

JOHN 10 | The Good Shepherd

The Shepherd of the Sheep

1 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.¹ 2 But he who enters by the door² is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice,³ and he calls his own sheep by name⁴ and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.⁵ 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.⁶

6 This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.⁷

The Door of the Sheep

7 So Jesus again said to them,

Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door (θύρα) of the sheep.⁸ 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.⁹ 10 The thief

¹ The chapter break here is unfortunate. This event really is a commentary on the conflict of John 9” (D. Bock).

² Jesus is the legitimate shepherd who enters the sheepfold in the legitimate way.

³ See *God’s General Call*.

⁴ See *God’s Special Call*.

⁵ Recognising the voice of Jesus is crucial.

⁶ We need discernment to know the voice of our shepherd versus the voice of strangers. The biblical worldview is the voice of our shepherd. All other worldviews are the voices of strangers.

⁷ By hearing and not understanding, the Jewish leaders show they don’t know the shepherd’s voice. **Jn 9:40** 40 Some of the Pharisees near [Jesus] heard these things and said to him, Are we also blind?

⁸ This refers to the moment of faith in Jesus (see v. 9). **Jn 14:6** 6 ...I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

⁹ **Ps 23:2** 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. **Eze 34:14** 14 I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. “The Pharisees threw the beggar out of the synagogue, but Jesus led him out of Judaism and into the flock of God!” (W. Wiersbe, 1:329).

comes only to steal, kill, and destroy.¹⁰ I came that they may have life and have it abundantly (περισσός).¹¹

The Good Shepherd

11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares (μέλει, pres.) nothing for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd.¹² I know my own¹³ and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father,¹⁴ and I lay down my life for the sheep.¹⁵ 16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold.¹⁶ I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.¹⁷ So there will be one flock,¹⁸ one shepherd.¹⁹

The Shepherd's Life

¹⁰ **Jer 23:1** 1 Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! declares Yahweh. **Eze 34:3** 3 You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep.

¹¹ “[P]ert. to that which is not ordinarily encountered, *extraordinary, remarkable*...pert. to being extraordinary in amount, *abundant, profuse*...going beyond what is necessary περισσὸν ἔχειν have (someth.) in abundance” (BDAG, 805).

¹² See *God as Shepherd*.

¹³ **Nah 1:7** 7 Yahweh is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble. He knows those who take refuge in him. **2 Ti 2:19** 19 ...God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: The Lord knows those who are his....

¹⁴ **Mt 11:27** 27 ...No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

¹⁵ **Jn 15:13** 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **1 Jn 3:16** 16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

¹⁶ **Is 56:8** 8 The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered. **Mt 8:11** 11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.... **Eph 2:13-16** 13 ...Now in Messiah Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the Torah of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

¹⁷ **Jn 18:37** 37 ...For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. **Ac 28:28** 28 ...Let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles. They will listen.

¹⁸ **Jn 11:52** 52 ...Not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. **Jn 12:32** 32 ...I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. **Jn 17:11** 11 Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. **Jn 17:21-22** 21 ...That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one....

¹⁹ **Eze 34:23** 23 ...I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. **Eze 37:24** 24 My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes.

17 For this reason the Father loves me,²⁰ because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.²¹ 18 No one takes it from me,²² but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.²³ This charge I have received from my Father.²⁴

Division among the Jews

19 There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.²⁵ 20 Many of them said, He has a demon, and is insane. Why listen to him? 21 Others said, These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?²⁶

The Unsnatchable Sheep

22 At that time the Feast of Dedication²⁷ took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.²⁸ 24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.²⁹ 25 Jesus answered them,³⁰

I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.³¹ 27 My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow (ἀκολουθέω) me. 28 I give them

²⁰ **Jn 5:20** 20 ...The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.

²¹ See *Jesus' Death and Jesus' Resurrection*.

²² **Mt 26:53** 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?

²³ **Jn 2:19** 19 ...Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

²⁴ See *The Father and the Son*.

²⁵ Jesus' words divide. **Jn 7:43** 43 ...There was a division among the people over him. **Jn 9:16** 16 ...There was a division among them.

²⁶ Jn 9:1-10:21 is a unit. The sign miracle of the blind man's sight is the focus.

²⁷ This feast commemorated the purification and rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus on the twenty-fifth of Chislev (late December/early January) in 164 bc. "...His Perea Ministry, which extended from after the Feast of Tabernacles to the week preceding the last Passover, was, so to speak, cut in half by the brief visit of Jesus to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Dedication. Thus, each part of the Perea Ministry would last about three months; the first, from about the end of September to the month of December; the second, from that period to the beginning of April" (A. W. Edersheim, *The Life...*, 2:195).

²⁸ **Ac 3:11** 11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. **Ac 5:12** 12 Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico.

²⁹ **Lk 22:67** 67 If you are the Messiah, tell us. But he said to them, If I tell you, you will not believe....

³⁰ The Jewish leaders ask Jesus for a plain statement of his messiahship. Jesus gave them far more: a claim that he fully and completely carried out the Father's desire—which strongly suggests his deity.

³¹ See *Negative Volition*. **Jn 8:47** 47 Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.

eternal life,³² and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.
29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.³³ 30 I and the Father are one (ἐν ἑσμεν).³⁴

Believe Jesus' Works

31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.³⁵ 32 Jesus answered them,

I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of them are you going to stone me?

33 The Jews answered him,

It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy,³⁶ because you, being a man, make yourself God.³⁷

34 Jesus answered them,

Is it not written in your Torah, I said, you are gods?³⁸ 35 If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken—³⁹ 36 do you say of him whom the Father set apart (ἀγιάζω) and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?⁴⁰ 37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. 38 But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works,⁴¹ that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father.

³² See *Eternal Life*.

³³ See *Eternal Security*. Jesus' hand is beneath us, and the Father's hand is above us. "Thus are we secured between the clasped hands of Omnipotence!" (A. W. Pink, 2:144). "The greatness of the Father, not of the flock, is the ground of [basis for] the safety of the flock" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures* ..., 5:186).

³⁴ See *Trinity* and *The Father and the Son*. Jesus did not mean he and the Father were the same person of the Godhead. If he had meant that, he would have used the masculine form of the word translated "one" (Gr. heis). Instead he used the neuter form of the word (Gr. hen)(T. Constable).

³⁵ **Jn 8:59** 59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

³⁶ **Lev 24:16** 16 Whoever blasphemes the name of Yahweh shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

³⁷ Jesus' claim of deity is clear to all. See *Jesus' Deity*. **Jn 5:18** 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

³⁸ **Ps 82:6** 6 I said, You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you....

³⁹ See *The Inerrancy of Scripture*.

⁴⁰ See *Jesus as Son of God*.

⁴¹ **Jn 14:11** 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. **Jn 15:24** 24 If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

39 Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.⁴²

Many Believe at Bethany

40 He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptising at first, and there he remained.⁴³ 41 And many came to him. And they said, John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true. 42 And many believed into (ἐπίστευσαν εἰς, aor.) him there.

⁴² Jesus is in charge of his own destiny. He will decide the time and place of his arrest. **Jn 7:30** 30 So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. **Jn 7:44** 44 Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

⁴³ References to John the Baptist at Bethany form an inclusio which brackets Jesus' public ministry to Israel (Jn 1:19-10:42). **Jn 1:28** 28 These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptising.

Biblical Worldview

1. Jesus is the Shepherd of the sheep (Jn 10:1-6).

- a. Sheep thieves are recognised by the unauthorised way they enter the sheepfold (v. 1).
 - (1) These are the false Messiahs who have come and gone.
- b. Jesus is no sheep thief. He has entered by the door. He is the true Shepherd (v. 2).
 - (1) Jesus is the Father's authorised shepherd.
- c. The gatekeeper, John the Baptist, has opened to the Shepherd (v. 3).
 - (1) This was mandated by Old Testament prophecy.
- d. The sheep, Jewish believers, hear the Shepherd's voice.
 - (1) See *Positive Volition*.
 - (2) The blind beggar heard the Shepherd's voice (Jn 9:[]).
- e. Jesus calls the sheep by name and leads them out of the fold, Israel (v. 3).
 - (1) See *God's Special Call*.
 - (2) Jesus called the blind beggar by name and led him out of Judaism (Jn 9:[]).
- f. Jesus goes before his sheep, and they follow him. They recognise his voice (v. 4).
- g. The sheep won't follow strangers. They don't recognise the voice of strangers (v. 5).
- h. Application.
 - (1) There are multitudes of voices in our world today.
 - (2) Be very careful who you listen to. Avoid all false messiahs, including political, economic, and cultural messiahs.
 - (3) Recognise that Jesus is the Father's only authorised Shepherd.
 - (4) Listen exclusively to the Shepherd's voice.

2. Jesus is the door of the sheep (Jn 10:7-10).

- a. Jesus is the only door. We must go through him to find pasture (vv. 7, 9).
 - (1) Rich pasturage is what every sheep needs. Jesus is the door to that pasturage.
- b. Those who came before Jesus are sheep thieves. The sheep didn't listen to them (v. 8).
 - (1) **Ac 5:36-37** 36 ...Before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. 37 After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered.
- c. Any sheep who enters by Jesus, the door, will:
 - (1) Be saved in phase one (v. 9).
 - (a) See *Justification*.
 - (2) Go in and out in phase two (v. 9).
 - (a) See *Liberty*.
 - (3) Find rich pasture in phases two and three (v. 9).
 - (a) See *Sanctification* and *Glorification*.
- d. Sheep thieves, false messiahs, come to steal, kill, and destroy (v. 10).
 - (1) "Alas and alas, if only our modern pastors had the sheep (old and young) so trained that they would run away from and not run after the strange voices that call them to false philosophy, false psychology, false ethics, false religion, false life" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 5:175).

- (2) “The world still seeks its humanistic, political saviours—its Hitlers, its Stalins, its Maos, its Pol Pots—and only too late does it learn that they blatantly confiscate personal property..., ruthlessly trample human life under foot..., and contemptuously savage all that is valuable....” (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel...*, 385).
- e. Jesus came that his sheep may:
 - (1) Have life in phase one (v. 10).
 - (a) See *Eternal Life*.
 - (2) Have life abundance in phase two (v. 11).
 - (a) See *Spiritual Maturity*.

3. Jesus is the good Shepherd (Jn 10:11-16).

- a. Jesus is the good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (v. 11, 14-15).
 - (1) “It is this extreme commitment to the welfare of the sheep that qualified Jesus as the Good Shepherd” (T. Constable).
- b. The hired hand sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and flees (v. 12).
 - (1) He does this because he cares nothing for the sheep (v. 13).
 - (2) Elders, as Jesus’ under shepherds, must care deeply for Jesus’ sheep and lay down their lives for them.
- c. Jesus knows his own sheep, and his own sheep know him (v. 14).
 - (1) See *Intimacy with God*.
- d. This reflects the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son (v. 15).
 - (1) See *The Father and the Son*.
- e. Jesus has other sheep, Gentile believers, who are not of the fold of Israel (v. 16).
- f. These other sheep will listen to Jesus’ voice (v. 16).
 - (1) That’s us!
- g. The Jewish and Gentile believers will be one flock, with one shepherd, Jesus (v. 16).
 - (1) **Jn 17:20** 20 I do not ask for these [disciples] only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word....
 - (2) **Eph 2:11-22** 11 ...Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Messiah, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Messiah Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- (3) **Eph 3:6** 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Messiah Jesus through the gospel.
- (4) **1 Co 10:32** 32 Give no offense to Jews, to Greeks, or to the church of God....
- (5) See *Church*.

4. **Jesus has authority to lay down and then take up his life (Jn 10:17-18).**

- a. The Father loves his Son because he lays down his life for the sheep (v. 17).
 - (1) See *The Father and the Son* and *Jesus' Death*.
- b. The Son will take up his life again (v. 17).
 - (1) **Jn 2:19-22** 19 Jesus answered [the Jewish leaders], Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 The Jews then said, It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days? 21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.
 - (2) See *Jesus' Resurrection*.
- c. No one takes Jesus' life from him (v. 18).
 - (1) **Jn 10:39** 39 Again [the Jewish leaders] sought to arrest [Jesus], but he escaped from their hands.
- d. Jesus lays down his life of his own accord (v. 18).
- e. The Father granted Jesus the authority to lay down and then take up his own life (v. 18).
 - (1) Jesus' death and resurrection has always been the plan of the Father.
 - (a) **Ac 2:23-24** 23 ...This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

5. **The Jewish leaders continue to divide over Jesus (Jn 10:19-21).**

- a. The Jewish leaders continue to divide over Jesus' words (v. 19).
- b. Some say Jesus has a demon or is insane (v. 20).
 - (1) Today, Bible-believing Christians are often called "evil" or "insane."
- c. Others respect Jesus' words and the signs he has done (v. 20).
 - (1) See *Positive Volition*.

6. **No one will snatch Jesus' sheep (Jn 10:22-30).**

- a. Jesus returns to Jerusalem in winter for the Feast of Dedication (v. 22).
 - (1) This is about three months before his death.
- b. Jesus again walks in the temple, ground zero for Israel (v. 23).
- c. The Jewish leaders ask Jesus to tell them plainly whether he is the Messiah (v. 24).
- d. Jesus answers that his words and works already testify on his behalf (v. 25).
- e. The Jewish leaders do not believe because they are not among Jesus' sheep (v. 26).
 - (1) See *Negative Volition* and *Unbelief*.
- f. Truths about Jesus and his sheep are:
 - (1) Jesus' sheep hear his voice (v. 27).
 - (a) See *God's Special Call*.

- (2) Jesus knows his sheep (v. 27).
 - (a) See *Foreknowledge* and *Intimacy with Jesus*.
- (3) Jesus' sheep follow him (v. 27).
 - (a) See *Sanctification*.
- (4) Jesus gives his sheep eternal life (v. 28).
 - (a) See *Eternal Life*.
- (5) Jesus' sheep will never perish (v. 28).
 - (a) **Jn 3:16** 16 ...God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - (b) See *Resurrection*.
- (6) No one will snatch Jesus' sheep out of his hand (v. 28).
- (7) The Father has given Jesus' sheep to him (v. 29).
 - (a) **Jn 6:37** 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
 - (b) See *Election*.
- (8) No one is able to snatch Jesus' sheep out of the Father's hand (v. 29).
 - (a) See *Eternal Security*.
- g. The Father is greater than all (v. 29).
 - (1) The Father is economically greater than the Son, but not ontologically greater.
- h. Jesus and the Father are one (v. 30).
 - (1) This statement refers to the Trinity's economic unity, not the Trinity's ontological unity.
 - (2) Jesus and the Father are one in the sense that no one is able to snatch Jesus' sheep out of their hands. As Father and Son, they co-hold the sheep in their hands.

7. Jesus' works prove his words (Jn 10:31-39).

- a. The Jewish leaders understand Jesus is claiming to be God (θεός)(v. 33).
 - (1) They pick up stones to stone him (v. 31).
- b. Jesus' many good works from the Father prove his claim is true (v. 32).
- c. God calls the Jewish leaders "gods" in Psalm 82. How much more should Jesus be called "the Son of God" (vv. 34-36).
 - (1) The identity of the "gods" in Ps 82:6 is debatable. The most probable view is they were Israel's judges, who were functioning as God's representatives, and so were in that sense "little gods."
 - (2) **Ps 82** A Psalm of Asaph. 1 God has taken his place in the divine council. In the midst of the gods (אֱלֹהִים) he holds judgment: 2 How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah 3 Give justice to the weak and the fatherless. Maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. 4 Rescue the weak and the needy. Deliver them from the hand of the wicked. 5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness. All the foundations of the earth are shaken. 6 I said, You are gods (אֱלֹהִים), sons of the Most High, all of you. 7 Nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince. 8 Arise, God, judge the earth. For you shall inherit all the nations!
 - (a) The Jewish leaders of Jesus' day are judging unjustly and showing partiality to the wicked. They are not rescuing the weak and needy.

- d. This is especially true given the Father consecrated Jesus and sent him into the world (v. 36).
- e. The Jewish leaders are to believe the works Jesus is doing, even if they do not believe his words (vv. 37-38).
 - (1) It is legitimate to believe in Jesus based on his works alone.
- f. The Father is in Jesus, and Jesus is in the Father (v. 38).
 - (1) Again this refers to the economic unity of the Father and the Son (see v. 30).
- g. Again Jesus escapes from the hands of the Jewish leaders (v. 39).
 - (1) **Jn 10:18** 18 No one takes [my life] from me [Jesus]....

8. Many believe in Jesus at Bethany across the Jordan (Jn 10:40-42).

- a. Jesus recrosses the Jordan to Bethany, where John had been baptising (v. 40).
 - (1) These verses form an inclusio with Jn 1:19-28.
 - (2) Jesus has presented himself to Israel as the Messiah and Son of God (Jn 1:19-10:39), but Israel has rejected him. Their decision has been made.
- b. Jesus remains outside Jerusalem until it is time for his final journey there (v. 40).
 - (1) Jesus' death and resurrection approaches.
- c. John did no sign (v. 41). Jesus did many signs (v. 32).
 - (1) This is another proof John is not the Messiah, but Jesus is.
- d. Many recognise what John said about Jesus was true and believe into him (vv. 41-42).
 - (1) Justification is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone.
 - (2) This shows there were many more believers in Jesus than just the disciples.