

Have you ever worked at a place where you wished your supervisor, manager or boss had done your job? That way, when they made suggestions or gave directions about what you should or could be doing, they knew what they're talking about.

Management can be clueless about the work that others are doing if they haven't been there and done it themselves. Who has more knowledge and a better understanding than the person who's actually done or is doing the job?

Let's grab that thought and take it into today's lesson. Usually, we could say that the one who shepherds the flock is not one of the lambs or sheep in the flock. But the Lamb and the Shepherd that are mentioned in our lesson are unusual. The Lamb who becomes the Shepherd has been in our place when he lived here. He knows what it's like to be us. He can sympathize with our situation. He knows what help we need. And, he has the power to do something about it.

Today, let's think about this unusual, yet incredible truth:

The Victorious Lamb Is Our Good Shepherd.

1) Salvation belongs to him. 2) He feeds and protects us.

Revelation is a vision that John had on the Island of Patmos. Remember, the Apostle John was in exile on this island because he kept confessing his faith in Jesus even though he was told to stop.

In today's portion of his vision in chapter 7, you and I get to stand next to John and look into the throne room of God and hear a choir too large to count singing at the top of their lungs: **“Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God. Salvation belongs to our God, and to the Lamb.”**

All of this worship and all of this praise belongs to the Lamb. He deserves all this attention because he's credited with our salvation. Salvation belongs to Him.

What exactly did the Lamb do for our salvation? By the way, *“the Lamb”* was what John the Baptist called Jesus at his baptism. The Lamb, would leave heaven behind and make his new home on earth. He became human, like one of us, with one huge difference. He lived the holy life God demands. His 33 years here would end with his death on the cross where he carried our sins and suffered our hell.

The Lamb was slaughtered and sacrificed, but on Easter he rose to prove he wasn't some weak and defeated Lamb. He's the Victorious Lamb who accomplished our salvation. His payment for sin was accepted. Pardon for sinners was announced.

Everyone who trusts in the Lamb has salvation. Everyone who rejects him is lost. They're lost not because salvation wasn't completed. They're lost because they reject the free gift offered to them by God.

Nothing more needs to be done. The Lamb did it all. Salvation belongs to him. He's rescued us from Sin, Satan and Death - our arch enemies.

SIN has no power over us. With God's help and strength, we can say *“No”* to sin. Unfortunately, we still cave in to temptations. But he picks us up, forgives us and gives us the strength get back out there.

SATAN can't point his accusing finger at us. At one time he could say: *“You are mine. You will spend eternity with me in hell.”* But because of our Victorious Lamb we can confidently answer back: *“I've been washed clean in the blood of the Lamb. My sin-stained clothes are white as snow. You're accusing finger doesn't scare me anymore.”*

DEATH, our final enemy, can't hold us. Sure, physical death is the outcome for being imperfect sinners. God clearly explained that to Adam and Eve: **“Dust you are and to dust you will return.”** However, death doesn't have the final say. It isn't the door to hell fire. Death is the believer's escape hatch to the paradise prepared for us.

Our physical death is just as temporary for us, as the Lamb's Good Friday death was for him. After 3 days he rose in victory. When he returns on the last day, he'll raise us in victory from our graves and safely tuck us – soul and body – into our forever home in heaven.

As our Victorious Lamb he saves us. As our Good Shepherd he feeds and protects us. As sheep we need to be fed, kept an eye on and protected. Life is difficult and it's hard. John describes it as coming out of the **"great tribulation."**

If you've read some Christian books, or watched some Christian TV, you may have heard the word *"tribulation."* Some say there's going to be a specific time of tribulation before the Lord returns, others say during his return, and still others say after he returns.

The Lord does tell us here and in other parts of the Bible that there's going to be tribulation. But there's no mention here or anywhere that this tribulation is at any specific time or for any length of time.

Here, the Bible is simply referring to the troubles, the heartaches and the hardships that every sinner living in this world of sin with other sinners faces.

Many have gotten side-tracked with the *"tribulation"* and what some call *"the rapture."* That's not found in the Bible, either. If you do, you'll miss the point that's being made here. How was this great escape to glory even possible? The answer lies in the white robes. They certainly didn't clean themselves. It was the Lamb's blood that made them white and sin-free. Forgiveness is a single loving action that the Bible describes in 2 ways: In the same instant that God bleaches our filthy clothes, he credits Jesus' righteousness as our white robe.

Since that Victorious Lamb also lived here, he understands what lambs and sheep like us are going through and what we need.

That's why as our Good Shepherd, he makes sure that we are fed with the food our souls need right now. He gives us himself, the Bread of Life, in his Word along with the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper to first create, then feed our faith.

John also describes what we can look forward to in heaven: **"Never again will we hunger, never again will we thirst."** We'll never have hunger pangs or a stomach that growls. He'll make sure there's plenty to eat at his heavenly buffet. We'll never be thirsty. He'll make sure there's plenty to drink from the springs of living water.

As our Good Shepherd, he makes sure that we are protected – body and soul right now. Having experienced the devil's daily attacks, and the constant temptation of the world; he knows what we're going through. He understands. That's why he's there for us.

John then describes what we can look forward to in heaven: **"He who sits on the throne will shelter us with his presence."** He'll protect us and keep us safe forever. We'll be living in the mansion he's prepared for us. Besides that: **"The sun will not beat down on us, nor any scorching heat."** He'll make sure we have the right level of SPF to withstand the heat of hell.

John's closing words: **"And God will wipe away every tear from our eyes."** All the sadness and sorrows that we've experienced in this life because of our own sins and the sins of others, gone, wiped away because sin is gone, wiped away, never to be spoken again.

Isn't it comforting to know you have someone who understands you, who has walked in your shoes and experienced your troubles, and best of all, is able to do something about it? That someone is the Victorious Lamb, Jesus Christ! He's your Good Shepherd and Savior.