

The Good Shepherd John 10:1-19

This is an important conversation after the controversy in John 9 over the blindness of the Pharisees.

Just as Jesus is the light of the world and the only light to free us from darkness, he is also the Good Shepherd and the door to the sheepfold.

Here, Jesus uses an analogy that is well-known to his listeners. There are sheep everywhere in Israel.

Abraham, Moses, and David, three of Israel's most well-known and revered leaders were all shepherds. (You need 3 things to 'create' a nation).

- a) Abraham provided the people
- b) Moses provided the land
- c) David provided the government

When Joseph's brothers came out of Canaan into Egypt, Pharaoh made them the shepherds of his flocks (Genesis 47:1-7).

In so doing, Joseph cautioned his brothers to simply tell Pharaoh that they kept livestock because "*all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians*" (Gen 47:34). The same was basically true in Israel.

A shepherd had four primary roles:

- 1 – Keep the flock intact
- 2 – Feed the flock
- 2 – Protect the flock
- 3 – Get the flock to market for shearing or selling

In a Jewish family, the care of the sheep always fell to the youngest son. As a son grew, he transferred his energy to farming; plowing, sowing, harvesting crops and gave his shepherding duties to his younger brother.

1 Samuel 16:11 - *Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep."*

In Israel, sheep provided:

- 1 – Wool for clothing
- 2 – Sheepskins (Hb 11:37)
- 3 – Meat
- 4 – Sacrifices (Ex 12; Lev 23:5; Matt 26:17-29)

5 – Milk

6 – Rams' horns for water and oil (1 Sam 16:1; 1 Kings 1:39)

There were, of course, bad shepherds –

Zechariah 11:17 - Woe to my worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock!

T - Ezekiel 34:1-16 –

It is against these two backdrops:

1 – The confrontation with the Pharisees and himself

2 – The awareness of bad shepherds (the Pharisees)

That Jesus addresses the people at the Temple (John 8:2) as the true Shepherd.

10:1-21 - *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” ¹⁹ There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. ²⁰ Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” ²¹ Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”*

First: The Controversy. 1, 6 & 19

There was and still is a controversy about whether Jesus is the only way to Heaven. The Pharisees were desperately trying to hold onto their power, and it drove them to murder.

But Jesus continues to press this – one door – mindset onto his listeners and to contrast himself with pretenders.

Second: The Pretenders – 1, 5, 8, 10 & 12

1 - *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.*

5 - *A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.*

8 - *All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.*

10 - *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.*

12 - *He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.*

The Pharisees know he is talking about them. But he’s also talking about their followers. Jesus is not only insulting the Pharisees but those who don’t know the difference between true and false shepherds.

5-6 - *A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

14 - *I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;*

In other words, there are pretenders as shepherds and as sheep

Matthew 25:31-34 - *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 41 - “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 46 - And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

Third: The Difference Between Sheep and Goats

a) The Shepherd's voice

4-5 & 8 - *he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. 8 - All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.*

16 - *And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*

Our Mormon friends say the "other sheep" are Americans – Quetzalcoatl –

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1995/10/the-book-of-mormon-a-sacred-ancient-record?lang=eng>

- Quetzalcoatl was the creator of life.
- Quetzalcoatl taught virtue.
- Quetzalcoatl was the greatest Lord of all.
- Quetzalcoatl had a "long beard and the features of a white man.

But...

- The Mesoamericans believed Quetzalcoatl would return.
- Led Snake worship
- Human sacrifice made to Quetzalcoatl
- Quetzalcoatl had a twin brother named Xolotl
-

...but we know they are Gentiles.

b) *The Shepherd's Door*

Jesus both enters by the door and is the door

1-2 - *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens.*

So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Unlike American corrals with a gate, a Middle Eastern shepherd was the living gate for the sheep pen, a low walled enclosure that backs up to a hill or the end of a ravine. The gate on the front, then, was the only way the sheep could enter the pen to find protection from the wild

animals at night. Similarly, the gate was also the only way to find their way back out to the lush pasture in the morning.

Exclusivity is the crime for which Jesus was crucified and for which early Christians suffered.

Jesus is not only the door but also

Fourth: The Good Shepherd. 11

11a - *I am the good shepherd.*

What is the primary difference between the false shepherd and a good shepherd?

a) Sacrifice

11b - *The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

14c – *and I lay down my life for the sheep*

17-18 - *For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.*”

b) Intimacy

14a - *I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;*

How does Christ accomplish this?

David was a shepherd of both sheep and Israel. He knew what makes a good Shepherd and writes,

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 still waters. ³He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will 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 anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Fifth: The Disappearing Shepherds and Sheep

The last shepherds and sheep in the Bible those in Luke 2:8 - *And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

Why?

- The Chief / Great Shepherd has appeared
- The ultimate lamb has appeared
 - OT = Promise
 - NT - Deliverance