

JESUS CHRIST, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : John 10:1-18, 22-42

LESSON 144 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" (John 10:4).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

John 10:1-18

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Good Shepherd

1 The Lord makes it emphatic that we must enter in by the door into the sheepfold to be saved; thieves and robbers climb up some other way, John 10:1;

Jeremiah 23:21

²¹ I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

2 The Porter opens the door for the Shepherd, who calls His own sheep by name, John 10:2, 3;

Isaiah 43:1

¹ But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine.

Acts 20:28

²⁸ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

3 The sheep know the voice of the Shepherd and will not follow the voice of strangers, John 10:4, 5;

2 Samuel 7:8

⁸ Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:

Jeremiah 17:16

¹⁶ As for me, I have not hastened from *being* a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was *right* before thee.

Matthew 25:32

³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

Galatians 1:8

⁸ But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

4 Jesus tells them plainly, "I am the door of the sheep"; all before Him were thieves and robbers, John 10:7, 8;

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

5 All who enter through Him will be saved, John 10:9;

Ephesians 2:18

¹⁸ For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

6 The thief comes to steal and destroy: Jesus came that they might have life, John 10:10;

Ezekiel 34:2

² Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

7 Jesus is the good Shepherd and giveth His life for the sheep, John 10:11, 14, 15;

Ezekiel 34:12

¹² As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he

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

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.

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

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.

John 10:22-42

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

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

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.

³⁰ I and *my* Father are one.

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

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

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.

³⁴ Jesus answered them, Is it not

is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

Hebrews 13:20

²⁰ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

1 Peter 2:25

²⁵ For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

2 Timothy 2:19

¹⁹ Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

8 The hireling fleeth when the wolf oometh, because the hireling cares not for the sheep, John 10:12, 13;

Zechariah 11:16-17

¹⁶ For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *which* shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.

¹⁷ Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

II Other Sheep

1 Jesus has other sheep which are not of this fold: them will He bring, and there will be one fold and one Shepherd, John 10:16;

Isaiah 56:8

⁸ The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather *others* to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

Ezekiel 34:23

²³ And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, *even* my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

Ephesians 2:14

¹⁴ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between* us;

2 The Father loves Jesus because He laid down His life for the sheep. He had power to lay it down and power to take it again, John 10:17, 18;

Isaiah 53:7-8

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Hebrews 2:9

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

John 21:19

¹⁹ This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

III Unbelieving Jews

1 This parable was given at the feast of Dedication; the people gathered around Him and said, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly," John 10:22-24

written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

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

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?

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

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.

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

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

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

⁴² And many believed on him there.

2 Jesus said, "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep," John 10:25, 26;

John 3:2

² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

John 8:47

⁴⁷ He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

1 John 4:6

⁶ We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

3 Jesus and His Father are one, and no man is able to pluck the sheep out of their hands. John 10:28, 29;

John 6:37

³⁷ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 17:11-12

¹¹ And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

John 18:9

⁹ That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

4 The Jews sought to stone Jesus because He made Himself equal with God, John 10:31-33

John 5:18

¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

NOTES:

In this parable Jesus draws a portrait of Himself, under the simple character of a true shepherd. He is using an illustration with which they are familiar. They knew the love and care that a true shepherd gave his sheep. Jesus is bringing vividly to the mind of his disciples that He is the Door into the sheepfold. The works of the Law would not suffice for their salvation, but they must enter through Him into the fold.

He opens this discourse in a most solemn manner: "Verily, verily... " (which is to say, "It is true! It is true !") as if to impress upon them the importance of what He was saying. Jesus said that he that climbeth up some other way is a thief and a robber. The sheep that belong to a shepherd have a right to his fold. But those who try to come into God's fold without true repentance and without being born again are climbing up some other way. The Lord calls them thieves and robbers. Many are trying to get into Heaven by their good works and deeds of charity, leaving out the Blood atonement and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

An Undershepherd

We have a beautiful illustration of a true shepherd in the life of King David. When a lad he was given the responsibility of taking care of his father's sheep. During those days a lion, and a bear, came into the flock and each took a lamb. David did not run

when he saw the lion or the bear; but his love for the sheep and his responsibility for their safety caused him to go to their rescue. Faith and strength from his God helped him to snatch the lambs from the mouth of the lion and the paw of the bear. We believe the Lord gave him those experiences to teach him how to care for His people, Israel. The Lord saw that He could trust him as a true shepherd. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

An Uncompromising Spirit

Paul knew the value of being a faithful shepherd, and he said, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). There was no place for false doctrine in any of Paul's ministry. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

Paul was careful to see that no wolves dressed in sheep's clothing (**Matthew 7:15** ¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.) were allowed to remain in God's flock. They may not always be as readily detected by the spiritual eye as the lion and the bear were to David's natural eye, but the Spirit of God does not let them get very far into the flock until their true identity is manifested to us. A true shepherd does not back off and run when he sees the wolf coming, but with sword and shield he goes forth to meet it as an enemy. Paul said, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). He said, "After my departing." He was determined they would not enter while he lived.

Sheep's Clothing

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). In these last days many false prophets have arisen, wearing the garb of a minister. They have come in sheep's clothing and preached unsound doctrine to the people, turning many weak and unstable souls from the truth.

One of the great delusions of these last days is the doctrine of Eternal Security. This false doctrine is erroneously based on verses found in our lesson today along with other passages similarly wrested and misinterpreted. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

These false prophets declare that if one is born into the family of God, he is always a son. No matter what happens or how deep in sin he may go, he is always a son — even though a prodigal son — and that some day he will return home. They fail to consider the Bible teaching that a son can be disinherited, and that sin unrepented of will separate a soul from God eternally. There are many passages of Scripture counteracting this false doctrine, but one found in Ezekiel is sufficient. "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth. shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he

die" (Ezekiel 18:24).

We know, by taking into consideration all the passages of Scripture bearing upon this important subject, that we can fail to stay in God's hand. No power on earth or in hell can take us out, however, so long as we keep ourselves in God's will and way. We are the only ones who can take ourselves away from God's care and protection — but we can do it! God gives every person a free will — a power of choice — to decide his own destiny. This he retains when he is born again. And if he chooses at any time to depart into sin, to turn God's way aside, to love the things of the world more than the things of God, he may do so, but he will do it at the expense of his own salvation.

No one who values his eternal salvation is going to risk dabbling in sin, expecting to get back to God before he dies. It is possible to be restored to God's favor after having lost the grace of God out of the heart (**1 John 2:1-2** ¹ My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*) ; but should one die in his sins, he will be eternally lost. It is dangerous to trifle with God's love and mercy. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

Helplessness

It is a fact that sheep will quickly recognize the voice of their shepherd and follow no other. Jesus said, "And a stranger will they not follow, ... for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:5). A sheep that is lost is helpless to find its way back home. From a spiritual standpoint, there is no more helpless a being than a man lost in sin. It is impossible for him to get out of sin alone. He is powerless to help himself. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23). The devil has tried to substitute good works for a born-again experience. Nothing but the Blood of Jesus can wash the heart from sin.

Power to Lay Down His Life

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 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." Here lay the glory of Christ's sacrifice, that His death was absolutely voluntarily given for the life of the sheep. The beauty of the Resurrection is also pictured in that he had power to take up his life again.

Other Sheep

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." Black or white, red or yellow, there is no distinction with God, "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:35).

We can imagine the feeling of relief that a shepherd has when the last sheep has passed through the door and all are securely housed for the night. We can picture the same joy when the last saint has passed through the Portals and the great Shepherd of the sheep announces, "They are all here; the roll has been called, and not one is missing."

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

There will be one flock — one fold — one Shepherd.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What are the titles given Jesus in this parable?
- 2 How do shepherds get their sheep into the fold?
- 3 In a spiritual sense, how do we get into God's fold?
- 4 Through whom do we enter?
- 5 What does Jesus call those who try to enter some other way?
- 6 Who is the great Shepherd, and who are the undershepherds?
- 7 What does a hireling do when the wolf comes?
- 8 Are the Jews the only ones in the fold?
- 9 How many folds and how many shepherds will there be?