

The Gospel of John

Chapter 10:1-21

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- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
- Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
- Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
- Chapter 6 The Bread of Life
- Chapter 7 The public debates about Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles
- Chapter 8 Public debates: Woman caught in adultery; The Son makes you free; Abraham's true children
- Chapter 9 Jesus heals a man born blind.
- Chapter 10 Jesus is the Door and the True Shepherd

- **Review and Introduction**

In the previous chapter, John records the healing of the man born blind and all of the events leading up to his being cast out by the Pharisees. At the end of that chapter, the leaders ask Jesus if He believed that they themselves were blind and He informs them that because they boast in their ability to see it really is a manifestation of their blindness.

In this section of chapter 10, Jesus goes on to demonstrate the difference between true and false teachers as well as teach about His proper role with the Church. This section appears to be a continuation of the discussion he was having at the end of chapter nine. Therefore, it would mean that the audience was the same which included the leaders and the man healed of blindness. This is further evidenced by the remarks in verse 21.

- **Exposition of John 10:1-21**

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."² "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."³ "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."⁴ "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice."⁵ "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."⁶ Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

- It can be difficult to know exactly if Jesus is only talking about Himself in these passages or if He is contrasting true shepherds from false. Given the audience and some of the particular details of the illustration, make it likely that it is the contrast that He has in mind here.
- There are those who want to be shepherd of the sheep but want to become such by some means other than through Christ. This is exactly what He accused the leaders of in the last chapter. They believed that they were true teachers of the people because of the lineal relationship to Abraham. But this is not the grounds for being a true teacher of the people. The true teacher must reach the sheep by coming through the correct gate that is, Christ, and the porter gives the shepherd access to the sheep.
- We can see that when the true shepherds come into the fold, they are properly recognized and their behavior proves who they are; true shepherds lead and protect. The true shepherds are leading the flock and by going before them are placing themselves in harm's way to ensure the safety of the sheep. There are many reasons why men (and women) have wanted to be leaders of the church. Here we see that those who are the faithful leaders will enter through the correct door, being Christ, and lead the fold through that door as well.
- Those who desire to get to the sheep for false reasons are usually looking for some kind of fame, notoriety, wool, prominence or special treatment. These are the men who have attempted to get to the fold by some other means than by Christ. Many men crave the position of being an Elder in a church. While Paul teaches us that when a man aspires to being an Elder, he desires a good thing. However, it is important to crave the qualifications more than the position.

7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep."⁸ "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them."⁹ "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."¹⁰ "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

- Given that the audience did not understand what Jesus was teaching, He takes the illustration further. He is the door, as we have already discussed, through which faithful leaders take the sheep. But it appears that in this portion of the illustration He now focuses more on the true sheep versus the false sheep.
- All who came before does not refer to the Prophets and true teachers but to those who have gained the position by some means other than faith. We can see that this illustration, although not primarily about salvation, is very closely linked with Christ as the propitiatory sacrifice for the sheep. Those sheep who enter the fold through Christ will be truly saved. Note also, that as the true shepherds must enter through this door, they must also enter through it as sheep first.
- As beings made in God's image, we are given life by Him. Christ came to give us spiritual, eternal life which makes our lives more abundantly joyous. Christ is not a stingy saviour. Nor is He a killjoy savior. He is a Savior who delights in the faithful pleasures of the sheep and wants them to have abundant life.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.¹² "But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.¹³ "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

- Here the illustration goes even further. Jesus is the good shepherd. He is the one whom the true teachers are in submission to and whom they follow. The example that the good shepherd gives for the other shepherds is that He gives up His life for the sheep. We know that other true shepherds cannot give up their lives in the same way as Christ did. Yet the example of Christ, whom Peter refers to as the Chief Shepherd among undershepherds, shows who really owns the sheep.
- The next contrast that Jesus makes in His illustration is that of true shepherds and hirelings. The hirelings do not lay down their lives, they do not labor diligently, they do not lovingly minister to the sheep but rather they attend to the sheep when it is convenient and expeditious to do so and in a crisis are more interested in protecting themselves than those whom they falsely declare to protect.

15 "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.¹⁶ "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.¹⁷ "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.¹⁸ "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

- It is the Father who purposes to have the Son lay down His life for the sheep. Jesus' reference to "other sheep" is most assuredly the Gentile sheep who would be brought into the single fold as the Gospel is made fruitful in all reaches of the earth.
- Jesus declares that He lays down His life in submission to the Father and doing so does not in any way set aside His true deity but demonstrates His true Sonship and that He indeed is the Good Shepherd.

19 Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.²⁰ And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?"²¹ Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" NKJV

- We can see very much the same kind of divisions in the people hearing Jesus teach. Some are unable, because they use the tools of temporal wisdom, to understand our Lord's words and others have their eyes opened such that they recognize their shepherd and are saved.