

JESUS
18. GOOD SHEPHERD: John 10
STUDY AHEAD

In John 10, Jesus combines two “I am” statements with slightly different twists on the role of a shepherd. He was in an extended debate with the Pharisees (continued from chapters 8&9), the false “shepherds” of Israel. He was comparing Himself to a true shepherd who takes good care of the flock, in contrast to the Pharisees who had just treated one of their ‘sheep’ with contempt, rebuke and literally thrown him out of the gathering at the synagogue.

“I am the gate” (10:1-10).

Notice how Jesus first pictures Himself as the true “gate” for the sheep. He uses the gate metaphor to make two points. See if you can pick up these points by reading vv.1-10:

- Who is trying to enter the sheepfold without going through the gate? (v.1,8,10) What were these people in the parable trying to do?
- Who was Jesus referring with this analogy? (See v.8)
- What is Jesus meaning as He refers to ‘a thief or a robber’?
- What were their messages to the people concerning the way of salvation that we have learned?
- How did the ‘sheep’ respond to them? (v.8)
- In v.7 Jesus changes the picture a bit. What does He claim about Himself? Now, who is going in and out through the “gate”?
- What is the clear message Jesus teaches concerning salvation in v. 9?
- In v.9, there is a sense of freedom and safety vs law, punishment and slavery. What do you think these ideas convey about His way vs the false shepherds’ ways?
- At night, in the open fields, shepherds would often find a safe enclosure for their flock. Then, they would sleep at the entrance to that enclosure, using their own body as a guard for the sheep.
- Ultimately, what is Jesus trying to provide for His sheep? (v.10)
- What do you think that He means by ‘life to the full’?

“I am the good shepherd” (10:11-21).

Now Jesus is the “shepherd” rather than the “gate.”

- How is the good shepherd different from a hired worker? (11-13)
- Jesus emphasized one particular thing that the good shepherd will do for His sheep. What is that one thing (vv.14-18)?
- What authority does Jesus say that He has to exercise? (v.18)
- What was He predicting would happen to Him? Who was ultimately in control of His main purpose as a ‘good shepherd’?
- What is the characteristic of *intimacy* Jesus describes between Himself and the Father, and between Himself and His sheep? (vv.14,15)
- How does this language comfort you?
- Verse 19-21 shows that the “Good Shepherd” conversation is still part of the “Light of the World” controversy from John chs.8 & 9.
- What were they still puzzled about?
- Although verses 22-42 jump forward to a later setting, there is a natural connection because Jesus continued to talk about “sheep.” What does Jesus say about His sheep in vv.27-30? What is His promise?
- Who can take a sheep out of Jesus’ hand?
- Jesus is referring to the security that a believer (sheep) has once we have believed. This is called ‘eternal security’. How does this comfort you?
- What astounding claim does Jesus make for Himself? (v.30)
- How did the Jewish leaders react to His words? (v.31)