

**The Word Became Flesh  
(Week 28)  
John 10:1-10  
“I AM The Door”**

**Introduction**

**“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” This is the Lord’s declaration. “Therefore, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds who tend my people: You have scattered my flock, banished them, and have not attended to them. I am about to attend to you because of your evil acts”—this is the Lord’s declaration. “I will gather the remnant of my flock from all the lands where I have banished them, and I will return them to their grazing land. They will become fruitful and numerous. I will raise up shepherds over them who will tend them. They will no longer be afraid or discouraged, nor will any be missing.”... Jeremiah 23:1-4a**

Throughout the Scriptures, the people of God are often characterized as sheep, and those who lead them, both politically and spiritually, are referred to as shepherds. I personally understand this comparison, for I have a small sheep farm myself. And I can tell you first hand, that sheep are not the toughest of creatures. They need quite a bit of tending. They can be stubborn, as well as, foolish. They tend to “live in the moment”, their only concern being the next bite of grass that they can feast upon.

I cannot tell you how many times I have had to come to the rescue of one of my flock, who had managed to get themselves into trouble. They seem to spend most of their time trying to escape the pasture believing the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. What they do not realize is that the fence is there for their protection. There are lots of predators out there, who are both ready and fully capable to take down a helpless lamb.

People are very much like sheep. We tend to only think of our own needs and desires, rarely thinking about the consequences of our decisions. This is why we need to be protected from our own selves by The Good Shepherd, Who knows what we need far better than we do. The boundaries that He gives us are there for a reason. This is why it is wise for us to obey His commands. They are given for our protection and well being.

When we come to the **Tenth Chapter of John’s Gospel**, we are given two more of the “I AM” statements of Jesus: *I AM The Door*, and *I AM The Good Shepherd*. At first glance these statements seem easy enough to follow. But a careful inspection of the text in its metaphorical context is actually much more difficult to understand. These powerful words of Christ were actually intended to be obscure as to their meaning, for what He said was meant to both condemn the Pharisees, as well as, confound them.

It is unfortunate that there is a break between Chapters Nine and Ten for they are a continuous narrative. Chapter Ten being “the rest of the story”, as it were, in the telling of the blind beggar whose sight had been restored by the Savior. As we know by reading the previous chapter, the Pharisees had ridiculed and persecuted the man for his testimony about Jesus. After which they had excommunicated him from the synagogue. Jesus sought the man out and saved this man’s soul, giving him spiritual healing in addition to his physical healing. The Pharisees had no use for this man, but Jesus came to call him out of the darkness and into the light.

In the Tenth Chapter, we see the man following Christ, and the Pharisees continued confrontation with The Son of God. Jesus’ words to them are powerful and convicting. He shows the obvious contrast between Himself, The True Shepherd of the sheep, and them, the false and ravenous shepherds, who care only about themselves. The reason that the allegory is difficult to follow at times is that Jesus mixes metaphors and speaks of Himself as two different components in the story. He refers to Himself as both The Door and The Shepherd. Today we will examine the first of these two “I AM” Statements: *I AM The Door*. Jesus is The Door of the sheepfold, The Door to the sheep, and The Door to salvation.

### **The Door of The Sheepfold (vs. 1-6)**

**“Truly I tell you, anyone who doesn’t enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will never follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they don’t know the voice of strangers.” Jesus gave them this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. John 10:1-6**

It is a mistake that many *Bible* teachers make when identifying the “sheepfold” of this metaphor as the Church or even heaven. As plainly evidenced later in this chapter, the sheepfold in this story is the nation of Israel (**vs. 16**). There is no way that a thief or robber could steal someone from the Church or from heaven for that matter. The thieves in this narrative, therefore, are the “false shepherds” of Israel. In other words, Jesus is telling the Pharisees that it is they who have come into the sheepfold in an unauthorized manner.

To fully understand the context of what is being said here, we need to understand a bit about first century shepherding practices in the Middle East. A “sheepfold” was usually a stone structure that was designed to enclose a large number of sheep in order to protect them during the night, when predators would be on the prowl for an easy meal. These predators would be of both the “four-legged”, as well as, the “two-legged” variety. In short, the sheepfold was employed to keep thieves from stealing the owner’s flocks and to keep vicious animals from preying upon the helpless animals as well.

Every evening at sundown, the local shepherds would lead their flocks into the sheepfold, where they would be closely watched by the porter, who would sit in the doorway. The porter would keep watch over the sheep during the night while the shepherds slept. He would actually lay down in the doorway during the night to keep the sheep in and the predators out. At daybreak, he would allow the shepherds to come into the fold to gather only the sheep that belonged to them. There would often be several different flocks of sheep combined within the fold each night, but when their respective shepherds came to retrieve them, the sheep could recognize their shepherds and would follow them out of the fold and to pasture for the day.

Sheep become very accustomed to hearing the voice of their shepherd, and they will not follow a strange voice that they do not trust. And it is this fact that enables the flocks to be separated so easily after spending the nights completely intermingled. I know this reality all too well, because I have a certain sound that I make when I go out to the field, and night or day, when I make that sound, my sheep will always come on the run. As I said earlier, Christ is both the Shepherd of the Sheep and The Door of the sheepfold in this allegory. But for now, we will concentrate on The Door.

First of all, Christ is the door to the sheepfold. He is the only legitimate way into the fold. *The Old Testament* has over three hundred separate prophecies as to the identity of The Messiah. And Jesus fulfills them all. He is speaking here of His legitimacy and His rights to the flock of Israel. The Pharisees were illegitimate shepherds of the flock. They were merely thieves who lived to make themselves fat off the sheep of God’s flock. Israel belongs to God Himself. They are the “sheep of His pasture” (***Psalm 100:3***).

The porter of this story, Who determines which shepherds are entitled to enter in, is none other than The Holy Spirit Himself. It is He Who determines who has a legitimate right to God’s flock. Jesus is not only The Door to the sheepfold, but He is the legitimate Shepherd or rightful owner of the sheepfold. And He was telling the Pharisees that they had no business tending His flock. The the only legitimate way into to The LORD’S sheepfold is through The Great I Am Himself. By claiming to be the only way into the fold, and all who would enter must go through Him alone, Jesus is once more claiming to be God. And as such, He is The Door to the sheepfold. No one has the right to come into the fold without His approval. Therefore His declaration: I AM The Door.

This Scripture tells us that the Pharisees could not understand what He was telling them. But this is why this matters: The Pharisees had attempted to cast this poor man out of the fold, and Jesus was letting them know that they had no right to do so. It did not matter whether they understood or not. The fact remained that *He* had never approved of them to shepherd *His* flock. And *He* had never approved of them to enter *His* fold. And since they had not entered into the fold through Him, they were thieves and robbers who had no right to be there in the first place!

### **The Door of The Sheep (vs. 7-8)**

**Jesus said again. "Truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn't listen to them. John 10:7-8**

Not only was Jesus the doorway into the sheepfold of Israel. He was also the only way out for the sheep. He had come to lead His flock out of the religious "works based" system that had been established by the false shepherds (Pharisees) and into something far more glorious. The Pharisees had attempted to throw this poor beggar out of the flock, but Jesus came to him and offered him something far greater. He had come to call His sheep out of religious bondage and into the wondrous pastures of grace!

The Pharisees had no legitimate rights over His flock, and this formerly blind beggar whom they had rejected was one of Christ's chosen sheep. He heard the voice of The LORD and believed, then obeyed. Therefore, he was delivered from the sheepfold of Israel in to the flock of God. And there were many other sheep, who would soon be called out as well. Even some of the Pharisees would eventually leave the fold and enter the flock of Jesus, after He was raised from the dead.

The way that a person is able to come out of the fold and into the flock is to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. Jesus is The Door that leads us out of religion and into relationship. His Word is the key. When we hear the Word of God and believe, we are led from captivity into green pastures of freedom. I love to lead my sheep out of a confinement pen into a field of fresh green grass. They will run and kick up their heels, when they are allowed out of a space with no fresh grass. You can tell by watching them just how content they are to be out!

Jesus came to free us from the bondage of sin, and the confinement of religious ritual. He came to lead us out of the fold and into His pasture. We can only leave the fold through Him. He is the door for the sheep. Only by going through Him will we be led away from our captivity. Just as He came to call the beggar, He has also called us. We hear His Word, and we are led out of the fold.

There is a truth in this passage that is unassailable. Those who belong to Jesus will respond to His voice. Do you want to know how that you can tell a true believer? They will long to hear The Word of God. You show me someone who doesn't love The Word, and I will show you someone who doesn't belong to The Shepherd! His Sheep will follow His voice. And He calls to them by name! He knows them intimately, and they know Him. Just as the blind man heard the voice of Christ and was healed, we hear His voice and are delivered from darkness to light. Remember, the fold was a place that held the sheep at night, but when the morning light dawned, the shepherd came and lead them out. The same is true for us, when we obey the voice of The Shepherd. He is the only way out for us. He is The Door for the sheep.

I believe that when the rapture of The Church takes place and we are called up by the shout of The LORD Himself, He will call us all by name with that shout (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**). We will hear Him call to us by name, and we will be taken to spend an eternity in the presence of The Shepherd. Because we have chosen to hear His voice and obey His Word. He is the door for the sheep. Not only is HE our only way out of our bondage, but He is also our only way out of this wicked world.

**The Door to Salvation (vs. 9-10)**

***I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.*** **John 10:9-10**

Not only does Christ call us out of the fold, but He also calls us “into another flock”. This flock is the Church, and He calls us from the darkness of the fold to the light of His salvation. Later in this discourse, He will mention “other sheep from a different fold” that He also intends to call out (**vs. 16**). This “fold” is not the nation of Israel, but rather the fold from every tribe and tongue. In other words, He is speaking of all the Gentiles that He will call out to become a part of His flock. There is to be one flock and one Shepherd (we will discuss this more when we cover the next part of the chapter).

Jesus is our door unto salvation. He calls us out of the fold and into the flock of His pasture. Just as He is The Door of the sheepfold and The Door of the sheep, He is also The Door of Salvation. There is only one way out of the fold into the flock of God, and that is through Jesus Christ. Or as The Apostle Peter has so wonderfully stated,

***This Jesus is the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.*** **Acts 4:11-12**

Peter was telling the Jewish leaders in the book of *Acts* the very same thing that Jesus was telling the Pharisees in John’s Gospel. They may not like the truth, but the truth would remain nonetheless. Jesus IS the door. He is the only way to God. He is The Door of Salvation.

The word for “saved” in the Greek is “sozo”, and it means to be “delivered”. It was used to describe those who had been rescued from certain death, either by violence or even a dire illness. Jesus is the only way that we can be delivered from whatever ensnares us. No matter what kind of confining sheepfold you may find yourself in. He is your only way out. He wants to bring you from darkness to light.

In *The Old Testament*, Moses commanded the Israelites to slaughter a lamb and place its blood upon the doorpost of their houses in order to be passed over by the death angel that would descend upon Egypt the night of the first Passover. Those who believed The Word of The LORD and placed the blood on their doorpost were delivered from death that fateful night.

Jesus the ultimate passover lamb was crucified and hung upon a post, so that we could be delivered from death and hell. The Door was hung upon the post and by His blood we have been given salvation. The cross was the ultimate doorpost for the ultimate Passover Lamb! He is the ONLY way to God. To trust in His Word is to be led out of the darkness of the sheepfold and into the light of salvation. To trust in any other way is to place our faith in thieves and robbers, for there is no other Name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved. Jesus is The Door, and those who enter through Him will be led into the pastures of God’s flock into life everlasting.

Have you made your way through the door of salvation? Are you trusting Jesus and Him alone to bring you from the dark sheepfold of sin into life everlasting? Are you experiencing the abundant life that The Savior has promised? He is there waiting for you. All that is left for you to do is enter in by faith. It is the most important decision that you will ever make. Are you tired and discouraged inside the confines of your darkened sheepfold. Hear the voice of The Shepherd as he calls your name to enjoin with the flock of God’s sheep.

***“Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*** **Matthew 11:28**

And let the many who are of God’s one flock say...TRUTH!!!