

John 10:1-21

There were no chapter and verse division when this original gospel account of John was written. There is no break between chapters 9 and 10, but rather chapter 10 is a continuation of the events that have taken place in chapter 9. It is in chapter 10 where Jesus will compare the Pharisees that are the false shepherds of Israel to Himself who is the Good Shepherd. John 10 is referred to as the Good Shepherd discourse.

Verses 1-2

The religious leaders had just cast the man that was healed of his blindness because he would not deny that it was Jesus who had healed him. They were the religious leaders or rather the under shepherds of Israel, but they did not care for others, but rather only for themselves. John 10 starts with Jesus standing among the Pharisees, the crowds that had gathered, and the man that He had just healed and directing His attention to the Pharisees and begins to directly tell them who they are using imagery that they would be familiar with: shepherds, doorkeepers, hired hands, and sheep. Jesus starts this verse off by “truly, truly” which speaks to the importance and weight of what He is about to say.

Shepherds in the Old Testament

- Abel
- Abraham
- Moses
- Jacob
- David

God is referred to as a Shepherd in the Old Testament

- **Psalm 23:1-6** The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. ³He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. ⁶Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
- **Isaiah 40:11** Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry *them* in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.
- **Micah 5:4** And He will arise and shepherd *His flock* In the strength of the Lord, In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they will remain, Because at that time He will be great To the ends of the earth.
- **Psalm 78:52** But He led forth His own people like sheep And guided them in the wilderness like a flock;
- **Psalm 80:1** Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned *above* the cherubim, shine forth!
- **Jeremiah 31:10** Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, And declare in the coastlands afar off, And say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.”
- **Psalm 28:9** Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; Be their shepherd also, and carry them forever.

Sheep were kept in folds and pens and the shepherd would use the assistance of a doorkeeper to assist in guarding the door to the sheep at various times. The only one who would have access to go through the door to gather the sheep would be the one to whom had authority as the sheep belonged to that shepherd. The doorkeeper would not allow anyone in the door other than the true shepherd of those sheep. However, there were robbers and thieves who would try to get to the sheep for selfish reasons including to kill the sheep for food, wool, and monetary gains so they would have to climb in another way. Jesus is referring to the Pharisees as the robbers and thieves as they do not care about the people, but rather are only concerned for their own selfish desires. The one who enters the fold by the door has authority to enter because they are his sheep. The Pharisees are the false shepherds who are thieves and robbers, Jesus is the true and Good Shepherd.

Verse 3

The doorkeeper will open the door to the true shepherd because the shepherd has authority to enter and call His sheep.

The first fold

In John 10, there are two folds mentioned. The first fold that Jesus is referencing is Israel. He is calling His sheep from Israel out to follow Him. The other fold that will be mentioned in verse 16 is referencing the Gentiles.

Effectual Calling/Irresistible Grace/Unconditional Election

The one who enters through the door has authority to enter the door and when he enters, he calls his own sheep by name. The shepherds in antiquity were said to name their sheep as they belonged to him. Jesus calls His sheep (elect) by name as He calls them out. Jesus, the Good Shepherd knows the name of His sheep as He wrote their names down in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8, Rev 17:8- unconditional election). In some sense we are His sheep before He calls us. His sheep hear His voice and they come. This is not a possibility that they will follow, but a certainty as He leads them out. This call of the Shepherd is an effectual call as it has the desired effect it was intended to have. The sheep are the elect and they come because they are those whom the Father gave to the Son (John 6:37- Unconditional election). This also speaks to irresistible grace as the sheep come.

Verses 4-5

Perseverance of the sheep

The Good Shepherd put forth all that are His and then He goes before them to lead them. The sheep will follow Him because they know His voice. After He calls them out and they begin to follow Him, they will not follow anyone else because they don't know the voice of strangers. The true believers are His true sheep will never stop following their true shepherd. They will follow Him and His words to eternity.

Verse 6

Jesus was using this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what He was saying to them.

Verse 7

Jesus again starts His response to them again by saying "truly, truly." What He is telling them is of the utmost importance. Jesus will then declare the third I AM statement. This verse contains the 3rd of 7 "I am" sayings found in John. Jesus will draw from Exodus 3:14 in using Ego Eimi in reference to the name of God to declare His deity and also add a metaphor to Himself to describe who He is. Jesus declares He is Yahweh and that He is the door of the sheep. Jesus declares He is the door of the sheep. Not only is He the shepherd who leads the sheep out through the door, but He is the door to which the sheep must pass to have pasture and eternal life. This is the exclusivity of Christ for salvation and access to the Father.

- John 14:6 Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Verse 8

Jesus will then tell the Pharisees that they are thieves and robbers, but the Christ's sheep did not hear them because they hear the voice of their true shepherd. They are the thieves and robbers who climb over the walls to get to the sheep for their own purposes, desires, and benefit.

Verse 9

Again, Jesus declares that He is the only door of the sheep. One must enter through Him to have eternal life (John 14:6). This verse Jesus tells us that this is in reference to salvation. The sheep will go in and out and find pasture. His sheep whom He has called out have freedom and find pasture. Jesus our Good Shepherd lead us and guides us to pasture. We are fed by the Shepherds food which is His Word.

Verse 10

This verse is frequently taken out of context as it often gets cited in reference to the devil being the thief who comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. However, in this context it is in reference to the Pharisees as He has already mentioned them to be thieves and robbers. They are the ones who can't come through the door to call the sheep as they are false shepherds and must get into the pen by climbing another way. They are not true shepherds, and they seek to steal, kill, and destroy all while claiming to be the religious leaders of Israel.

False shepherds of Israel

- Ezekiel 34
- Matthew 7:13-23
- Matthew 23

The sheep are His sheep, not pastor's sheep. Pastor's and elders are under shepherds of God's sheep.

- **1 Peter 5:1-4** Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, ² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over ^athose allotted to your charge, but ^bproving to be examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading ^ccrown of glory.

In contrast to the false shepherds, Jesus cares for His sheep and came to give them life and give it more abundantly. He gives us an abundant life here on earth, but even more importantly, He gives His sheep eternal life. He came for His sheep. He came to live for them, die for them, and give them eternal life.

Verse 11

Definite Redemption/Limited Atonement

This is the 4th of the "I AM" statements: I am the Good Shepherd. As compared to the false shepherds who do not care of the sheep, Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays His life down for His sheep. This is speaking of Jesus laying His life down for His sheep by dying on the cross for them. This speaks to particular redemption also known as limited or definite atonement. The Good Shepherd lays His life down only for His sheep. The substitutionary death of Christ on the cross for His sheep speaks to the intimate nature of the cross and the love reflected for His sheep on the cross. The death of Christ on the cross for His sheep is personal and intimate.

Verses 12-13

The shepherds would have hired hands that were to help the shepherd with the care of the sheep. However, there was an attack or threat such as from wolves the hired hands would leave the sheep because the sheep were not theirs and they would rather save themselves. They look out for the sheep when things are going well, but in difficult times or times that require sacrifice for the sheep they leave the sheep. This speaks to the actions of the religious leaders who would not show sacrificial actions for the people in comparison to Jesus who laid His sheep.

Protecting the sheep in the Old Testament-Type and shadow (David)

The story of David and Goliath is a type and shadow pointing to the work of Christ in defeating Satan. We are not David; David is pointing to Christ. David was a shepherd from Bethlehem who guarded his father's flock. When the lion and the bear came, he would risk his life to save the flock. This is foreshadowing of the Son of David, the Good Shepherd who laid His life down for His sheep and protects them.

- **1 Samuel 17:31-37**

Verses 14-15

Jesus knows His sheep in a personal and intimate way. The omniscient God know all things, but He knows His sheep in a special salvific way. He knew them before the foundation of the world. His sheep know Him and those who are not His sheep will be told on the Last Day "I never knew you." Not only does He know His sheep, His sheep know Him. Christ knows His sheep in the same manner that He knows the Father and the Father knows Him. The same love the Father has upon His Son is the same love shown and placed upon His sheep (**John 17:22-26**). This love is expressed by His willingness to die on behalf of His sheep.

Verse 16

The first fold that Jesus had in view was Israel. Here He speaks about another fold. This other fold is speaking about the Gentiles. As He will call out His sheep (elect) from Israel, He also has sheep (elect) among the Gentiles whom He will also go to and call out to follow Him. He speaks in terms of certainty “I must bring them,” “they will hear my voice,” “they will follow me.” Jesus did not just die for the elect of Israel, but also for the elect among the Gentiles. The Gentiles, who are His elect, will hear the voice of the Shepherd and will be a part of Christ’s Church as they will follow Him. The sheep of God, both of the Jews and the Gentiles, will become one flock and have one shepherd.

Verses on the mystery of the Gospel which is the inclusion and grafting of the Gentiles

- **Ephesians 2:11-3:11**
- **Romans 11:11-25**
- **Romans 10:12-13**
- **Romans 16:25-27**

Verses 17-18

The Father loves His Son because He willingly laid down His life for all that the Father had chosen and given to the Son. Jesus laid His life down willingly for the sheep. Not only did Jesus have the authority to lay His life down, but He has power and authority to raise Himself from the dead.

- **John 2:19** Jesus answered them, “Destroy this ^{temple}, and in three days I will raise it up.”

Verses 19-21

Again, the words of Jesus cause a division among the people. Some accuse Him of being demon possessed and insane. Other question if someone who has a demon can open the eyes of the blind. The healing of the blind man was to display the works of God. The works Jesus did were a witness to Him being sent from the Father as the Son on Man.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He has all authority to enter by the door as He is the true Shepherd over His sheep. His sheep are the elect whom the Father chose before the foundation of the world and gave to Him. All the Father gives to the Son they come to Him as His call is effectual. He calls His sheep by name as He knows His sheep personally. He calls them by name because the name of His sheep have been written in the Lamb’s Book of Life before the foundation of the world. The Good Shepherd loves His sheep and the love He has for His sheep was on display when on the cross, He willingly laid down His life for them. He laid His life down for His sheep so that they would be saved and have eternal life. Now, He leads His sheep and they will not follow another because they are His sheep as they belong to Him. Although we might face dangers, threats, and difficulties in this life, His sheep know that He is the Good Shepherd and will shepherd us all the way to our eternal home where we will find the most perfect pasture!