

John 10

This chapter is Immediately following the discourse and conflict with the Jews in the preceding chapter.

We have seen Christ has been in conflict with those who claim to be the shepherds of the people. These were the Pharisees and doctors of the Sanhedrin Court, men whom call themselves the men “who sat in Moses’s seat,” and boasted of their knowledge of the law of God.

These self-professed shepherds had just cast out from their fold a poor lamb who was born blind for the crime of refusing to believe that the person who opened his eyes was a sinner. Here in chapter 10 Jesus points out the characteristics of those who are real shepherds, in contrast to those who are spiritual robbers.

This is a simile that has two parable like meanings or applications.

First, Christ compares the Pharisees and Jews to shepherds. Then He compares Himself to the door, and declares that the only true shepherds are those who enter through Christ the door and his authority. All others are thieves and robbers.

Then he changes the application and declares Himself the Good Shepard, whose praises David and Isaiah sang indicating he would give his life for the sheep. The figure the Shepard and the Sheep is always a favorite one in the scriptures.

King David was called from the flocks to the Throne.

It was David who sang The Lord is my Shepard cf: Psalms 23:1 ff. All through the scriptures the Lord is presented as the Shepard of his people.

John 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

The Sheepfold is figure of speech meaning the church, Jesus is the door into the sheepfold or the Church is Christ. Sheepfolds in Israel were large enclosures opened to the sky, but walled around with stone brick or reeds crowned about with thorns to offer protection against robbers or wolves. At the door was a porter or door keeper who remained on guard. All those who climb in the sheepfold any other way than the door are obviously thieves and robbers.

John 10:2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

The figure of speech is plain, the door is for the shepherd and the sheep, while those who get in some other way seek to pray on the sheep.

John 10:3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

The business of the porter or gate keeper is to guard the entrance.

The sheepfold is the Church of Christ, Jesus is the door by which all enter the sheepfold. Jesus is also, the Good Shepherd. There are also other shepherds and teachers under him who enter by the door, the saints are the sheep, who have intelligent hearing and are tame.

In Israel shepherds lead their flocks and they give them names as we do our pet cats and dogs.

John 10:4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

On the hills in Israel, thousands of sheep and goats could be seen in dense confused masses. Each shepherd had a particular call, and the

sheep will not follow a strange or offending voice. The sheep would hear their shepherd and they follow them in the direction taken by their shepherd.

John 10:5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

The proof that we are Christ's sheep is that we hear his voice and follow Him.

John 10:6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

The Greek word here translated parable is never translated parable elsewhere, this rather a simile.

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

Jesus is the gateway to all spiritual blessings. In verses 1--5 Christ speaks of shepherds in general. These shepherds enter the fold by one door Christ. There is one door for both sheep and shepherds into the fold of the Church of Christ cf:

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

John 10:8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

This describes the doctors of the law and the Pharisees who had claimed for over two hundred years to be the spiritual shepherds but they were really blind leaders of the blind. They place themselves before Him. Any who turn away from Christ as their teacher are not real shepherds. This view includes the Jewish rabbis, the Greek Philosophers, the modern pretended Prophets, spellbinders and any

man who claims to be an infallible Pope. True sheep do not hear them. It is the goats who wander off after such leaders.

John 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Christ is the door, He is the good shepherd and the He is the pasture, He is all of these. They who enter by Him in the way He has appointed are saved. The word “In’ in this verse means protection and “out” means pasture which is Jesus is the bread of life and the water of life.

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

False religion robs men, true religion blesses and enriches men. The false shepherd is a thief who steals the substance and opportunities of the flock. He is taking the pulpit or place where a true shepherd should be standing and he is a destroyer. He destroys the spiritual life of the flock, destroys the faith in men’s hearts and fills men’s minds with false notions that man can improve upon God’s plan.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

This title is applied to Jehovah in cf:

Psalm 23:1-6 The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. 23:2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 23:3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 23:5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall

follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Ezekiel writing during the Babylonian captivity prophecies against the future false shepherds who will not do their job, so God Himself will have to come in the form of the Messiah and do it for them.

Ezekiel 34:1-5 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 34:2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 34:3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock. 34:4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

Ezekiel 34:10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. 34:11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, *even* I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. 34:12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

Ezekiel 34:23-25 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, *even* my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. 34:24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken *it*. 34:25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause

the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

Christ applies the term to himself. The mark of a good shepherd is that He giveth his life for the sheep.

In that country the shepherd often had to defend the flock cf:

I Samuel 17:37 David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

John 10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

The Jews are like their fathers cf:

Micah 3:10-11 They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. 3:11 The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, /s not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

It is not the bare fact that a man receives pay that makes him a hireling. Cf

I Timothy 5:18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer /s worthy of his reward.

He is a hireling would not work if it not for his hire. Such hirlings who were moved by such interest alone will abandon the flock in times of danger.

John 10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

This is because their love is centered in self-interest, their pay, hire and money and not in the love of the sheep.

John 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

Jesus knows every one of those personally, tenderly, lovingly by name.

Matthew 10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

John 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Just as the Father knew the Son and son knew the Father, so there is a tender bond between the sheep of Christ and the Good Shepherd.

John 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

Not just Jews, but Gentiles also shall enter through the same door, as the Jewish Christians entered. So there will be one fold and one shepherd. There is only one Church of Christ, and one Door into it, and one Shepherd over it.

Here Jesus' Ministry shines forth in the grand truth that He is the redeemer of the world instead of just a Jewish Messiah.

As John the Baptist said:

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

And as the world wide commission given as He ascending on high says:

Mark 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

These are claims of a Deity, only God could give His life in full assurance He could take it up again.

John 10:18 No man taketh 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 commandment have I received of my Father.

He gave himself for man of his own free will. He laid down his life on the cross. He took again when he arose from the dead. The plots of man would have no power had he not consented. From the very beginning of His teaching there are references to dead He should Die.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

John 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

John 10:19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

Previously in John 7:43 there was a division among the people and in **John 9:16** there was a division among the Pharisees.

Now there is division among the Jews who are the ruling body or Sanhedrin court. Some were wonderfully impressed by his miracles and teachings, while others who were willfully blind.

Jesus did not in any respect except power and wisdom resemble their conception of the Christ. To accept him was to abandon their national hope and accept instead the Hope of the world.

John 10:20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

It was a common belief among the Jews that demons could produce supernatural affects: cf Matthew 12:24. This was a convenient way of explaining the miraculous powers of Christ.

John 10:21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

As much depends on the condition of the heart as on the testimony of Jesus that was given. Here we have the softening of some and the hardening of others. The same sun softens the wax as hardens the clay.

No demon had ever taught like Christ, and there for his teachings disproved the charge. Other said besides that it had never been known that a demon could open the eyes of the blind.

We have learned

There is no way into the fold but through Christ the Door.

Those who reject Christ reject eternal life.

All who live in disobedience to Him are following other leaders.

Any teacher who teaches contrary to Christ who set aside Christ authority is a thief and a robber and his object is to prey on the sheep.

There are both robbers and hireling shepherds. Robbers lead astray, hireling shepherds work for pay alone and will abandon the flock for better pay.

God has only one fold, or one Church. The division of the Christian world into warring denominations and sects is sinful.

Now more than two months passes between verse 21 & 22.

The Feast of Dedication was established by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 B.C. to commemorate the purification of the temple after its defilement by the Syrian Greeks under Antiochus Epiphanes which occurred in 167 B.C. It was observed for 8 days and was a patriotic

observance like our 4th of July. This was not a divinely appointed feast, but Jesus was in Jerusalem, and it afforded an opportunity for Christ to teach the people.

John 10:22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

This feast came in December.

John 10:23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

This porch was a long covered colonnade or veranda with a roof resting on pillars. Josephus describes it as a stadium 400 feet long.

John 10:24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

Jesus was in a public place and this was an opportunity for “the Jews” to have a decisive interview. They were determined to bring matters to a head, so they came and surrounded him. These were men who were officials in the Sanhedrin Court. Their demand to know if He was the Christ, shows the extent of the debate of that in Jerusalem.

John 10:25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

He had told them repeatedly cf:

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things so ever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

John 8:35-36 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

John 8:56-58 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad. 8:57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Jesus knew what was in the hearts of the Jews so He simply pointed them to His works just as He had done to the disciples of John the Baptist who came asking the same question if He was the Christ cf:

Matthew 11:2-6 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, 11:3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? 11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 11:6 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

There is profound evidence of Jesus' divinity in, His words and teaching, in His superhuman life in His works and miracles.

John 10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

Their unbelief was not because of a lack of proof, but a lack of something within themselves. You cannot be convinced by purely intellectual arguments. You cannot believe in Christ as your personal savior until you are attracted by Jesus' voice to follow Him like sheep.

John 7:16-17 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

The term “eternal Life” occurs forty four times in the New Testament it never means simply endless existence, but always a blessed immortality cf:

Matthew 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

This is opposite of everlasting punishment which is endless existence in a state of punishment. The Greek word zo-ee rendered life means ‘existence’ as opposed to annihilation. It occurs thirteen times in the New Testament cf:

I Corinthian 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

It is also used without the adjective for eternal life.

John 5:28-29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

All humanity has existence zo-ee and there is no indication that existence comes to an end. At death a man yields up the soul. Greek psu-ch-ee the “breath”, “the spirit,” Greek p-neu-ma returns to God, but there is no indication that existence closes.

When Christ said I’ll lay down my life, He used p-su’ch-ee “breath” instead of zo-ee “existence”.

Eternal life is the inheritance of all who all have been born of water and Spirit. It is a blessed immortality. It is never applied to existence in a state of condemnation. The deathless angels that sinned, do not have eternal life. The rich man in hades had an existence beyond the

grave, but not eternal life. Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, enjoying "good things" had eternal life.

John 10:29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

Christ watches over the sheep as a Good Shepherd and they have absolute assurance that they are safe in Him from all the howling forces of hell.

John 10:30 I and *my* Father are one.

Here in the presence of these Jews, He makes the statement, He and the Father are one in essence, and one in purpose and one in person, for He uses the plural verb. There is unity of purpose and power between the Father and the Son.

John 10:31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

The word again carries us back. cf:

John 8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

These high doctors of the law held Him guilty of blaspheme by asserting He and the Father are one, the penalty of which was stoning and they rushed to inflict it without a trial.

Again the rulers have come with stones in their pockets, ready to do murder.

John 10:32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

Jesus now calls for the specifications or a Bill of Particulars of the crime for which they have sentenced Him without a trial.

John 10:33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

Now they have accidentally born witness that Jesus' good works are truly miracles. But, the Jews replied it was for blaspheme they would stone Him because He made Himself Divine. It will be on this very charge that the Sanhedrin in 6 months will condemn him to death cf:

Matthew 26:61-64 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? **14:62** And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. **14:63** Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? **14:64** Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death

Had Jesus only been a man His words would have been blasphemy.

John 10:34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

Jesus now quotes the Psalms which are a reproof of unjust judges:

Psalm 82:1-6 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. **82:2** How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? **82:3** Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. **82:4** Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked. **82:5** They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. **82:6** I have said, Ye *are* gods; and all of you *are* children of the most High.

Jesus argument is: if in your law, judges are called gods, and allowed to have, in some sense, the divine characteristics and are called children of God, why am I guilty of blasphemy for saying I am the Son of God?

John 10:35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

This scripture cannot be broken is a declaration in parenthesis which is a testimony the Old Testament is inspired and cannot be broken.

John 10:36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemist; because I said, I am the Son of God?

The word sanctified here means set apart. There is no article (the) before Son in the Greek of this verse.

John 10:37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

Since those who did the work assigned to them by God were recognized in some sense as partakers of the divine nature; Christ therefore points to his own works as a test. If he does the work of the Father, God has recognized in Jesus the Son-ship of Jesus.

John 10:38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

They ought to consider the works without prejudice. Because God lives and moves in Him, He is a full partaker of the divine nature.

John 10:39 Therefore, they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

Not to stone him for their madness had cooled, but to arrest Him. His escape was probably because of His many friends in the crowd. His presence over awed them, they could only glare in hatred upon Him as they made a passage for Him to pass by among them.

Jesus could little descend to their notions of a Messiah as they could rise to His.

This is the end of three months of a stormy ministry in Jerusalem.

Twice there were attempts by mobs to stone Him. Cf:

John 8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

John 10:31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

Twice they made efforts to arrest him. Cf:

John 7:32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

**John 7:45-46 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?
7:46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.**

John 10:39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

In addition secret plans for his murder had been laid. Cf:

John 7:19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

John 8:37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

John 10:40 And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

For the time the Lord had retired before the threatening storm, which comes to a head, three month later at Passover when they crucify Him.

John 10:41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

John 10:42 And many believed on him there.

This Perea ministry was fruitful, the people held John the Baptist to be a prophet, though he had done no miracle, he has borne witness of Jesus in that very place when he said. Cf:

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Sources: KJV, e-Sword, Clark's Commentary and mainly B. W. Johnson's Commentary.