

## I. John 10:1-42 – Jesus, a Master Illustrator

### A. John 10:1-6 – The good shepherd versus the thief

1. John 10:1a – *“Truly, truly, I say to you...”* Although some commentators disagree, Jesus was likely still dialoguing with the Pharisees from the previous chapter. There’s no reason to believe otherwise since there is no mention of a **change** of audience or setting.
  - a. Verse 21 confirms that this is a **continuation** of the conversation concerning Jesus healing a man born blind. John 10:21 reads, *“Others were saying, ‘These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?’”* In verse 22 we can observe that the setting changes.
  - b. This chapter begins with a merciful **appeal** to these stiff-necked religious leaders. Jesus’ compassion and patience extend to all people. Since He is the only one who can save sinners, He greatly desires that all people trust in Him for salvation. Isaiah 30:18, Luke 23:34, Acts 4:12, Romans 5:8, 1 Timothy 2:5, 2 Peter 3:9
2. John 10:1b – *“...he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.”* The door was the only valid entry into a sheep pen. In the average sheep pen, the door was merely an opening in the circular enclosure that protected sheep. A shepherd would serve as the **gate** by lying in this opening at night.
  - a. The only legitimate way to enter the sheep pen was through the gate opening, which Jesus called the door. Only a thief (nonconfrontational burglar) or robber (an armed villain) would seek a more **covert** way to enter.
  - b. What was Jesus’ point? Jesus was building an analogy to compare His relationship with Israel with the way the religious leaders related to Israel. In this **analogy**, Israel was God’s flock. The religious leaders were thieves and robbers. In this comparison, Jesus was the true shepherd.
3. John 10:2 – *“But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep.”* Jesus came to the **flock** via the doorway. He came directly as God’s shepherd sent to God’s flock, Israel. He came identifiably in an open, candid and honest way, just as scripture had predicted He would come. Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:14
4. John 10:3 – *“To him the doorkeeper opens and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.”* Often, in open fields, a large sheep pen was **shared** by various shepherds and flocks. This allowed multiple herds to be safeguarded in the same enclosure.
  - a. In such instances there might be one shepherd assigned as doorkeeper. His job was to remain in the gateway to **safeguard** the various flocks of sheep inside the pen overnight.
  - b. In the morning, each shepherd would call out to his own sheep, often by name. The sheep would easily **recognize** and respond to the voice of their shepherd.
5. John 10:4 – *“When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.”* The believing remnant among Israel readily followed Jesus Christ because they recognized His **call**, His voice. Those who were of their father the devil did not recognize Him nor did they follow Him. John 8:44
6. John 10:5 – *“A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”* Jesus proposed that believing Israel would not follow false messiahs. Those who knew the true shepherd would not follow the **lies** offered by the false shepherds among the flock of Israel.
7. John 10:6 – *This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.* Because the Pharisees were spiritually blind, they did not understand the **significance** of the analogy Jesus made.
  - a. Jesus spoke of Himself as the true shepherd of Israel who came legitimately in the way a genuine shepherd would enter the sheep pen, through the principal **gateway**.
  - b. Jesus spoke negatively of the religious elite. He basically called them **bandits**. He implied that these religious leaders could beckon to Israel all day long but the true remnant of Israel, those who were believers, would simply not respond. In fact, they would flee from them.

### B. John 10:7-10 – Jesus is the gate

1. John 10:7 – *So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.”* Truly in Greek is **AMEN**, let it be so, or of a truth. The repetition of the word truly emphasized Jesus as the one and only true gateway, Israel’s one true shepherd.
2. John 10:8 – *“All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.”* The thieves and robbers were the religious leaders and others who tried to get Israel to follow them. These were not sent by

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God and did not actually care about the spiritual well-being of God's sheep. Believing Israel did not submit to these **imposters**. Acts 5:35-37

3. John 10:9 – “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” This verse describes two of the **tenses** of salvation, past and present.
  - a. Justification is salvation from sin's penalty occurring at a moment in time and can be likened to entering through an open door. Entering through Jesus describes believing in Him **alone** for salvation. That describes the past tense of salvation.
  - b. Sanctification is ongoing salvation from sin's power and is described by the phrase “*and will go in and out and find pasture.*” Finding pasture means the continual process of consuming the spiritual **food** necessary for spiritual growth. This describes the present tense of salvation. Acts 20:32, Ephesians 5:26-27, Colossians 3:16
4. John 10:10a – “*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy...*” Do not trust anyone who is self-promoting and unconcerned for the **welfare** of the sheep. Such people exploit God's flock by using religion for riches or fame. Acts 20:33, 1 Thessalonians 2:3-6
5. John 10:10b – “*...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*” Those who pass through the open door of Jesus Christ for salvation receive **life**.
  - a. This includes **eternal** life obtained in justification. John 3:16
  - b. This also includes **fullness** of life obtained through sanctification. John 17:3, Ephesians 3:8, 19-20, Colossians 2:9-12
  - c. And lastly, this includes **resurrection** life (the believer's glorification) which will be obtained in the future at the rapture of the church. 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

## C. John 10:11-21 – Jesus is the good shepherd

1. John 10:11 – “*I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep .*” By this statement, Jesus predicted His upcoming death on the cross. When Jesus came to earth, He did not have His own **agenda** ; He came for the benefit of God's sheep. As the good shepherd, He willingly died so that the sheep could live. John 1:29, Philippians 2:3-8
2. John 10:12 – “He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.” Hired hands flee at the first sign of danger because they do not truly **care** about the sheep.
  - a. Hired hands are not usually **evil** in their intentions, but at the same time, they are not fully committed to the protection and wellbeing of the flock.
  - b. The leaders of Israel during the times of Jesus were like **hired** hands. They were not concerned, or worried Israel might be devoured by an enemy. They were only concerned about keeping their position of power and control over the nation.
3. John 10:13 – “*He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep .*” Jesus told the truth. The religious elite of the day were not truly concerned for Israel's welfare. They were concerned only for their **own** advancement, even if it meant destroying the sheep of God's pasture. They were as indifferent as a hired hand. Philippians 2:20-21
4. John 10:14-15 – Jesus drew attention to His coming substitutionary **death**.
  - a. John 10:14 – “*I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me...*” As a perfect shepherd, Jesus is intimately acquainted with **every** lamb in His flock. Jesus' lambs also recognize Him as their shepherd. Psalm 23:1, 139:1-6
    - 1) This statement shows why the Pharisees continually speculated, argued and denied Jesus identity. The Pharisees did not **recognize** Jesus because they were not the sheep of His fold.
    - 2) They did not know from where He had come. They did not know who His real Father was, and they constantly denied the truth of His person. This was all proof that they did not **belong** to God.
  - b. John 10:15 – “*... even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep .*” Not only did Jesus know His sheep, He also intimately knew the **owner** of everything, God the Father. The religious leaders of the day could not make that claim. Jesus stated again that He would lay down His life for the sheep. Amazing!
5. John 10:16 – “*I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.*” Up until this point, the flock Jesus referred to was Israel. Now He spoke of **other** sheep who were not part of the flock of Israel.

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- a. The other sheep Jesus mentioned here are the **Gentiles**. Jesus was going to save others besides Israel. On the day of Pentecost, Jews and Jewish proselytes from gentile nations were among the first converts. Acts 2:5, 14
  - b. As time passed, we see Peter first, and then Paul, preaching the **gospel** to the gentile nations. Acts 10:11, 13:11
  - c. With the passing of time, the church became composed of both **Jews** and Gentiles. Jesus Christ, *the Chief Shepherd* (1 Pet. 5:4), presides over the church, accepting all equally. Galatians 3:26-29, Ephesians 2:11-22
6. John 10:17 – “*For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again .”* Being fully assured of His Father’s **love**, Jesus willingly obeyed the Father’s plan. He did not seek to work out His own private agenda.
- a. For the third time in this chapter, Jesus spoke of His coming death and resurrection. Each time He made it clear that **He** was laying down His own life. No one took it from Him. He was not forced to give it up unwillingly.
  - b. Those who were listening to Jesus could not have understood the full **meaning** of His words, but today, from hindsight, we readily understand that He was talking about His death and resurrection. Hebrews 12:2
7. John 10:18a – “*No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again...*” When Jesus died, no one took His life; He voluntarily laid it down. In His substitutionary death on the cross, Jesus was never a victim. He was both **priest** and sacrifice at the same time.
8. John 10:18b – “*...This commandment I received from My Father.*” God the Father gave Jesus **authority** to do with His own life whatever He wanted. Jesus ultimately made the decision to lay down His life. He willingly chose to die for our sins. This shows that Jesus’ sacrifice was an offering and not an obligation.
9. John 10:19 – “*A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words.*” Again, Christ’s teaching **caused** a noteworthy division (SCHISM meaning a division into opposing groups). Jesus tended to create this kind of stalemate. Matthew 10:34, John 9:16
10. John 10:20 – *Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?”* Rather than trying to understand Jesus’ teaching, a lot of the people went back to their typical accusations against Him. These people were a great **example** of those who did not know Jesus because they were not from His flock and He was not their shepherd.

John 10:21 – *Others were saying, “These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?”* Still others reasoned that Jesus had to be someone **special**. No demonic person could ever heal a man born blind.