

The Gospel of John

Believe and Live!

Lesson 11

John 10:1–42

Jesus: The Good Shepherd

Jesus' contentious debate with the Pharisees in the Temple over the healing of the blind man brings to light what He thought of them: they were false shepherds of Israel who distorted God's law for their own advantage. Here in chapter 10, Jesus will illustrate the difference between these false shepherds and the True Shepherd God sent to call each sheep by name, lead them out of darkness and into the protective sheepfold of salvation.

At a glance ~ **Read John 10:1–42.**

What stands out to you in your initial reading of the text as the most important point Jesus is communicating? Pay attention to the detailed intimacy in John's narrative regarding the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep.

The beauty of Jesus' teaching in chapter 10 is in its simplicity. Shepherds and sheep were quite common in the Middle East during the first century. Jesus' example of the relationship between the two would have been easily understood by those who heard Him speak as well as by the readers of John's gospel.

1. In the first six verses of John 10, we are given the marks of a true shepherd. What are they?

a. vv. 1–2:

b. v. 3:

c. vv. 4–5

The *doorkeeper* or *watchman* is a possible reference to John the Baptist, who went before and opened the door for the Lamb of God.

2. Think of the implications of Jesus' word here . . . Why do you think the sheep would respond to only one voice? Why would they never follow a stranger? vv. 4–5

3. To a sheep, a stranger is anyone they do not know; someone who could possibly do them harm. What are the marks of false shepherds and the potential consequences to following them?

a. vv. 1, 8

b. v. 10

c. vv. 12–13

4. According to John, Jesus uses the illustration to distinguish the difference between false shepherds and the reason why He came, but what was the result? v. 6

How was it possible for these listeners to miss the point of Jesus' simple illustration? But they did; and because they did, Jesus will now use a different approach: not that of a shepherd but that He is the *door* (gate) for the sheep.

On any given day, the shepherd would lead his flock out of the sheepfold to graze on the hillsides in the morning hours. Then as the day became hotter, he led them to a makeshift shelter where they could rest. The shepherd himself or a doorkeeper (watchman) would lie across the opening so that no wild animals endangered the sheep. They were safe and secure in his protective care. At night, the same nurturing care was repeated. Although the sheep were often mingled with others to rest, when the shepherd appeared to call forth his sheep, one by one they responded to his voice alone.

Selah ~

Think back to the story in chapter 9, about the man born blind. The Pharisees—the false shepherds—had reinterpreted the teaching of God’s laws to achieve their own end, thereby blocking the gateway to the truth of salvation. Now Jesus is saying, “*I am the door: If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved . . .*” (vv. 7, 9).

- What does Jesus say about the others who came before Him? v. 8

5. Not only will those who enter by way of Him find salvation, what else are they promised? vv. 9–10

In focus ~ (Key words) **abundant life**

Look up these words using the resources you have on hand (Bible translations, dictionary, concordance) and write a definition.

Abundant life: _____

How would you apply “abundant” to living *your* life to the fullest?

Take a closer look ~ John 10:10

(Memorize and meditate on the memory verse each time you open your lesson.)

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

There is a connection between John 10 and Ezekiel 34. Read through the entire Ezekiel passage and summarize what God says regarding:

- a. False shepherds (vv. 1–10):

- b. The True Shepherd (vv. 11–31):

Earlier in verses 1–5, Jesus spoke of “a” shepherd in a general sense. Here in verses 11–15, He speaks of Himself as “the Good Shepherd.” The care of our Good Shepherd distinguishes Him from that of the hired hand.

4. What is our Good Shepherd willing to do? v. 11
 - a. Since the sheep do not belong to the hired hand, what is he *unwilling* to do? vv. 12–13

Not only is Jesus willing as our Good Shepherd to lay down His life for His sheep, but He also shares an intimate fellowship with us!

5. This intimacy we have with Jesus is a mirrored reflection of what other relationship? vv. 14–15

In verse 16, when Jesus speaks of adding to “this fold,” He means the flock of Israel. He is looking ahead, beyond the cross and the resurrection to the time when the message of the gospel goes forth into all the world and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

6. In what manner did Jesus say He would give His life? Why? v. 17
 - a. How can we be assured He did this willingly? v. 18

7. Personal: The more Jesus talked about who He was, the angrier the Jews became, leading once again to divided opinions; and what was true then remains true today. You can *talk about* Jesus as the Good Shepherd, but unless you place your faith *in Him*, you will never settle the issues of your life; you will never experience the abundance of life He came and died for you to have. The evidence is there: He is your Good Shepherd! Are *you* His sheep? Please explain.

Jesus: The Great Shepherd

Outlook ~ Read John 10:22–42

In verse 22, we move forward approximately three months to the Feast of Dedication—called Hanukkah—in Jerusalem. It is winter time and Jesus resumes His teaching as well as making arrangements for His final return on Palm Sunday. We see yet another confrontation between Him and the Jewish leaders who sought to kill Him.

1. His enemies literally surround Him and confront Him with what question? v. 24
 - a. How does He answer them? v. 25

To these religious leaders a shepherd was a kind of leader, whether spiritual or political. Jesus picks up right where He left off earlier with the illustration of the shepherd and the sheep. Twice He tells them plainly, “*You do not believe*” (vv. 25–26).

2. Although His works bear witness to His identify, *why* do they not believe Him? v. 26
 - a. What identifies Christ’s sheep as truly belonging to Him? v. 27
 - b. What further assurance do they have? v. 28
 - c. What great declaration does Jesus add as yet another guarantee? vv. 29–30

The eternal security Christ gives is unchangeable—it cannot be altered: “*No one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.*”

Picture it ~

Your eternal security is gifted—guarded—and guaranteed by God Himself! You belong to Him and no one can change that or snatch you out of His loving hand. In contemplation of this reality, what image does the Apostle Paul convey in Colossians 3:3–4? How does it encourage you to know that the Father has given you to the Son?

In verses 31–39, once again these Jews want to execute Jesus. He turns to ask them for which of the many miracles from the Father do they wish to stone Him? And they tell Him it is not for the good works but for the “blasphemy” of making Himself one with the Father. He then quotes from Psalm 82 to counter their charge. In this psalm, God judges the leaders of the people—those whom He sites as “gods” (commissioned representatives of God)—who were sitting in judgment of the people but who were failing to help those who were oppressed and in need.

Verses 34–38 are difficult to translate, but the main point Jesus is making is that if the false leaders were referred to in the Old Testament as “gods,” then how was it blasphemous for Jesus to refer to Himself as the Son of God?

3. If these leaders could not believe Jesus for His words, then what does He tell them to believe? How do they respond? vv. 37–39

Unable to change their minds, Jesus escaped out of their hands and went to the east side of the Jordan where John had baptized and there the outcome was much different. What the people heard and saw there caused many to realize that what John spoke about this Man was true. *“And many people believed in Him there”* (vv. 41–42).

More like Jesus ~

Are *you* becoming more like Jesus? Absolutely! Every time you open the Word and spend time getting to know Him more intimately, you partake in the life-long process of drawing near—going deeper—bearing fruit—becoming more like Him. As you close your lesson today, determine to put into practice what you’ve learned by noting it below.

- Recite your memory verse _____

- Reflect on a lesson you received _____

- Respond with prayer and praise to God _____

Notes