

## John 10:1-21

### *Sheep Know Their Shepherd*

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**Who were some of the great men of the Bible who were shepherds?** Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David. The sheep/shepherd relationship is something John's original readers were very familiar with since shepherding is widespread among the Jews. In the Old Testament God frequently compared His relationship to Israel to that of a shepherd and his sheep.

**What do we know about sheep?** They are dumb. They need a leader, someone to care for them. They have a tendency to stray.

**The sheep/shepherd picture here is an allegory or sustained metaphor. Who is the Shepherd?** Jesus

**Who is the man who does not enter by the gate but climbs in by some other way?** The religious leaders, the false shepherds, false messiahs of Israel, the Pharisees.

**Who is the watchman?** The person hired to protect the sheep from their enemies. In the case of Jesus' ministry the watchman corresponds to John the Baptist.

**What does the sheep pen or sheepfold refer to?** Israel or Judaism

**Verse 3 What does the shepherd do?** He calls the sheep by name to follow Him and He leads them.

**Who are the sheep?** The Jews who choose to follow Jesus (shepherd). The ones who hear Christ's voice and respond to His call are those within Israel who belong to Him. Others do not hear/recognize His voice. Others choose to follow different shepherds.

**Note:** Some shepherds drive their sheep before them. However this shepherd, as many others do, goes before his sheep and leads them where he wants to take them. This description reflects the style of Jesus' leadership. He leads His disciples who follow Him.

**Application: As the allegory applies to us today who are the sheep and what are their similarities?** Those who listen to His voice, hear His voice, and know the Shepherd. Followers of Jesus. Christians. Us. We can be dumb, slow to listen, slow to follow.

**What are the lessons/applications of this allegory?**

- The allegory teaches that *the Lord Jesus Christ knows His sheep*. He knows the weak ones and those that tend to stray and He loves the sheep in spite of their behavior. He knows and loves you with all your flaws, failures, and sin.
- The allegory teaches us that having known them, *Jesus calls His own sheep by name*. God gives some sheep to the Lord Jesus (6:37 & 39) He calls them out of the pen. There are a lot of sheep in the pen but not all come when called by the Shepherd. Not all recognize His voice. Some choose to follow other masters. Not all the sheep follow. Not all people are saved.
- The allegory teaches us that having known His own sheep and having called them, *the Lord Jesus Christ leads them out*.

**Note:** There is a tension in the Bible between the sovereignty of God (as in the doctrine of election) and the responsibility of man.

- But all those whom God has given to Jesus are saved. Christians are God's chosen people today. God calls us all but doesn't choose us all (John 12:32). Jesus calls the sheep, they follow and their job is to bring the rest of the sheep into the sheepfold.
- We see the responsibility of man described in verse 9: whoever enters through me will be saved.

**To what does He lead them?** To His own great flock, the church, and into green pastures.

**Application: What are our sheepfolds that Christ leads us out of?** The world, hedonism, life of decadence, self-service, blindness.

**Note:** The point of these verses is how God forms His flock. People come to Jesus because He calls them, and they follow Him because they belong to Him. Many of the Jews who hear Jesus' voice disregard Him because they consider Abraham or Moses or some famous rabbi as their shepherd.

**Application: Have you been hearing the voice of your Shepherd lately? Where do we hear the voice of our shepherd?** Word of God, church, OCF.

**How do we recognize the stranger's voice?** We recognize it as different, strange, foreign.

**In verse 7 Jesus states the third I AM as what?** The Gate for the sheep

**What is purpose of the Gate?** It leads to sanctuary, safety, security.

**How is Jesus the Gate (verse 9)?** He is the only way in and out. (See also John 14:6.)

**Jesus refers to these false shepherds as thieves and robbers (verses 1, 8, 10). Who are they and how do they steal, kill and destroy?** The religious leaders. Those who don't enter the sheep pen through the gate (Jesus) or follow Him. They lead people away from Jesus to eternal damnation.

**Application: Who are some of the thieves and robbers in our lives today?** David Koresh, James Jones, Cults, Hare Krishna. Religious leaders who lead us astray.

**How can we recognize modern day imposters?** They all have one thing in common—they distort the truth and reality of Jesus.

**Note:** Why the thief comes (steal, kill, and destroy) contrasts sharply with why Jesus comes (to give life abundantly).

**In verse 11 Jesus states the fourth I AM as what?** The Good Shepherd

**How does the Good Shepherd compare with the hired shepherd?** Different motivation. Attitude is the crucial difference between a true shepherd and a hireling.

- Care and protection of the sheep versus making money and even self-preservation in dire circumstances.
- Laying down his life for the sheep versus running away and caring nothing for the sheep.

**Application: In our lives today, who are the hired shepherds?** People who are leading the flock without concern for the flock's well being. People who choose the ministry as a comfortable occupation or for the prestige without true love for God's sheep.

**Verse 16 Who are the other sheep?** The other sheep in this passage are Gentiles outside the fold of Israel who believe in Jesus. This is one of a few intimations in the Gospels that a new body will replace Israel as the people of God in the present age. These sheep, along with those from Israel, will compose one fold, namely, the church. That fold has one shepherd, namely, Jesus.

**Note:** Jesus doesn't say "I will have other sheep" or "I hope to have other sheep" but "I have." It is present tense = now.

**What is the vision associated with gathering in the other sheep?** One flock and one shepherd. Not Jew and Gentile. One church, a Christian church.

**Who killed Jesus?** (See verses 11, 15, 17, 18.) No one. I may have put Him on the cross by my sin, but He freely and voluntarily gave up His life. He was in total control on the cross and He determined when He would die. The phrase "lay it down" is stated three times. Jesus is teaching that His death is voluntary and vicarious. It is He who "gave up His spirit." (See John 19:30.)

**Application:** How is your relationship with the Good Shepherd? Are you staying close to Him, or are you lost and wandering around?

**Verse 21** Once again Jesus' teaching polarizes the crowd.

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**MEMORIZE: John 10:11**