these Santa Clauses and stuff, away with that nonsense of commercializing. Wherever you heard about Santa Claus in the Bible? It's a Roman mythology, there's nothing to it at all, there is no such a thing. Don't teach your children such nonsense as that. When one day you'll have to tell him that it was all a blind story, then you've lied to your child. And it'll hurt your testimony about Jesus Christ, he'll say, "Maybe it's the same thing." Put Jesus Christ the great shepherd-prophet back into Christmas where it belongs.

101 Notice, listen to this prophet, John, as he stands there. We all know that he was a great shepherd-prophet. Now, he had a message, the angel knowed that he was going to introduce Jesus.

Now, he couldn't go to some seminary. They'd say, "Now, you know that Dr. So-and-so is just the man to take the place now. You're to introduce him. And you know that just...." See, he couldn't get mixed up with man.

At the age of nine years old, we're told, he went into the wilderness to prepare before God. That's where the shepherds come from. Notice his message wasn't like a theologian, with some great, big swelling words of some degree. He said, "Oh, you generation of snakes." Telling religious men, "You bunch of snakes." That's what he had seen in the wilderness, he saw the snake. Lowest thing he could find was a snake, and he called them priests and clergymen and theologians of that day, "A bunch of snakes!" Said, "Who's warned you from the wrath to come? Don't begin to say, 'We belong to this, and we belong to that,' for I say unto you that God's able of these stones to rise children to Abraham." Stones, what he had seen in the wilderness. "Also, the ax is laid to the root of the tree." That's what he had been seeing: snakes, trees, wilderness. And, see, that was his message. He didn't know the great swelling words of some great doctor of divinity (could explain it all away), he just preached exactly the line of nature.

102 That's what we're showing here: the shepherd's staff, the shepherd, the sheep, the line of nature.

What did he do? He had a great thing to do, he was the one that would know the Messiah. He said, "I say, 'He's standing here among you now. And you don't know Him, because your theology has got you so tied up, you don't know where you're at.'"

One day Jesus come walking out, he said, "Behold, there comes the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." The Lamb! Hallelujah! The real atonement! There comes what every sheep from the garden of Eden down has shadowed, an ordinary man walking down through there.

103 They said, "John, how did you know it? I didn't see one thing different."

"But I bear record, I saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and a voice saying, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am pleased to dwell in.' "

Watch the dove and the lamb. See? Yeah. What if it had been a ... what if it had been something.... What if it had been a wolf standing there? Well, that lamb could not have went upon ... or that dove.... God symbolized Himself with a dove, the most meekest of all the birds of the heaven; his Son by a sheep, the most meekest of all the animals on earth. See, the clean bird of the heavens, not a crow; not a vulture, but a dove. Not a pig, but a lamb. Any other nature wouldn't have blended together.

And notice when the dove come upon the lamb, it led Him. Not the way He would, but the way the Father would lead Him. That's the way a real lamb is today. O Christmas-time sheep, don't you know that God only leads by his Word? That's his staff.

104 Notice nothing would have took place, but John said, "The rest of them didn't see it, but I bear record, 'I saw it.'" Introducing: "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world."

May I now introduce my Christmas message, and when I'm closing now: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." It's that same Lamb. He's just as much the Lamb today as He was then. He's just as much here as He was there, for his Word is the same. "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them." That's exactly what He said. He never changes, He's God the Word. He never changes; still giving his sheep, and feeding them by his shepherd-prophet, his sheep food first. Not to the theologians, to his sheep.

105 They won't.... How can them others eat it. But the wise.... Notice this! But the wise and intellectual, well-trained of the world, still desire to say there is a Santa Claus. And there's all kinds of fiction and stuff that they worship, because they won't accept Him, the Word; because in their denominations, it doesn't fit their taste, the hireling shepherds of the day. The hirelings from creed, that'll want to unite you under one goat, don't you believe it! They'll lead you to the slaughter pens. Hear the great shepherd that was borned nineteen hundred year ago this month, sometime out yonder in his message come the true shepherds that knowed how to take care of sheep.

Noticing, they still desire it. They won't accept it today, just the same as they didn't then, because it does not fit their ecclesiastical taste. They turn that Word around and make it suit their organization, and they won't preach the Word. They won't! They say, "Well, that was for the days of apostles. It doesn't mean this." It means just exactly what it says, it needs nobody to interpret it for them.

106 Now let us at this hour bow our heads and hearts towards the dust of the earth, and hasten real quick to a manger, to see and receive the light that this Word brings by the shepherd: the great prophet-shepherd, Jesus Christ the Son of God. I've spoke to you at length. I maybe not fixed my words up like a clergyman should, I don't try to do that. I try to speak it just as He gives it to me.

But, do you see why it had to be shepherds? The others was so trained in another thought till they wouldn't receive it. And today we've got all kinds of overseers, district men, bishops, priests, cardinals, popes, everything in the world, to try to lead us. But God give us a shepherd, and that shepherd is the Holy Spirit.

107 Listen to me now. "When He ..." (not a thought, He is a personal pronoun) "When He the Holy Ghost is come (the Spirit of truth), He will reveal these things to you that I have said unto you, and will show you things to come." That's the great shepherd, that's the shepherd Jesus left. And the Holy Ghost wrote the Bible, the Bible said so, "Men of old, moved by the Holy spirit, wrote the Word." Now, could the Holy Spirit pull you to a creed? Could it pull you to something that this Word doesn't say? Why, it'd be totally impossible. The Holy Spirit would be a liar if He said that "This is what you should do," and then turn around and say, "No, it was a mistake, and you do what the church says do."

Now, if you've been listening to ... something another's pulled you away from the real, true shepherd that'll lead you to the Word, the Holy Spirit, and you do not have the experience, and do not have the witness of the Holy Spirit in your life, which without....

108 God is one. God is the only one that has eternal life, and He is eternal life. And anything that had a beginning has an end. And if you're just a member of a church, it

had a beginning. But the Word of God has no beginning, God has no.... And when you are borned of God, you're borned of the Word, then you become a son of God, and your name was put on the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world. And you, the color of hair you have, the color eyes you have, the stature that you're in, God seen you before the foundation of the world. And He seen you, a human being, like you are. And though there come a million years yet, there's nothing can keep you from coming back to that perfect imagine that God ordained for you in the beginning, "My sheep hear my voice, a stranger they will not follow."

109 And if you haven't accepted that eternal life, tonight, and you're looking at a fiction story of a little baby laying in a manger, and a bunch of wise men around, don't you believe such things as that. And trying to think, "Well, I'll be good. And I'll do this. And I'll join church. And that's all I need to do." You're lost. If you haven't got eternal life, how can you ever live forever?

You can take a grain of corn, I don't care how perfect it looks, you can man-.... Science has manufactured one, that you can cut it open: it's got the same kind of a moisture, the same kind of heart, the same materials that the grain that's grewed out of the field has, the same thing. You could put them in the laboratory, and you can't tell one from the other one: one will make just as good a corn bread as the other, one will make the same kind of corn flakes. But the only way you can tell them, is bury them. The one that man made, stays there, it rots, and it never comes up. But the one that God made, has a germ of life, it lives again.

110 You might imitate a Christian, you might go to a church like a Christian, you might put your name on the book like a Christian, you might join a denomination like a Christian; that would be all right, but unless that eternal life is in you that that good shepherd gave his life for, to separate.... When God came down at Pentecost, He came down in a ball of fire like He did on Mount Sinai, like He did to the first shepherd, Moses. And when He come down, He separated Himself in tongues of fire that set upon each of them, God separating Himself into his people. And except you have received that which.... Peter said that "It's to you, and to your children, to them that's far off."

111 Friends, don't you listen to any theological myth, you be borned again. And when you are, the Spirit that's in you is part of God, and witnesses to every Word of God being "The truth." If you haven't got that experience, let us now hasten to the manger, the Word. Let's hasten to the Bible, away from these decorated theological-termed churches, to a real manger, to God's Word where the Messiah is made known.

With out heads bowed, let us pray:

112 Dear God, that's all that I know to say at this time. We are approaching Christmas, the streets are crowded with men and women, boys and girls, pushing, shoving, trying to buy a present to return to someone who would give them likewise. Many people who call themselves Christians are out on the streets buying cigarettes, liquor, for Christmas presents. God, it looks like they're throwing it right back in your face, teaching their children of some fiction, Roman, pagan theology of a St. Nicholas, some myth that's easy accepted by the world, and they turn down the real Christ of Christmas, the real Lamb.

God, I pray, tonight, that as we have our heads turned down towards the dust that You brought us from.... You told Abraham once, the great prophet-shepherd, "Go out, Abraham, and number the sands that are upon the seashore."

And he returned the word, "They're innumerable, I cannot number them."

Then You said, "Look up towards the heavens, and number the stars." And he knew that that was impossible. And You said to him, "So shall thy seed be." We look at that message to that shepherd-prophet, from the dust of the earth, to the stars of heaven, that though there be death in our mortal bodies to take us to the dust, there is a life that can raise us to the stars.

113 As You said to your great prophet Daniel, "Those that know their God, in the last days, shall do exploits. And they that turn many to righteousness shall outshine the stars forever and forever."

Lord God, great Creator, who was so willing to come to earth in the form of Jesus, to let man know what God was. And You were the only one who could take the penalty

of death, no angel, no substitute could do it. You was the one who placed the penalty, and You alone could justly take it away. And being Spirit, You could not die. But You were made flesh so You could die; and become a lamb that You might take away the sin of your redeemed, that You had to redeem them by your own blood.

Oh, the story is so great, Lord, it goes over the head of so many. To think: "Little Jehovah, laying in a manger, He had to live like a baby. Little Jehovah, born in a stable. Little Jehovah, playing with children on the street. Little Jehovah, the teen-ager. Little Jehovah, the schoolboy. And Jehovah, the mighty." You took all these places. "And then, Jehovah, the lamb. Jehovah, the prophet." And You become all of this that You might suffer the penalty of sin, and to give to us eternal life.

114 Forgive us, O God, we, poor, unworthy creatures of this world. We are humiliated tonight, Lord, when we read what You have done for us, and so little we have done in return. How You come in the days of great religious leaders! How You was willing to stand and reflect the Word of the Father! How You didn't compromise upon their theories! And today it seems like that there's no one that wants to stand out and call the Word still the Word, and not compromise. We pray, God, You forgive us for these things that we have so neglected. And give to us tonight, in our hearts, as we give them to You as a manger. And we know that every time that the crucified Christ is accepted, there is a new birth, there is a newborned sheep, there is singing in heaven by the angels. Over one sinner that repents, the angels sing again.

We pray, God, that if there be some here tonight that doesn't know You as the real gift of God, as a personal Saviour, not just by a mental conception, but by a new birth, of being borned of your Spirit, may they receive it just now, Lord, with our heads bowed. And if there should be one, Lord, that has not done this, may their hearts receive joy now, and find like the shepherds of old, in the manger of their heart, the Word, the Messiah; that'll be a-vindicated to them as the Holy Spirit, the great shepherd of the day. We ask this in Jesus' name.

115 While we have our heads bowed, and I trust our hearts bowed, would you, my dear brother, though you be member of church.... And I hope that I haven't hurt you by saying what I have said. It's all right to belong to church, we should do that, but, Oh brother, just don't accept that, you must be born again. That's what the great prophet-shepherd said, "You must be born again." He said that to a theologian, "You've got to be born again."

And when you're born again, it just isn't because you believe. They say, "You're born when you believe."

But the Bible said, "The Devil believes, also." Now, notice, it's not that, it's an experience.

You say, "Well, I've lived a good life."

So did the apostles, but they wasn't born again until they received the Holy Spirit. They wasn't even converted until they had received the Holy Spirit. You remember the night before the betrayal ... or on the betrayal, just before the betrayal took place? Jesus said to Simon Peter, "When thou art converted, then strengthen thy brethren." And Peter had followed Him for three years and a half, and had cast out devils, and healed the sick, had preached the Gospel, and still, according to the Word, was not even converted.

116 Now, would you want that kind of a messenger in your heart tonight? If you really want that.... It don't make any difference what somebody else says, it's true, brother, sister. I know that to be true. Would you, while every head is bowed and every eye closed, not to me, I'm just a man, your brother, but to Christ you'd raise your hand, say, "I believe that. And I really want that Christ into my heart, the real Christ of Christmas"? Would you raise up your hand now? God bless you. That's good. God bless you, too. God bless you. My, hands everywhere.

May it happen, brother; may it happen, sister; may it happen, my friend; be filled with God's Spirit. What difference does it make what anybody else says? Remember, it's your life. We may not even be on the earth in the morning, we have no assurance of no more life than what we have breath in our nostrils now. We may never make another breath, only the grace of God. And what good does it do, no matter how good you've

lived and what.... Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he will in nowise enter in."

117 Now, I know terminologies of what born-again is, but let's just watch what happened in the Bible when they were born again. Peter was a believer, the apostles were believers, but they wasn't born again till after the Holy Ghost fell on them at Pentecost. Now, they were wondering what happened, and Peter said, with the rest of them, "Ye men of Israel, be this known unto you; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by signs and miracles and wonders, which God did by Him; He who was foreknown, by determinate council you took with wicked hands and crucified, who God has raised up and we're his witnesses. He shed forth this that you do see and hear now, and it's according to the Scriptures."

And then, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said, "Men and brethren, what can we do to be saved?"

Peter said unto them, "Repent!"

118 Now, my Catholic friend sitting here, which I know four or five of your setting here. I was discussing this with your priest, maybe not your priest, but one of the Catholic priests, he said, "Jesus gave the church power to remit sins, 'Whosoever sins you remit, to them they're remitted; whosoever sins you retain, to them they're retained.'" That's true. But let's watch how he did it, how the apostles followed out his order, not according to the way that the priest does today.

But what did the first priest, if you want to call him that, Peter, that had the keys to the kingdom, how did he say do it? He said, "Repent, every one of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to them that's far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And if God is still calling, the same experience is for you if you'll follow the same prescription. If this congregation believes that, with your heads bowed, say, "Amen." Then, anything short of that is contrary to the Word, and not according to the shepherd.

119 Lord Jesus, they're in your hands now. I pray that each open heart tonight that hasn't got the Christ, Messiah.... And Christ is the Word, the anointed Word made manifest. And if there's any open hearts here tonight that doesn't have that Messiah, the real Christmas gift, the only real Christmas gift there is that God gave the world, and declared it to the world by shepherds, of his Lamb, the atonement for sin. And if that heart is open tonight, place in it, Lord, the Messiah Word of today. We commit them to You in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.

120 Do you love Him? Do you believe Him? "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, all other things will be added unto you."

Friends, before we dismiss, I want to say this. Many times, I'm so misunderstood. I have a message from God, and I must declare that message regardless. I know it's misunderstood. If it wasn't, then it wouldn't be the message of God—it couldn't be. There's too much scruples today for it not to be misunderstood. I believe that God has men in every denomination and organization of the world, and it's not that I'm against my brethren. I come here to Tucson, three years ago, and had a meeting with you ministers up at Brother Gilmore's, and it was asked, did I "come here to start a church?"

I said, "No, sir. I come here to help you." But I haven't been asked yet, in three years. But just the same, I'm here to help you. I'm here to join hands with you, not join organizations with you, but join hands and heart with you over the Word of God, to try to preach the Gospel to every lost soul and every needy person that's under the sound of our voices.

I offer myself to God, tonight, with all my heart, with all that's in me. I don't have very much to give; I can't bring frankincense, myrrh, and gold, 'cause I have none. But all I have in myself that God give me this life, I dedicate it to Him afresh tonight, upon the manger of his Word in my heart; and promise Him, to stand with that Word, if He'll let me live another year, just as faithful as I can stand; preach every bit of it, and believe every bit of it; so, help me, God. Will you do the same with me?

121 Receive us, Lord. We receive your Christmas gift, the Messiah, the anointed Word that vindicates your presence with us, Lord, regardless of creed or denomination. We find, ourselves today, the world falling apart, and here the great Messiah stands with his

hands outstretched: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever, that made the promises, that in this last days, the church would be so organized till it would go into Laodicea. And we see it today, Lord.

What can we do, dear God? What can I do? Help me and these other shepherds, Lord, around the world, shepherds of the Word, to proclaim it, Lord, in this next year. Help us, Lord, we pray. Give us of thy love and thy Spirit and thy life. We dedicate ourselves tonight to thy Word and to thy call. In Jesus Christ's name, we receive your Christmas gift: the Word of God made flesh in us. Amen.

122 I love the songs of the church. Paul said, in the Bible, "When I sing, I sing in the Spirit. I preach, I preach in the Spirit. When I ... whatever I do, I do it all in the name of Jesus Christ." Now, being that this has been strenuous on you.... And I appreciate you. I come with this message. Sometime it seems like I just hate to say it, but yet I'm duty bound, brethren. If I don't do it, I'm a hypocrite. If I don't do it, I'm a traitor to my own conscience, and my own faith in God's Word. I must do it, not to be different, but to be true to my calling. And I want to help you all, I want to do everything I can.

Now let's sing one of the great hymns of all times, I love it so well, I love Him. You know, I believe if we'd just all love Him, we would do what He asked us to do. "How call ye me, 'Lord,' and no not the things I command you to do? How do you call me, 'Lord,' and then not do what I told you to do?"

123 Would you rather listen to a hireling shepherd that would say "put your name on the book, and join; take this communion, say this, and it's all right," when the great shepherd Himself said "except a man be borned again he cannot even see the kingdom of heaven"?

And look at those trained theologians of that day, trained! Holy? Clean living? We have nothing to compare with it today, the way they lived. And what did the great shepherd call them? Said, "You are of your father the Devil," because they didn't.... They recognized the Word, but the Word of another day, not the Word of that day.

If they recognized Noah's time, that's all right, that was Noah's time; but it wouldn't work in Moses' time. And Moses' time wouldn't work in Christ's time. See? Luther's time won't work in Wesley's time. Wesley's time won't work in Pentecostal time. And Pentecost has done the same thing the rest of them did. Now, who has give me help in the days gone by? Ask you.

124 When a blade of grass comes up, what is it? What ... when a blade of wheat comes up. Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat falls into the earth." What happens when a corn of wheat ... or a wheat falls into the earth? The first thing comes up is a little blade. It's just not like the grain that went in. Watch nature. It's not like the grain that went in, but it's the carrier of the life of the grain. What came....

That infidel that just wrote that famous book, The Silent God, it said, "How could there be a God who could open the Red Sea, and stand through a thousand years of dark ages and see little children eat up with lions, and people hung on crosses, and murdered in the arenas and things, and never even opened his mouth?" See, the Word is a revelation.

125 That wheat, when that real wheat started at the beginning, it failed God. And finally there come a wheat, a real reflector of God, that reflected his whole Word insomuch that He was the Word. Then God gave Him a bride at Pentecost; but that bride dropped into the ground through the dark ages, just like the real wheat did, it dropped in. And why couldn't it act? Because it was hid beneath the earth, it had to rot before it could bring forth life.

But there come a little priest one time, by the name of Martin Luther, and he sprang forth the one word of truth: "The just shall live by faith," there come a blade; then another blade followed it, Zwingli, and then come Calvin and Knox and on down.

First thing you know, it changed its blade, it went into a tassel. Now, that looked a little bit more like it, but still it wasn't the real thing that went in the ground, there come Wesley along. Out of Wesley came the Methodist church, from the Methodist church came the Nazarene, United Brethren, so forth. What did it do? It fell back again and it brought forth, looked like a real grain of wheat now, Pentecost.

126 Now, watch Jesus, in Matthew 24:24, "In the last day, the two spirits will be so

close together till it will deceive the very elected, if it was possible." Now, when that grain of wheat come forth, any wheat raiser knows that that looked like perfect, the grain of wheat. But you set down and take it in your hand, open it up. There's no wheat in it, it's a shuck. But way back in the back, under microscope you can see a little bitty bud, there comes the grain. And then what is that shuck to do? It's to protect the grain, the hot sun would kill it, it protects the grain until the grain is matured. And then when the grain becomes matured, the shuck pulls away from it. But, did you notice, that grain then that comes forth, has got to be the same kind of grain that went into the ground.

127 After Luther's revival, come an organization. After Wesley's revival, come an organization. After Alexander Smith, John.... Alexander Campbell, John Smith, all the rest of them, come an organization. After Pentecost, right down like the real thing, but it come an organization. What did it do? Pulled away.

We've had fifteen years of revival, it's never been known in all history. And watch, in this fifteen-years revival, it's swept around the world, and not one organization has been built out of it. Where was it? (It started the latter rain, it died in its ... instant, it died.) There's been no organization follow this. Why? It's the grain itself, there can be no more. And the shuck now is pulling away, no cooperation, nobody wants you. Why is it? It has to be that.

128 Why was that church set there? To support it. Where ... who would have cooperated? What Baptist, or Presbyterian, or Lutheran would have supported a divine healing campaign? Now when truth comes forth, what happens? Not the shuck; but the life goes right out from the shuck, right into the grain, the real true life. The organization stands there, dies, just like it has done in every age, it does the same. You come out of that, fifty years ago, and went right back into it again! But real life follows the grain, we're at the end time, brethren.

129 What did it pull away for? So that it would bring the grain in presence of the sun, to ripen the grain to a golden ripen for the master. Why has it pulled away? So, it causes heartaches, tears, that they don't lay before the s-u-n, but the S-o-n, to be ripened to the true full Gospel, to manifest everything that Jesus Christ promised in the Bible. There is raising up a body today among the people. And there will be no more organizations, it goes right out into rich Laodicea. What has the organization prospered by? Millions of dollars, and millions of souls.

And what was the shepherd come from? To deliver his brethren from bondage. I don't know; God, be with us, help us. Study the Word! Search the Scriptures! In them we think we have eternal life, and they are they that testify of truth. See, God allotted his Words to each age. This age always....

130 What did Jesus say when He come? He said to them people, "You hypocrites! You whiten the walls, and build the tombs for the prophets, and your fathers put them in there. And you are the sons of your fathers. And the works that they did, you'll do too." It ever remains the same, my brethren.

But when Jesus comes some day, the great shepherd of the sheep from Pentecost through Luther through all the ages, has accepted the light as it come through the carriers (not accepted the carrier, accepted the life; see, went out), He'll come to redeem. I'm so glad that I know He's coming again. Oh, would you be numbered with his group? Would you be numbered? there's only one way to do it, not by joining a church, but by being born into Him. "And all the Father has given me, will come to me, and no man can come except my Father calls him." See, that's all there is to it, accept it. That's the only Christmas gift that I know of, is the gift of God that He gave to the world, his only begotten Son. And He's the same, yesterday, today, and forever, the Word. See? Believe Him in this day, the fullness of the Bible.

131 When those seven mysteries.... Back through those seven church ages, there were seven hidden mysteries. I'm writing a book of it. And a great theologian said to me not long ago, said, "Brother Branham...." See how Satan will try to jerk you off the road? He said, "Brother Branham, you know what? I believe the Lord will reveal to you what we're to do next. Is to ... it'll be some great secret that's hid in there under these seven seals."

I said, "No, that isn't it, brother."

He said, "It'll be something that's not even written in the Word."

I said, "No! No! You forget, 'Whosoever shall add one word, or take one Word away.'" See, it's already in there, but the reformers has failed to see it, they didn't live long enough to see it.

And the ages is over now, we're right here at Laodicea. And remember, the Laodicea age, He was on the outside of the church, knocking, trying to get back in: Eve had put her Adam out. God, help us. Let us go beyond the camp to find Him. Let us suffer without the gates with Him. Let us go to Him in his death, in his burial, and in his resurrection; for He's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

132 Let us sing one hymn before we leave. Will you? I love Him. Would you give us the key, sister? How many knows the old hymn? I.... If you ever been in the meetings, I love it.

Now let's just close our eyes, think of Jehovah. No one was worthy, no one could do it but Him. And He come down, and become a little baby. He come, a teenager. He become a carpenter, a working man. He become a lamb, He become a sacrifice. He raised triumphantly, Jehovah. And as Moses pulled his hand from his bosom from over his heart, God pulled his hand from his bosom his secret his Son that was smitten with disease of sin, incurable; and stuck it back into the bosom again, and pulled it forth and extended it to you and I: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever."

Look at Him now:

I love Him, I love Him  
Because He first loved me,  
And purchased my salvation  
On Calvary's tree.

133 How many knows it had to be a shepherd, say "Amen." Must! Why a shepherd? It had to be. Now while we sing this same verse over again, reach across the table. There's Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Catholic, and all, setting in here tonight. Shake hands, say, "Fellow pilgrim, I'm so glad to be here with you, tonight." Say something to them. Say, "God bless you," as we shake hands with one another now. As we sing it again now:

I love Him, .....

[Blank spot on tape.]

..... my salvation  
On Calvary's tree.  
Now let's close our eyes, and raise our hands, and sing to Him:  
I love Him, I love Him  
Because He first loved me,  
And purchased my salvation  
On Calvary's tree.

134 And now, God's without form. So let's bow our heads and hum it now, like little children, you are children of God. Don't look at what the world might think, you're worshipping now, worshipping Christ. Just bow your heads and hum it. [Brother Branham leads congregation in humming: I love Him.]

Don't you feel all scoured out like? Just kind of ... something just rubbed all the doubt and the world away from you? Feel that way? Raise up your hands, "I just feel all scoured out. I feel different. I feel like I have been eating from his hands. I have,..." Like the brother here testified, "Food, shepherd's food, sheep food." That's the Word.

135 God's sheep feed on his food, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And this is it, the Bible. We feed on every word, not just some of the words, but every word that proceedeth. Oh, don't it make you love Him? To think that now we have eternal life! Not we will be, now we are the sons of God. Not we will be, now! And it's setting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And the great television, that declares that there is a ether wave that makes people the person that travels around the earth known by the screen of the television. The great Word of God, and the Spirit of God taking the Word of God, reflects Jesus Christ in heavenly places to his sheep, that He's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Isn't He wonderful? Wonderful! God bless you.

136 Now let us stand just a moment. (Have you someone for the benediction?) Now, remember, during Christmas, worship the Lord Jesus. Worship Him in the power of his resurrection. And if I can ever be of favor to you (you, your pastor, your church, or anything), the night never gets too dark, the rain never falls too hard.

The other night (there's a lady standing present here) I was so busy, took up the sick and stuff till.... There was a eighty-something year old woman that had lost her mind, and she had ... she thought about having a baby or something, she was out of her mind. And Billy, from the office, called me, said, "Daddy, can you?"

I said, "I can't right now. There's people ... I just can't do it."

He said, "Daddy, can you go to prayer? I'll tell them you're praying."

I said, "Yes." And at that very same moment she came to herself. She fell asleep, woke up in her normal condition; eat a full, chicken supper, in normal sense. Person was standing here testifying of it a few moments ago.

137 Brother Mack, I seen him here awhile ago, somewhere in the church. He's here, one of the pastors, local pastor. A very dear brother, and I've always loved Brother Mack since I was first started in the ministry. And then I met him....

And I was way up in British Columbia; and just to show you how that God will work everything right. I was already mounted on a horse, and was going back into the wilderness where I had led a whole group of Indians to God; and they were all converted, and had received Jesus.

And by the prophecy that told the Indian boy that lost his pony, two years ago, told him where he would find it, how far it would be away, and where the pony would be standing. His mother dying with a heart attack. She was healed and saved. And this boy, just coming by and seeing it, and knowing that his horse was found exactly the way that he was told, and everything.

138 Not one Word has the Lord ever spoke.... I'll ask any of you, "Has he ever heard Him say anything, that He's ever told me to tell you, but what come to pass just exactly?" If that's right, say "Amen." See? See? Exactly, never has it failed one time.

And Brother Mack was laying at the point of death, and happened to be that his wife called Billy ... my son's wife, and told ... ask where I was at; that lovely little lady and ... his wife. And she.... And my daughter-in-law said, "He's way in northern British Columbia on a hunting trip."

And that morning, somehow, I just couldn't ride that horse out. And then Billy said, "I believe I'll call home once more." And he went up to the post to call. And here they come running back, when the little Indian standing there, the little ... whoever had the pony, and said, "Brother Mack is laying at the point of death, and is calling you."

139 And I got off, went over in the woods and knelt down. I said, "Dear God, way down, three thousand miles across the country, in the sunny state of Arizona, in Tucson, is my brother, and he's laying at the point of death. Will you help him?"

Just something spoke to me, "All is well."

And when I come to Brother Mack the other day, to talk to him, and I asked him, "What hour that it happened?" it was exactly the same hour we went to prayer.

Oh, isn't He wonderful! He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. I'm so happy to know that I live in the presence of the King.

140 Let us bow our heads now, and a precious little brother is here, a missionary brother, friend of mine, a member of the Assemblies of God, a precious little brother here. I call him, "Creechy." He spoke such nice things. Brother Creech, I call you that. I don't know what to say, you're my brother and fellow servant in the tribulations of Jesus Christ in this last day. May God bless you. And I think Brother Tony said that you was going to dismiss the audience at this time, while we bow our heads. All right.



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Sermons By  
**William Marrion Branham**  
*"... in the days of the voice ..." Rev. 10:7*