

1 Peter 5:4

by John Gill

In this sermon, John Gill emphasizes the role of Christ as the chief Shepherd and the responsibilities and rewards of faithful ministry under His guidance.

Scripture: Matthew 25:21, John 10:11, 1 Corinthians 9:24-25, Philippians 3:14, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 2 Timothy 4:8, Hebrews 13:17, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, Revelation 2:10

Topics: "Eternal Rewards", "Leadership in the Church"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the role of Christ as the Chief Shepherd, encouraging church elders and pastors to fulfill their duties with faithfulness, humility, and joy. He explains that all pastors are under Christ's authority, receiving their commissions and gifts from Him to care for His flock. Gill highlights the accountability of these leaders to Christ, who will return in glory to reward them with an everlasting crown of glory, contrasting it with temporary earthly rewards. The sermon serves as a reminder of the eternal significance of their ministry and the joy that awaits faithful servants of Christ.

Transcript

Ver. 4. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear,....

This is the encouraging motive and argument to engage the elders and pastors of churches to discharge their office faithfully, cheerfully, and in an humble manner: by "the chief Shepherd" is meant Christ, who may well be called so, since he is God's fellow, and in all respects equal with him, and is the Shepherd and Bishop of the souls of men; all other bishops, pastors, and elders, are under him; they receive their commissions from him to feed his lambs and sheep; are made pastors and overseers by him; and have their gifts, qualifying them for such offices, from him; and have their several flocks assigned unto them by him; and from him have they all the food with which they feed them, and are accountable to him for them, and the discharge of their office; so that Christ is the chief

Shepherd, in the dignity of his person, he being God over all, blessed for ever; in his qualifications for his office, having all power, grace, and wisdom in him, to protect his flock, supply their wants, guide and direct them; and in the nature and number of his flock, being rational creatures, the souls of men, even elect men; and though they are, when compared with others, but a little flock, yet, considered by themselves, are a great number; and especially the general assembly will be, in comparison of the little bodies and societies of saints under pastors and teachers, of Christ's setting over them, with respect to whom, principally, he is called the chief Shepherd: the allusion is to the principal shepherd, whose own the sheep

were, or, however, had the principal charge of them;

who used to have others under him, to do the several things relating to the flocks he directed, and were called "little shepherds"; so Aben Ezra says {s}, it was customary for the shepherd to have under him Mynjq Myewr, "little shepherds": the same perhaps with the hirelings, whose own the sheep are not, Joh 10:12 who are retained, or removed, according to their behaviour; these, in the Talmudic language, are called ylzrb {t}, or ylzrk; though, according to Guido {u}, the word, pronounced in the latter way, signifies a "chief shepherd", who takes care of men, and has other shepherds, servants under him; and such an one used to be called lwdgh hewrh, "the great", or "chief shepherd"; so Maimonides {w} says, it was the custom of shepherds to have servants under them, to whom they committed

the flocks to keep; so that when lwdgh hewrh, "the chief shepherd", delivered to other shepherds what was under his care, these came in his room; and if there was any loss, the second shepherd, who was under the "chief shepherd", was obliged to make good the loss, and not the first shepherd, who was the chief shepherd; and to the same purpose says another of their commentators {x}; it is the custom of lwdgh hewrh, "the chief shepherd", to deliver (the flock) to the little shepherd that is under him; wherefore the shepherd that is under him is obliged to make good any loss: now, such a shepherd is Christ; he has others under him, whom he employs in feeding his sheep, and who are accountable to him, and must give up their account when he appears: at present he is out of the bodily sight of

men, being received up to heaven, where he will be retained till the time of the restitution of all things; and then he will appear a second time in great glory, in his own, and in his Father's, and in the glory of his holy angels: and when he thus appears,

ye shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away; in distinction from those crowns which were given to the conqueror, in the Olympic games; which were made of divers flowers, of the olive, wild olive, pine tree, and of parsley, and inserted in a branch of the wild olive tree {y} and which quickly faded away; or in allusion to crowns made of amaranthus {z}, the plant "everlasting", so called, from the nature of it, because it never fades: the eternal glory and happiness, which is here meant by a crown of glory, or a glorious crown, never fades away, but ever shines in its full lustre; and this faithful ministers shall receive at the hands of the chief Shepherd, as a gift of his, as a reward of grace; when they have finished their work, they will enter into the joy of their Lord, and shine as the stars for ever and ever; they shall reign with Christ, as kings, on a throne of glory, wearing a crown of glory, and enjoying a kingdom and glory to all eternity.

{s} Comment. in Zech. xi. 8. {t} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 56. 2. {u} Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 102. {w} In Misn. Bava Kama, c. 6. sect. 2. {x} Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 6. sect. 2. {y} Vide Paschaliū de Coronis, l. 6. c. 1. p. 339. c. 16. p. 391. c. 18. p. 399. c. 19. p. 413. {z} lb. l. 3. c. 11. p. 178.

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