

# Jesus the Good Shepherd

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

**Preparatory Reading:** Jeremiah 23; Ezekiel 34; Matthew 23; John 9.

## **Introduction:**

1. The *context of John 10* is the healing of the blind man, his faith, and the Pharisees’ arrogant cruelty (John 9).
  - a. Full appreciation of this chapter requires a reading and understanding of chapter nine for its controversy.
  - b. The connection is identified by 9:39-41 compared to 10:1; 10:21 itself; and by comparing 9:16 to 10:19.
  - c. The connection is understood by the nature of the lesson in chapter ten in light of the controversy of nine.
  - d. The context leads to the purpose of the chapter, which is to condemn bad pastors and exalt Jesus Christ.
2. The *purpose of John 10* is to condemn the Pharisees and all imposter shepherds by comparing them to Jesus.
  - a. It is a warning against false teachers for their rebuke and the comfort of His sheep to know the difference.
  - b. Further appreciation of its purpose sees God’s condemnation of false shepherds (Jer 23; Eze 34; Mat 23).
  - c. Most religious men in the world’s history, including the church of God, have been God’s great enemies.
  - d. It is a comforting lesson for us to realize the superiority of our Shepherd to most religious men in history.
  - e. It is a doctrinal treatise on the nature of the work of the ministry and the identity of Jesus as God’s Son.
  - f. If not careful, we will leave the contextual pathway and wander into theological details not intended here.
3. The *parable of John 10* extends from 10:1 to 10:18, in which Jesus claims to be both the door and shepherd.
  - a. We know this is a parable by the plain words of our Lord (10:6), and the nature of it should confirm it so.
  - b. We understand not to get too hung up on the details of parables, lest we miss the far more valuable lesson.
  - c. Remember that parables are extended proverbs and riddles, so do not force it literally to your own liking.
  - d. Remember the parable of the Good Samaritan and all its details simply to explain who your neighbor is!
  - e. Remember the parable of the Sower and all its details with a simple bottom line to be vigilant in hearing.
  - f. This parable’s design and bottom line are nearly as visible as these two, so we must see our Lord’s intent.
  - g. We are not sheep, and Jesus was not a shepherd (He was a carpenter’s son, and He is King of kings!).
  - h. The sheepfold is the church, under either testament, for the care of God’s sheep by His under-shepherds.
  - i. The thieves and robbers are false teachers; the wolf is also one or other threat; do not focus on the devil.
  - j. Though Jesus is God in the flesh, Immanuel, do not forget He is also the Man Christ Jesus, filling and fulfilling every glorious office necessary for both our legal redemption and practical protection e.g. Apostle and High Priest (Heb 3:1), Shepherd and Bishop (I Pet 2:25), Master (John 13:13-14), etc., etc.
4. The *doctrine of John 10* extends from 10:19 to 10:42, in which Jesus defends himself as the Son of God.
  - a. Typical with the Jews, a division arose about Jesus, for some believed Him and others did not (10:19-24).
  - b. He defended Himself by His works, which were sufficient proof that He was the Son of God (10:25).
  - c. He established the doctrine of election, which was the fundamental reason for the differences (10:26-31).
  - d. Jesus defended Himself as God’s Son by referring to their scripture’s use of god terminology (10:32-36).
  - e. He defended Himself again by His works, which should have caused them to see God in Him (10:37-39).
  - f. After their fatal rejection, He withdrew Himself to another location, where many did believe (10:40-42).
5. The *danger of John 10* is to forget the nature of a parable and seek meaning in every detail of the metaphor.
  - a. Reject a treatise of soteriological details for the apostles to rightly divide regeneration and conversion, in the same way we avoid such confusion in the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Sower!
  - b. Reject worries of unconverted elect and the basis of conversion other than what is plainly stated (10:26).
  - c. This is a general lesson to condemn the Pharisees and exalt Jesus Christ as far superior to any of them.
  - d. This is a defense by Jesus Christ of Himself and rightful authority He and true ministers have from God.
6. We will see Jesus personally, intimately, devotedly, and passionately as our Shepherd for time and eternity.
  - a. Our goal at this time is not the fullest exposition and application of this passage, but rather an overview of it to quickly grasp the glory of Jesus Christ our Saviour as the Good Shepherd and the Son of God.
  - b. Religious men should be the most compassionate and caring of all men, but the Pharisees and so many others like them prove the opposite, but Jesus our Lord is the Great and Good Shepherd in comparison.
7. We are at a disadvantage not knowing anything about sheep and shepherds, but the lesson is simple enough.
8. We shall keep the Lord’s Supper today, and we can benefit by Jesus as Shepherd, Son of God, and Saviour.

***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.***

- A. *Verily* is an affirmation or expression of certainty, sincerity, or truthfulness to emphasize a point.
  - 1. Scripture shows only Jesus Christ our Lord using this introduction to His declarations of truth.
  - 2. The double affirmation of truthfulness and importance, as here, is only in John, and 25 times so.
  - 3. Let us humble ourselves before the Son of God as He rebuked the Pharisees and comforted us.
- B. The plural second person pronoun *you* includes or identifies the Pharisees in context (9:39-41).
- C. Parables, which this is (10:6), are to be studied for their overall lesson rather than their many details.
  - 1. We do not foolishly study or waste minutes or hours explaining male shepherds, entrances, doors, sheepfolds, climbing, alternative entrances, thieves, robbers, porters, wolves, etc.
  - 2. We grasp that rightful shepherds enter the sheepfold with the sheep by an approved way to do so.
- D. Jesus the Christ had authority straight from heaven and publicly identified by John to be Shepherd.
  - 1. God formed His human nature and sent Him into the world as Christ (Lu 1:31-35; Jn 18:37; etc.).
  - 2. John the Baptist identified Him as exceptionally superior to him and sent from God (Jn 1:29-35).
  - 3. He did not take this office without rightful authority for it, for God called Him to it (Heb 5:1-6).
- E. True under-shepherds have authority indirectly from heaven through rightful ordination (II Tim 2:2).
- F. The Pharisees had some legitimate authority (Matt 23:23), but they were corrupt in all other senses.
  - 1. They are thieves and robbers here without a Door; they are hirelings and not shepherds shortly.
  - 2. It is beyond this study to show all their errors in authority, doctrine, and lifestyle (Matt 23:1-39).
  - 3. They, like the false prophets and priests of old, had corrupt motives and lives (Jer 23; Ezek 34).
  - 4. They presumed to be the shepherds and guides of the people, though blind (Matthew 23:16-24)!
  - 5. They were thieves and robbers for sneaking into office with avarice and greed their ambitions.
  - 6. They were more concerned about their own reputations, ease, and gain than feeding their sheep.

***2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.***

- A. The true Shepherd does not need to sneak around for lack of rightful authority to enter the sheepfold.
- B. The true Shepherd has perfect motives and intentions, honest and transparent, needing no subterfuge.
- C. Though not the main thought here, every under-shepherd enters the ministry through Jesus Christ.
- D. As a riddle-parable, you must see Jesus as both the Door of the sheepfold and the Shepherd using it!

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

- A. Do not forget this is a parable, an obscure metaphor – continue to think sheep, folds, and shepherds.
- B. **Porter.** One who has charge of a door or gate ... a gate-keeper, door-keeper, janitor.
- C. We will not pretend great insight about the identity of the porter, since Jesus did not care to explain, though we can grasp the full approval of God the Father and God the Spirit in the ministry of Jesus.
- D. There is an established and intimate relationship between the true shepherd and his own sheep.
  - 1. This true and rightful shepherd knows his own sheep by name, which shows exceptional care!
  - 2. The sheep recognize his voice and their name, and they are willing to follow him out to pasture.
  - 3. While preeminently true of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, it is also so of true under-shepherds.

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

- A. The Lord Jesus Christ, unlike the Pharisees, goes before His sheep as their example in every work.
  - 1. Jesus declared the horrible trait of scribes and Pharisees to avoid what they taught (Matt 23:3-4)!
  - 2. Jesus always did the will of God His Father, so we have Him as a glorious example (I Pet 2:21).

- B. The sheep of Jesus Christ, the elect of God, as a general rule, follow Him rather than foolish men.
  1. It is wise for us to avoid seeking theological or soteriological details in every verse or clause.
  2. This is not a hair-splitting doctrinal treatise about regeneration and conversion, as we see in Ephesians 1-2, but rather an explanation for the man born blind relative to Pharisees and Jesus.

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

- A. This is preeminently true of sheep: as no sheep would follow *you*, even if your life depended on it.
- B. This is generally true of the elect of God, who are troubled and turned off in soul by false teachers.
- C. The blind man was not impressed or intimidated by the Pharisees and rejected them for Jesus Christ.
- D. Such scattered sheep contact us on a regular basis due to their resentment of strangers' voices.

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

- A. This is one of the places where we are specifically told that Jesus used a parable, not plain speech.
  1. Parables are not earthly stories with heavenly meanings to make spiritual things easier to grasp.
  2. Parables are extended proverbs or riddles requiring careful interpretation for the right message.
  3. Parables are the opposite of plain speech, which the apostles knew (Mat 13:10-15; Jn 16:25,29).
  4. More about difficulty of parables ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/parables-proverbs-miscellaneous.pdf>.
- B. Note that this kind of teaching by Jesus was not understood by the hearers, so we proceed cautiously.
- C. His next words do not help much, as they further complicate things by Jesus as door and shepherd!

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

- A. Jesus resumed speaking after the explanation provided by the Spirit through John of their confusion.
- B. Here is the second and final double affirmation of *verily* in this chapter for the explanation given.
- C. Jesus is the good Shepherd distinct from hirelings (11-18), and He is also the door of the sheepfold.
- D. Anyone tampering with the church of God without authority or approval from Jesus Christ is begging for destruction, as our brother Paul described to the church at Corinth (I Cor 3:5-17).
- E. Anyone seeking to enter the sheepfold of God, the true church, can do so only through Jesus Christ.

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

- A. Can you rightly divide the word of truth (II Ti 2:15)? Obviously God's prophets are not considered.
- B. If an Arminian applied his rule for "all" here, we must conclude John the Baptist a thief and robber!
- C. It is a terrible fact of religious history that the greatest enemies of the sheep have often been pastors!
- D. Scribes and Pharisees, the object of the parable, like the pastors and priests of old (Jer 23; Ezek 34), were more interested in their lives of ease at the expense of the flock than they were true service.

**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.***

- A. Jesus again declared He is the door in the parable so far, though soon the good shepherd (10:10-11).
- B. As the door, He was of benefit and the only way of practical salvation to the sheep, a new thought.
- C. Due to the ministerial context, understand the *salvation* here to be the practical phase – conversion.
  1. The use of any form of *save* may be strictly practical by ministerial faithfulness (I Tim 4:16).
  2. Arminians refuse more than one sense of *save*, but there are more (I Cor 15:2; James 5:19-20).
  3. The reference to *pasture* intends the edifying and feeding aspects of the local churches of Christ.

**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.***

- A. The rapacious Pharisees, typical of many ministers in all ages, have horrible plans for the flock.
  - 1. These false pastors, often of Rome but of all other denominations as well, are greedy and selfish.
  - 2. These pretenders have greedy lusts to satisfy, and they will use violence to achieve their ends.
- B. Jesus had an entirely different calling and objective for God's sheep, which He fully accomplishes.
  - 1. Rather than taking or using the lives of the sheep for His own end, He gave His life for them.
  - 2. Rather than seeking a life of leisure for Himself, He gave Himself to maximize their own lives.
  - 3. The life here should be understood in contrast to kill and destroy, which is primarily practical.
  - 4. Yet, the work of the Good Shepherd results in life now and eternal life to come with abundance!

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

- A. Having declared Himself the door of the sheep (10:7,9), He now emphasizes His role as Shepherd.
- B. While there are hints here of our Lord's legal redemption of His people, do not forget the lesson that the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep, while thieves and robbers devour the sheep!
- C. *Jesus* is the good shepherd. There is no *we* here, for He only has the call and ability to save the flock.
- D. *Jesus is* the good shepherd. It was not past tense accomplishment or future plans – He worked then.
- E. *Jesus is the* good shepherd. He is much more than just a good shepherd. Note the Spirit's words.
- F. *Jesus is the good* shepherd. There are many kinds of shepherds, but few are good, and none as good.
- G. *Jesus is the good shepherd.* God chose for that agrarian society the metaphor of shepherds and sheep.
- H. The good shepherd *giveth his life* for the sheep. This raises this Shepherd to unprecedented heights.
- I. The good shepherd *giveth his life for the sheep.* His affectionate care is not promiscuous or vain.

**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.***

- A. David was no hireling, as he risked his life against a bear and lion to protect his father's sheep, and he is justly the name by which our Shepherd Jesus is called in prophecy of His coming (Ezek 34).
- B. The wolf is any threat, including false teachers, which endanger the sheep and cost them their lives.
- C. A hireling is an employee, a hired servant, a day laborer, a wage earner, a clock puncher, etc.
- D. **Hireling.** One who serves for hire or wages; a hired servant; a mercenary (soldier). A day laborer.
- E. He is clearly not the shepherd, clearly not the owner, without any ownership interest in the sheep.
- F. This word is used to describe insecure, short-term employment (Job 7:1-2; 14:6; Is 16:14; 21:16).
- G. We compare several places to see day laborers hired for wages (Lev 19:13; Mal 3:5; Matt 20:1-16).
- H. A hireling is very different from the shepherd, as he is only a temporary servant for the shepherd.
  - 1. An owner does not care about wages, for he sees the past investment and future return on capital.
  - 2. An owner does not care about time, for he is not paid for time but for efficient productivity.
  - 3. An owner scoffs at fear, for he knows he must protect his assets in order to survive and succeed.
  - 4. An owner has vested interest in a business, including capital investment, plans, labor, risk, etc.
  - 5. An owner's thoughts and actions are related to assets and income rather than wages and a soda.
  - 6. He is entirely intent on the overall business objectives and prosperity without distraction or fear.
  - 7. Though a hireling for wages, with them changed often, Jacob worked as an owner (Ge 31:38-41).

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

- A. A mere wage earner or day laborer will run away from a job as soon as the cost, pain, or travail exceeds the wages, which is a very low threshold due to rather low wages.
- B. Men who choose the office of pastor or priest for carnal reasons have no commitment to the sheep to keep them standing their ground for the sheep's safety when grave danger presents itself.

- C. For more elaboration of this simple point, see the sermon outline, “An Owner’s Mentality.”
- D. A hireling only cares about wages for the day, because he has no other commitment to the business.
1. He does not see the sheep as assets to nourish and protect for a return far exceeding wages.
  2. He only thinks about the clock and the day ending so he can get his penny and buy a soda.
  3. Since his wages are based primarily on time, he paces himself without regard for the business.
  4. Those who have owned a business know with great conviction the character of mere hirelings.
  5. They are the ones who punch in promptly upon arrival and then look for coffee and a break.
  6. They are the ones who finish slowly, talking much, before they eventually and finally punch out.
  7. They are the ones who pace themselves slowly through every task, for burning time ends the day.
  8. They are the ones who take as many breaks as long as possible in order to avoid work’s effort.
  9. They are the ones who never think about what could or should be done, but wait for follow-up.
  10. They are the ones who will waste product or supplies because it does not come from their wages.
  11. Christian employees will blow this accurate and true description to pieces by a godly work ethic.
  12. Christians regard jobs as service to Jesus Christ from their hearts (Col 3:22-25; I Timothy 6:1-2).
  13. Intelligent citizens should know the U.S. Labor Day was instituted to honor rebellious hirelings.
- E. A hireling only cares about the day’s wages, so he will not fight a danger or a threat to the business.
1. He will fly out the door and quit his responsibilities at the first sign of any danger or trouble.
  2. It is an easy calculation in the hireling’s mind – a penny a day for a soda is not worth any risk!
  3. A hireling protecting a flock of sheep has no vested interest, so he will leave the flock for fear.
  4. Because the sheep are not his, he does not grasp the investment of capital and labor in them.
  5. Because the sheep are not his, he does not grasp the return on capital necessary for the business.
  6. Because the sheep are not his, he does not feel any compassion for them from animal attackers.
  7. Because the sheep are not his, he has not prepared his spirit and weapons to repulse attackers.
  8. Because the sheep are not his, he does not grasp the loss of their lives, if he can but save his own.
  9. Because the sheep are not his, he does not have an owner’s mentality for them like the shepherd.
  10. Christian employees will blow this accurate and true description to pieces by godly commitment.
  11. Christians regard jobs as service to Jesus Christ with all fidelity (Titus 2:9-10; I Peter 2:18-20).
  12. Examples of this kind of committed, dedicated, and loyal service are in the Bible ... Jacob with Laban, Joseph with Potiphar and Pharaoh, David with Jesse, Saul, and Nabal, Daniel, etc., etc.
- F. What is a ministerial hireling? A man with all the weak traits described above serving as a pastor!
1. He cares for his own things rather than the things of the flock. Compare Timothy (Phil 2:20-21).
  2. He departs from the work for vain reasons, as Mark and Demas (Ac 13:13; 15:38; II Tim 4:10).
  3. He fails to fulfill His ministerial calling, which is precisely spelled out for him (I Tim 4:13-16).
- G. What was the character of the Pharisees? Even worse than that of a hireling simple considered!
1. The Pharisees best fit the *thieves and robbers* that Jesus had previously described (John 10:1-10).
  2. Judas was one of these imposters; he was literally a robber of our Lord’s funds and took a bribe.
  3. They were hireling hypocrites by not practicing what they required of their sheep (Matt 23:1-4).
  4. They were hirelings only interested in eye service and popularity rather than truth (Mat 23:5-12).
  5. They were hirelings not interested in true profitability for themselves or their sheep (Matt 23:13).
  6. They were hirelings mainly interested in fleecing the sheep for profit (Mat 23:14; Titus 1:10-11).
  7. They were hireling missionaries seeking only the numbers of more converts to error (Mat 23:15).
  8. They were hireling corrupters that perverted God’s rules for manmade standards (Mat 23:16-22).
  9. They were hirelings that fussed about minor things compared to needed priorities (Matt 23:23).
  10. They were hirelings professing great dedication but filled with lying mischief (Matt 23:25-33).
  11. They were fearful to confess Jesus Christ in case they lost their cushy day job (John 11:48).
  12. There are numerous Old Testament passages that describe the shepherds of Israel – the prophets and priests – that had this same character (Jer 23:1-40; Ezek 34:1-31; Mal 2:2-9; etc., etc.).

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

- A. Jesus the Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep – He died instead of the sheep dying (10:11,15).
  - 1. How do we comprehend this comparison between Jesus and a hireling? There is no comparison.
  - 2. It is painful for a hireling to get hands dirty, let alone to face a deadly threat and die for sheep.
  - 3. This exemplary conduct of the Shepherd breaks down in our minds. See the break down below.
- B. So much so are the sheep His possession that He is not fulfilled in Person or Office without them!
  - 1. Note how He repeatedly refers to the sheep as *my sheep* (10:14,26,27), received from the Father.
  - 2. See the glorious text describing the church as the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Eph 1:23).
  - 3. Other texts declare this essential and eternal unity between Christ and His sheep (Heb 2:11; etc.).
- C. Jesus is the Son of David, and as such He had a father that showed courage against a lion and a bear.
- D. He has intimate knowledge of His sheep, they of Him, and He with His Father as well (10:14-15).
  - 1. The foundation of God stands sure, for the Lord knoweth all those truly His sheep (II Tim 2:19).
  - 2. While He professes to have never known the goats, He knows His sheep forever (Matt 7:21-23).
  - 3. The sheep know Him also, for that is the only confidence and consolation in a dangerous world.
  - 4. As the next verse describes, the unity of the sheep with Christ includes their unity with God also.
  - 5. Compare I John 1:3, where this same apostle describes the fellowship among all three parties.

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

- A. Jesus here in the parable introduced God the Father as being in an intimate relationship with Him.
- B. He indicates in clear terms His laying down of His life for the sheep is in agreement with God's will.
- C. Arminians are so blind as to think of Jesus laid down His life for thieves, robbers, wolves, and goats!
- D. While the parable proceeds with a sacrificial shepherd compared to thieves or hirelings, the doctrine of substitutionary atonement and particular redemption come through beautiful and clear!

***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.***

- A. The other sheep are Gentiles converts, which is a part of the great mystery of godliness (I Tim 3:16).
- B. The fold is the Jewish church of Israel, which would be expanded to include Gentiles (Eph 2:11-22).
- C. There is one fold, not a Jewish and Gentile one; and there is one Shepherd, the Lord Jesus only.
- D. Our apostle, Paul, was given great knowledge of this profound mystery (Eph 3:1-13; Col 1:21-29).

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

- A. God the Father's love of Jesus included approval of His obedience in this great work (Heb 5:7-10).
- B. What submission to God's will we see in Gethsemane! And it is this obedience we must remember.

***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.***

- A. Neither the Jews nor Pilate nor Herod took Jesus' life from Him; He could have called a few angels!
- B. He willingly went to the cross for us, and He went zealously with forethought (Luke 9:51; 12:50)!
- C. He could have called twelve legions of angels, but He died alone for you and me (Matt 26:53-54).

## **Where does the parable break down? Where does truth exceed the metaphor?**

- A. It breaks down by comparing us to sheep, when in reality and fact we are far worse than sheep.
  - 1. Sheep are innocent creatures that willingly eat, follow, and grow for wool, milk, and mutton.
  - 2. We are malicious and malignant enemies of God, Christ, righteousness, truth, and wisdom.
  - 3. A shepherd dying for sheep, though extreme, makes far more sense than dying for you or me.
- B. It breaks down by comparing the enemies Jesus defeated to a wolf that the hireling flees from.
  - 1. Jesus faced the wrath of Almighty God, the madness of the devil, the profane trial and perverse torture of Jews and Romans, betrayal and forsaking by friends, death, the grave, etc.
  - 2. Wolves fear men, fire, noise, and other human deterrents; Jesus faced an angry God Himself.
  - 3. The Day of Judgment comes, the greatest threat of all, but Jesus the Shepherd will be there.
- C. It breaks down by comparing ministerial shepherds to Jesus – for they all look like hirelings!
  - 1. Paul was clearly the best of the New Testament, but he did not lay down his life for his enemies!
  - 2. And Paul labored more abundantly, less like an hireling, than the other apostles of Jesus Christ!
- D. It breaks down by this Shepherd after His death entered upon His greater work to save the sheep!
  - 1. What kind of commitment from Father and Shepherd can we know by His dying to protect?
  - 2. Paul taught our Lord's life is greater than His death in some respects (Ro 5:10; 8:34; Heb 7:25).
  - 3. Any shepherd giving his life for the sheep would not save the sheep or provide for their future.
  - 4. The Lord Jesus Christ is still fully committed and active to save every single one of the sheep.
- E. It breaks down in the motive and purpose and objective of the Good Shepherd dying for the sheep.
  - 1. An exemplary shepherd like Jacob or David might die unintentionally trying to protect the flock.
  - 2. But the Good Shepherd laid down His life voluntarily without any accidental aspect (Jn 10:17).
  - 3. The motive of an exemplary shepherd would be preserving the flock to take them to market!
  - 4. But the motive of the Good Shepherd is to give them eternal life and an inheritance (Jn 10:28).

## **Can You Apply the Parable to Yourself?**

- A. You are a Gentile sheep. Does Jesus have any place for you in His flock of those given to Him?
  - 1. You were by nature far from the commonwealth of Israel and without God in life (Eph 2:11-22).
  - 2. Jesus owns us Gentile believers as well, and He is just as convicted about bringing us (Jn 10:16).
  - 3. Caiaphas prophesied and Paul declared that we will be brought together (Jn 11:51-52; Eph 1:10).
- B. How can you know you are of the sheep of Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep of God?
  - 1. Hear His voice this day in His gospel and believe on Him, for this is the evidence (John 10:27).
  - 2. Follow Him in His leading for every aspect of your life, or you have no evidence as His sheep.
  - 3. It is a corruption of true doctrine that many teach you must believe in order to be a sheep (10:26).
  - 4. The foundation of God standeth sure – the Shepherd knows those who are His – and following Jesus Christ by faith and walk, or departing from evil, is the evidence of His sheep (II Tim 2:19).

**19 *There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.***

- A. After a difficult parable like this that ended with doctrinal declarations, there was a Jewish division.
- B. It was common for Jesus to cause a division among Jews by His person and doctrine (Jn 7:43; 9:16).
- C. Jesus came not to bring peace, but a sword; there will always be divisions over Him (Matt 10:34-39).
- D. Reader, what will you do with Christ? He is the Son of God and high King of heaven. Worship Him!

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

- A. These blasphemous reprobates could see that He was the Good Shepherd, but they refused to see!
- B. As in Romans 1:18-32, the truth of God is plainly and evidently set forth, but they wickedly reject it.
- C. This is the unpardonable sin ... to personally witness the person, life, and miracles of Jesus and ascribe them to the devil (Matt 12:24-32; Mark 3:22-30).

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

- A. This should be obvious, but so should have been the Red Sea to Pharaoh! God must open all hearts.
- B. The contrast throughout the second half of this chapter should cause us to give thanks (II Thes 2:13)!

**22 *And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.***

- A. At Jerusalem at this time, while Jesus was there, was a particular winter feast called the Dedication.
  - 1. There is no feast called the dedication in the Law of Moses, which prescribed three annual feasts.
  - 2. There is no feast that falls during the winter in the Law of Moses, so this must be something else.
- B. This feast is what is called Hanukkah today, recalling the Maccabean dedication of the second temple.
  - 1. Antiochus IV, or Epiphanes, of the Seleucid Empire desecrated the temple 2300 days (Dan 8).
  - 2. For more about this vile Greek enemy of the Jews ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/daniel/daniel-08.htm>.
  - 3. Judas Maccabaeus regained the temple and rededicated it to worship Jehovah (Dan 11:31-35).
  - 4. For more about these great heroes of Jewish history ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/daniel/daniel-11.htm>.
- C. An implication of Jesus being in the temple on this occasion should silence opponents of holidays.
  - 1. We reject all religious holidays that come to us from pagan idolatry through Roman Catholicism.
  - 2. However, we do not find in God's condemnation of them any condemnation of birthdays, anniversaries, national holidays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Secretary's Day, etc., etc.
  - 3. These other days, not commanded by God for observance, are matters of Christian liberty.

**23 *And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.***

- A. Our Lord walking in the temple at this time indicates His approval by His presence of this holiday.
- B. Solomon's porch, a magnificent enclosed porch, was popular with the apostles (Acts 3:11; 5:12).

**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.***

- A. The Christ of God had been prophesied to be a Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24; Zechariah 13:7).
- B. Though He had been declared to be the Christ by many means, they were vile unbelievers at heart.
- C. Our Lord did not lift up His voice in the street, for God's work of drawing was sufficient for sheep!

**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.***

- A. Jesus had declared Himself to be the Son of God moments before to the man born blind (Jn 9:35-38).
- B. Jesus had performed countless miraculous wonders, proving God's approval and power upon Him.
- C. It is hard to comprehend that religious men expecting the Messiah and with identifying prophecies could observe the stupendous miracles of Jesus for three and one-half years and hate Him!

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

- A. Arminians tell us we must believe in order to become Jesus' sheep, the very opposite of His words.
- B. The sheep are the elect of God by virtue of being given by God to Jesus to redeem (John 10:28-29).
- C. The sheep are drawn by God opening their hearts to see, hear, believe, and love Christ (Jn 6:44,63).
- D. The order in this passage is (1) God gave them to Christ, (2) Christ gave them eternal life, (3) they hear and follow Christ, and (4) they shall never perish. These are four of the five phases of salvation.

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

- A. The sure foundation of God is that all the elect are clearly known by God (II Timothy 2:10,19).
  - 1. They were given to Him by the Father as objects of the Father's business and glory (Jn 10:28).
  - 2. When were they given? God gave them to Jesus from eternity (John 17:1-2; Eph 1:4; II Tim 1:9).
- B. This conversion of the sheep is the general rule by far, but it does not exclude special exceptions known only to God, which are not taught here (Rom 11:25-28; I Cor 10:1-5; Heb 4:1-2; etc.).
- C. The point to be grasped is this explanation for the division in Israel – some believing, others not.
- D. We do not make this a legal or vital calling and following, as some varieties of Fatalists have done.
- E. We do not choose the regenerating voice of Christ here, for the context of the whole chapter speaks of other voices of strangers, thieves, and robbers ... so it is not a passive hearing of His divine voice.

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

- A. Here is the divine power of Jesus to preserve and protect His elect sheep, as in Romans 8:34-37.
- B. What is the order? God gave the elect sheep to Jesus before the world began (10:29 cp II Tim 1:9).
- C. Can the sheep ever be lost? Is there such a thing as eternal security? Can eternal life be lost?
  - 1. How were they given? With a charge that He should not lose a single one of them (Jn 6:38-39).
  - 2. Not a chance! They can never perish eternally and are safe in the Shepherd's hand (Jn 10:28).
  - 3. Not only are they in the Shepherd's hand, but they are also in the Father's hand (John 10:29).
  - 4. No matter what kind of thieves and robbers and how many might try, they are fully safe there!

**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.***

- A. The Father is greater even than Christ Jesus in His mediatorial Person and office (I Cor 15:27-28).
- B. By comparing Romans 8:28-39, eternal security in both the Son and the Father are clearly seen.

**30 *I and my Father are one.***

- A. God the Father and Jesus Christ were one in nature, attributes, operations, purpose, unity, etc. Glory!
- B. The preceding context indicates a unity and oneness in the plan and power of redemption (10:28-29).
- C. By being one in nature and attributes, Jesus declared Himself to be God like the Father, and the monotheistic Jews understood Him in exactly that sense (John 10:31,33), which Jesus did not correct or alter, but instead pursued their choice of terminology out of their own Law (John 10:34-36).

**31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.**

- A. Blasphemy is a terrible crime, and the Jews rabidly defended God's glory ... only in some respects!
  - 1. Though none of the accusations stuck against Jesus, they chose Barabbas to be freed instead.
  - 2. Consider their rules of oaths, which valued the temple's gold above the temple (Matt 23:16-17).
- B. Religionists are the greatest enemies of Shepherd and sheep (Isaiah 66:5; Jn 15:20; 16:2; Re 17:1-6).

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

- A. How could the Jews consider stoning a prophet with such miracles, yea, greater than any prophet!
- B. Jesus confronted them about the stupidity of stoning Him in light of prodigious miracles from God.
- C. In this chapter, Jesus continues to bring up Jehovah as His Father, further provoking them to wrath, not unlike His hard sayings about bread from heaven and eating and drinking Him in John 6.

**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.**

- A. The Jews recognized (and did not recognize) His argument's force, so they trumped up blasphemy.
- B. There are not two charges or accusations here, but rather one of blasphemy and the details of it.
- C. How did Jesus make Himself God? By declaring a unity of nature (10:30), and by declaring Himself the Son of God (9:35-38 cp Isaiah 9:6 cp Isaiah 7:14). He did not declare His eternal, divine sonship!

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

- A. While with the blind man, Jesus had declared in their hearing that He was the Son of God (9:35-38).
- B. It is this claim, a basic axiom of our faith, which Jesus will defend by this line of reasoning (10:36).
- C. He appealed to Psalm 82:6, where the Psalmist penned these words about Israel's civil rulers, though there are other places as well where God gave the name of gods to rulers (Ps 82:1; 138:1; Ex 22:28).
- D. When dealing with persons that profess faith in scripture, use those scriptures against their errors.

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

- A. Those Jehovah called *gods* in Psalm 82:6 received Moses' Law for their official magisterial conduct.
  - 1. The Law identified, ordained, and charged Israel's magistrates with their duties and penalties.
  - 2. They received the Law of God from another, therefore they were not truly legislators themselves.
  - 3. They needed the scripture as much as the populace to know God's will for their own lives.
  - 4. Receiving God's word from another is very inferior to Christ – Legislator, Master, and Judge!
  - 5. John the Baptist, the greatest man born of women, received the word of God from God (Lu 3:2).
- B. The scripture cannot be broken, in that a word found there is the right word and may be argued from.
  - 1. If the Bible calls magistrates *gods*, then that exact term is absolutely right and justified for them.
  - 2. If it is rightly used for those in the low office of magistrate, then certainly so for greater offices.
  - 3. It cannot be blasphemy for the Messiah to use the terminology due to His far superior office!
- C. We justly use this verse two ways to support our trust in the KJV as inspired and preserved scripture.
  - 1. Jesus declared and showed the nature of scripture – it is inspired at the word level and may be argued from the word level for doctrine, thus condemning paraphrases and other word changes, as these further examples show: <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/scripture/every-word-of-god.htm>.
  - 2. If we can show internal contradictions in a "Bible," then it is not scripture, for scripture cannot be broken at even the word level ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/questions/who-killed-goliath.htm>.
  - 3. What about contradictions in the KJV? <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/scripture/ahaziah-contradiction.pdf>.

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

- A. If you justify the title *gods* for mere civil magistrates, why do you fault me with a superior office?
- B. The word of God did not come to Jesus as to *gods* and John (10:34-35), He was the Word of God!
- C. Almighty God, the LORD Jehovah, set Jesus of Nazareth apart for an office far greater – Messiah!
- D. He was sent into the world: He was not in the world as a mere man with scripture given to Him.
- E. What was so wrong with His title *Son of God*, since the Jews allowed mere rules a similar name?

**37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.**

- A. Jesus showed reasonableness against their unreasonableness, by assuming the lie they held about His miracles for the sake of an argument involving the next verse. Come, let us reason together!
- B. Jesus absolutely did the works of His Father, but He allowed the possibility He did not in order to get them to allow the possibility that He did indeed

**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.**

- A. A man could believe Jesus was Christ by His own testimony and/or that of John, without miracles.
- B. Or a man could see the stupendous miracle power and believe that God was in this Man of Nazareth.

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

- A. Why did the Jews want to take Him again? Because He declared an intimate union with Jehovah.
- B. Jesus reasoned with the unreasonable Jews, if my works are miracles of God, then you should believe based on that basis, though you do not want to believe my actual sayings or teachings.

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

- A. This place was Bethabara, where John at first baptized, and where Jesus as baptized (John 1:28).
- B. Jesus did not go there merely for security and ease, but rather to minister, as He did with results!
- C. He was always about the work of His father and kingdom, whether it is stated or not (John 9:4).

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

- A. While Jews at Jerusalem tried to stone or take Him, other Jews flocked to see Him and hear Him.
- B. John was great himself in the eyes of the people (and our Lord), but they knew Jesus to be greater!
- C. What did John say of Jesus? He should baptize John, He was greater than John, so great that John should not touch his shoelaces, He was the Lamb of God, The Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the true Messiah, and who would baptize men with the Holy Ghost and with fire, etc.

**42 And many believed on him there.**

- A. The miracles of Jesus and the testimony of John about Jesus contributed to the faith of many in Him.
- B. What makes the difference – the incredible difference? Only the grace of God through Jesus Christ!
- C. Do you believe on Jesus Christ today? Do you know Him with total certainty to be Emmanuel, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the only Saviour from sin, the coming Judge, etc., etc.?

**Conclusion:**

1. Jesus is the Great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13:20-21).
2. There is an end and objective to which you were saved by your Shepherd's blood – fulfill it (Heb 13:20-21)!
3. When we see the Lord's Table, remember your Lord's love for His sheep and sacrifice for them (Isaiah 53:6).