

GOSPEL OF JOHN
THE PARABLE OF THE DOOR
JOHN 10:1-10

Introduction

Understand that the verses of our text today are a continuation of Jesus speaking to the Pharisees that he was speaking to in *John 9:40-41*.

READ THE TEXT!

Verses 1-5 of this Chapter is a “*parable*.” *Verse 6* tells us it is a “*parable!*” Now understand that the word translated “*parable*” here is not the same word translated “*parable*” in other places in the N.T. It is close, but it is not the same.

In fact, this is the only place where we find this word translated as “*parable*”. It is also used in four other places in the N.T. but is translated as “*proverb*” in those places. Nevertheless it is a *figure of speech* the Lord is using here!

i.e. Jesus is telling this story for a PURPOSE! Our Lord ALWAYS had a PURPOSE in ALL that He did while He was here walking on the earth! We would do well to remember that even now Jesus ALWAYS has a PURPOSE for that which He does and that which He allows!

Jesus was giving an illustration here that He wants us to understand!

Verse 6 states that **those who were listening to Jesus didn't understand what He was talking about.** (i.e. They didn't understand the parable...they didn't get the point...they didn't have a clue!)

Though **they may have understood shepherding a lot better than us**, they were unable to make the spiritual connection Jesus was trying to make here! So Jesus began to explain Himself to the crowd that was gathered around Him.

I dare say that some of us here today don't have much of a clue about *shepherding*...unless you happen to have studied it for some reason, because *shepherding* is not a major occupation in our society!

So, let's take a look at this today so we can have a better understanding of what the Lord Jesus Christ is illustrating here because it is still applicable to us today!

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I. LET'S TALK ABOUT SHEPHERDING!

As I said, Jesus' audience would have understood better than us the reference to *shepherding* because *shepherds* were common in the land. With all the sacrificing of sheep in the Temple, *shepherds* were necessary to provide a continual supply of sheep!

Throughout the Old Testament we find repeated references where the kings of Israel were referred to as *shepherds* of God's people.

Speaking of David, the Psalmist Asaph wrote:
Psalm 78:70-72—“*He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: 71 From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. 72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*”

When Micaiah prophesied the death of wicked King Ahab, he said these words in *1 Kings 22:17*—“... *I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.*”

We see also that God condemned the kings of Israel as well as the religious leaders through the prophet Ezekiel in *Ezekiel 34:2-10!*

Of course, God, through both His Prophets and Psalmists, referred to Himself as the Shepherd of Israel. (Cf. *Ezekiel 34:11-31*) Each of us have heard the *Shepherd's* Psalm of David, which begins with the comforting words,
Psalm 23:1 “*The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want*”

Others writers did the same:-

Isaiah 40:10-11—“*10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. 11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*”

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*Jeremiah 31:10—“Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, **He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.**”*

So these folks with an understanding both of *shepherding* and the Word of God should have made a connection but they didn't.

II. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE SHEEPFOLD! (Vs 1-5)

In *verses 1 through 5*, Jesus is speaking of a **large sheepfold** that was situated in a central location where several flocks would be corralled and held together. There, a gatekeeper would watch the flocks, and each *shepherd* was responsible to call his own *sheep* to lead them out to pasture. The *sheep* of each *shepherd* would all be mingled together. But the *sheep* only responded to THEIR *shepherd's voice*!

In these *first five verses* of the *Tenth Chapter*, the *sheepfold* appears to represent Judaism. Those who heard the Saviour's voice and responded to Him were those of *His own sheepfold* from Israel who responded to Him and His message by faith. (e.g. *The man that was born blind.*)

This becomes more evident when we notice that Jesus speaks of leading out His sheep [*John 10:3*] and of bringing out His own [*John 10:4*]. In the text, Jesus speaks of *His sheep* entering the *sheepfold*. (i.e. *Those who hear his voice and follow Him!*)

III. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE DOOR!

In *verse 7*, Jesus gave another illustration by identifying Himself as *“the door of the sheep.”* Though we are familiar with what a *door* is and what *sheep* are, still we need to understand the separate illustration that Jesus is giving in *verses 7-10*.

So let me help you here. Before night fell in the wilderness where the sheep grazed, the *shepherd* would construct an enclosure for the flock to ensure the safety of the animals for the night. Danger abounded in all around—there were wild animals and thieves, as well as other dangers associated with the sheep wandering off during the night.

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Now, the enclosure that the *shepherd* would build for his *sheep* would back up against a cliff face or be at the end of a canyon! These enclosures would have waist-high stone walls topped with thorn bushes.

The *sheepfold* would have one opening to serve as an entrance and an exit. After the sheep had entered the fold, the *shepherd* would himself serve as sentry in the opening. The sole purpose of this *sheepfold* was safety for the flock at night. Without the enclosure to keep them secure, the *sheep* might be scattered and or imperiled.

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Let me illustrate this with a story I heard:

I heard a story about Sir George Adam Smith, who was a famous Old Testament scholar of his time. He said that one day while traveling with a guide in Arab lands, they came across a *shepherd* and his *sheep*. He fell into conversation with the man who showed him the fold into which the *sheep* were led at night. It consisted of four walls, with a way in. Sir George asked him, *“So, that is where they go at night?”* *“Yes,”* said the *shepherd*, *“and when they are in there, they are perfectly safe.”*

Sir George said, *“But there is no door.”*

“I am the door!” said the *shepherd*.

Understand that this man was not a Christian man; he was not speaking in the language of the New Testament. He was speaking from the Arab *shepherd's* standpoint. Sir George looked at him and said, *“What do you mean by the door?”*

The *shepherd* said, *“When the light has gone, and all the sheep are inside, I lie in the open space, and no sheep can ever go out but across my body, and no wolf can come in unless he crosses my body; I am the door!”*

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That is the picture that the Lord Jesus is giving here in His parable. Entrance and exit were only permitted by the *shepherd*, for **He is the door! Jesus is that Shepherd Who is also the Door!**

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IV. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE POINT!

This statement by Jesus shows that those who are His are known to Him and that they are kept safe within the relationship into which they have entered by faith.

Now the thieves and the robbers mentioned here refer to the false wannabe *shepherds* of Israel (the Pharisees).

John 10:8a—“All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers...

John 10a— “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...

Those who do not enter the sheepfold by the gate are “*thieves and robbers.*” Jesus was condemning those who have no living relationship to Him as *thieves and robbers* when they seek to exercise leadership over the people of God. (i.e. the Scribes and Pharisees)

Jesus identified the Scribes and Pharisees as “*blind guides*” on an earlier occasion. While Jesus’ disciples were concerned that He had offended these religious leaders, He startled them with this warning: *Matthew 15:13-14 – “13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. 14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”*

Listen to me...just because a person is religious, uses the Bible, and talks in religious terms does not mean that he is a follower of truth or that he possesses integrity, or that he belongs to the Family of God!

Jesus say that sheep will not follow a stranger because “*...they know not the voice of strangers*” (*John 10:5*). Sheep follow the shepherd of the sheep, because “*they know his voice.*” (*John 10:4*)

In fact, we will see later in this Chapter that sheep have an obligation to know the voice of the Master and to follow that voice. Later, during His exchange with these religious leaders, Jesus said, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me*” (*John 10:27*).

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On the other hand, thieves and robbers, though they may mingle with the flock, will not recognize the voice of the Master, nor will the sheep heed what they say.

The Faith of Christ is narrow in that there is ONE DOOR!
Jesus said, “*I am the door of the sheep.*” There is only one way to enter the fold! It is through that ONE DOOR—JESUS!

Understanding the nature of the pen that Jesus described, it would have been meaningless to have multiple doors. Often, unthinking people, even some who are religious leaders, will imagine that there are multiple ways to God.

However, Jesus not only said that he was **THE DOOR**, but He said in *John 14:6 – “...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

Jesus did not merely show us the way to God; He presented Himself as the only way to the Father!

Jesus did not just teach truth; He is the truth!

Jesus does not simply tell us about life; He is the life!

These are vital truths, because they remind us that those who imagine that there are other ways to God are at best ignorant of truth, and their very claim exposes them as liars!

Conclusion

In closing, let’s look at *Verse 9 and 10* again!

Have you entered by way of THE DOOR—JESUS CHRIST?
HE IS THE ONLY WAY TO BE SAVED AND TO BE SAFE!

He will meet you where you are! He will accept you as you repent and confess faith in Him! And then by His power He will transform your life, by giving you His own Righteousness and making you acceptable to the Living God!

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Understand that there is no room for anyone to think that they can please God through their own efforts, or to imagine that somehow they can be good enough to make themselves acceptable to God—No one can!

There is but One Way into the presence of the Father, and that is through **THE ONE AND ONLY DOOR—God’s precious Son, Jesus Christ!**

He says here in *Verse 9*, “**...by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved!**”

“**Any**” embraces all of humanity. The life that is offered in Christ the Lord is not restricted by any condition or status other than repentance and faith—One’s birth, education, social position, wealth, achievements, reputation nor anything else excludes you from life in the Son of God. The Lord Jesus Christ invites all who are willing to hear His voice to come into the safety of His sheepfold!

The call of the Gospel is extended to each one who is willing to accept it.

John 1:12—“*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*”

John 3:16—“*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

John 3:18—“*He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*”

John 3:36—“*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*”

Romans 10:9-10—“*9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*”

Jesus says that those who enter in “**shall be saved.**”