



## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: LESSON 11 "COME AND SEE"

Chapter 9 of the book of John ended with a word of judgment, which leads to the opening of chapter 10. Jesus contrasts Himself -- as the True Shepherd -- with the religious leaders, who were no better than false shepherds or thieves. This chapter is a wonderful illustration of the intimate relationship we can have with the Lord. He is our lover, our protector, our deliverer. He is the only door through which we can enter eternal, abundant life. William Barclay, in *The Gospel of John*, gives us a good picture of the life of a shepherd. He writes: "There is no better loved picture of Jesus than the picture of Him as the Good Shepherd. The picture of the shepherd is deeply woven into the language and the imagery of the Bible. It could not be otherwise. The main part of Judaea is a central plateau. It stretches from Bethel to Hebron for a distance of about 35 miles. It varies from 14 to 17 miles across. The ground, for the most part, is rough and stony. Judaea was, therefore, naturally much more a pastoral than an agricultural country. It was, therefore, inevitable that the most familiar figure of the Judaeian uplands was the shepherd. The life of the Palestinian shepherd was very hard. In Palestine no flock ever grazes without a shepherd and the shepherd is never off duty. There is little grass and the sheep are bound to wander far afield. There are no protecting walls, and the sheep have ever to be watched. On either side of the narrow plateau the ground dips sharply down to the craggy deserts and the sheep are always liable to wander away and to get lost. The shepherd's task was constant and dangerous, for, in addition, he had to guard the flock against wild animals, especially against wolves, and there were ever thieves and robbers ready to steal the sheep."

Keep this picture in mind as you read this chapter. This is a perfect illustration of the Shepherd's love for each one of us. May you bask in that love this week as you meditate on the truth of John 10.

## **First Day**

1. Read John 10:1-42. List and observe the facts in each section, noting any repeated words, phrases, or thoughts. Give each section a title that reflects the main thought.

### **Section 1: Verses 1-21**

### **Section 2: Verses 22-42**

2. How does this chapter tie in or relate to chapter 9?
3. The Old Testament often depicts God as the Shepherd of His people. Read the following verses and explain what each says about God as our Shepherd.
  - a. Psalm 23:1-6
  - b. Psalm 77:20

- c. Psalm 79:13
  - d. Isaiah 40:11
4. The New Testament also depicts Jesus as a Shepherd. What do these verses say about that?
- a. 1 Peter 2:25
  - b. Matthew 9:36
  - c. Matthew 18:12
  - d. Matthew 26:31

We'll end here for today. I love this illustration of Jesus because it brings so much comfort to my heart. I pray it does to you, too.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep." John 10:11

### Second Day

**Memorize your verse and ponder the meaning.**

1. Read John 10:1-21. Did the people understand what He was trying to say?

Jesus sets the stage for a great commentary on who He is and makes two great "I AM" statements. He again uses an image or illustration that they would all be familiar with. Being a shepherd in the East was a very common trade and a highly personal occupation. They were very devoted to their sheep.

2. From verses 1-6, name some characteristics of a shepherd.

3. Will sheep recognize their shepherd's voice? Will they follow a stranger?
4. Why do you think Jesus uses sheep to depict people?
5. Verse 4 shows us a specific characteristic of Eastern shepherds. They don't drive their sheep from the rear. What do they do instead? What is significant about this for us?

Eastern shepherds were very intimate with their sheep, calling them each by name. Typically, they would name them by their particular characteristics, like "Shorty" or "Black Ear." Every shepherd also had a unique call that his sheep recognized. Because they were used more for their wool than for meat, the shepherds would usually tend their sheep for years. A sheep could be in a communal sheep-fold, yet when her shepherd called her by name, its ears would perk up and she would follow. I read that the only time a sheep will follow a stranger is when it is sick. Hmmmm...

There are a few different kinds of sheepfolds. There were some that were low-walled corrals made with stone. These corrals had a narrow opening in front and were usually used out in the country. In the villages, the sheepfolds were often much larger and were more like communal corrals. They were manned by a professional gatekeeper who knew all the shepherds. During warmer weather, the sheep were not driven all the way back to the village, but stayed in rustic, makeshift sheepfolds on the hillside. William Barclay says this: "These hillside sheep-folds were just open spaces enclosed by a wall. In them there was an opening by which the sheep came and went; but there was no door of any kind. What happened was that at night the shepherd himself lay down across the opening and entrance, and no sheep could get in or out except over his body. In the most literal sense the shepherd was the door; there was no access to the sheep-fold except through him."



11. Why do YOU need a shepherd?
  
12. How does knowing that you have a Good Shepherd that loves you make you feel? (Think about that for the rest of the day!)

### Third Day

**Work on your memory verse.**

1. Read John 10:1-21 again. Jesus says that He is the door, and in order to enter the fold, you must go through Him. When you come in the door, you are not only saved, but safe. **How does He protect you, and what does He protect you from?**
  
2. Verse 9 talks about "finding pasture." What do you think He means?
  
3. The Pharisees and the scribes tried to enter by "climbing up some other way." How were they trying to enter?
  
4. According to verse 10, what did Jesus come to give us? We don't have to wait until we get to Heaven to experience this. How can we realize this life today?

Jesus now changes metaphors. When He brings us to the Father, He is the Door. When He takes care of us, He is our Shepherd. Michael Card writes that, "When Jesus calls Himself the Door, He is still calling Himself the Shepherd since the shepherd would lie in the opening to the sheep pens in the fields, making himself the gate to keep the sheep safe from wandering away in the night."

5. Which verses show us that Jesus gave His life for us willingly; that no one took it away from Him? Why is that significant?
  
6. Contrast a true shepherd with a hireling. Look at the motives, actions, and attitudes of each.

Jesus says that He is known by His sheep. They recognize Him and respond to Him. When sheep hear the shepherd's voice, their ears perk up. Their usual reaction is to immediately follow. They are drawn to him. They know that every need they have will be supplied by him.

7. How well do you respond to your Shepherd's voice? When your ears perk up at the sound of His voice, do you obey, or do you hesitate, deciding whether or not to trust Him? How did you respond today?
  
8. God wants to be your protector. He wants you to find rest and refuge in Him, knowing that you are safe. How does that minister to you today, in a situation you're facing?

9. A shepherd was a 24/7 job. He was never off duty. Our Shepherd is never off duty either. He is constantly there for you. How does that comfort you?
  
10. The fact that Jesus is our "Good" Shepherd implies that there are "bad" shepherds. What other shepherds are people following today?

In verse 16, Jesus refers to "other sheep which are not of this fold." He is talking about the Gentile believers. In verse 1, "the fold of the sheep" is speaking about the Jews who had accepted Jesus as their Messiah. These two groups would become one fold, but only through the sacrificial death of the Shepherd (Galatians 3:28). The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29) now proclaims Himself as the Good Shepherd, who gives His life for the sheep.

In his book, A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23, Phillip Keller describes a danger that is unique to sheep. He calls it being cast down, or simply, cast. A cast sheep cannot get back on its feet. Oftentimes, a heavy, fat, or long-fleeced sheep will lie down to get comfortable. Sometimes it rolls on its side to relax, which causes the center of gravity to shift, causing the sheep to turn on its back far enough that its feet no longer touch the ground. Sometimes the feet stick straight up in the air. The sheep usually panics because it is now at the mercy of many predators. When it panics, it rolls over even further, making the situation much worse. It is impossible for the sheep to regain its footing. The shepherd must come and turn it back over and massage its legs to get the blood circulating again.

11. How can we spiritually become a "cast" sheep? How can we regain our balance?



12. When we wander away from the fold, even slightly, what can happen to us? (Have you wandered away from the fold, even slightly? The Good Shepherd is coming after you to bring you home.)

That's it for today. There is so much in this section that we could spend weeks discussing it. I pray that you will really meditate on the great truths taught in this chapter. Have you entered "The Door"? Have you asked Jesus to be your "Good Shepherd"? Allow Him to lead you down the path ... He's been there and checked it out. You'll make it. That's a promise.

#### **Fourth Day**

**What's your memory verse? How does it speak to your heart today?**

How do you respond to the teachings of Jesus? The Jews were divided, some believing His words to be true, while others thought He was crazy (John 10:19-21). In our next section, Jesus returns to Jerusalem and continues His teachings. There is about a two-month interval between verses 21 and 22.

1. Read John 10:22-42. When and where is this taking place?

The Feast of Dedication is also known as Hanukkah, which is celebrated in late November or December, about 3 months after the Feast of Tabernacles. Hanukkah celebrates the purification and rededication of the Temple. "In 164 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes destroyed the temple, stole all the money from the treasury, and made it a capital offense to circumcise a child or even own a copy of the Torah. Mothers who were caught circumcising their babies were crucified with the infants hanging around their necks. Eight thousand Jews were killed. Swine flesh was offered to

Zeus on the altar in the temple. It was the abomination Daniel had foreseen (Daniel 11:31). The Maccabee family revolted against the Syrians, driving them out of the land, reclaiming and rededicating the temple." (Michael Card, The Parable of Joy)

Jesus is teaching in the east side of the temple area, known as Solomon's porch. It is a roofed-in enclosure supported by beautifully decorated columns. This is where they typically gathered to sit and discuss theology. Verse 24 tells us that the Jews surrounded Jesus, literally meaning "completely encircled." They had Him cornered.

2. What did they ask Him? Do you think they were being sincere or trying to trap Him?

Although Jesus had revealed Himself to the woman at the well (John 4), and the blind man (John 9), He had not yet openly claimed to the Jews that He was the Messiah, perhaps because their idea of the Messiah was completely wrong. They were looking for a conqueror; a hero like Judas Maccabeus, who would drive out the Romans. This was not Jesus. By listening to Jesus and seeing His miracles, they should have believed Him, but they didn't. Their minds were closed to the truth.

3. In verse 25, what does He offer as proof of who He is?
4. According to Jesus, why don't they believe in Him?
5. Verses 27-30 are some of the most precious and comforting verses in Scripture. What blessed assurances are given to us in these verses? (How does Romans 8:35-39 support this?)

In verse 28, the phrase "I give them" means "continually, again and again, never stopping." He is the source of our life!

6. Many today still claim that Jesus is not divine; He is not God. Do the religious leaders understand who Jesus was claiming to be? How do you know?

"I and the Father are One" is an amazing statement. In the LifeChange series Bible Study of John, it says this: "When the Church was coming to understand the Trinity in the early centuries, John 10:30 was considered a key. Some people thought "one" meant "one Person." They said that the Father, Son, and Spirit were simply modes of one Person. But the word is neuter - "one thing." Furthermore, as Augustine explained it, "are" refuted this idea of modes of one Person. On the other hand, some believed that the Son was a created being who was not fully God. They said that "one" meant simply "one in will and purpose." Augustine insisted that "one" meant "one in essence" or "one in kind." This word refuted those who made Christ less than fully God. The mystery of the Trinity is that Father, Son, and Spirit are three distinct Persons who are each fully God and together are the One God. They are not three Gods, three aspects of God, or three parts of God. Nor are the Son and Spirit less fully God than the Father."

Verses 34-36 may be a little confusing. Jesus quotes Psalm 82 which deals with the judges of Israel, the human judges who settled disputes. "The psalmist says that these men act as agents of God. God is in their midst. Jesus argues, saying that if ordinary men are called "gods" for serving as judges and doing God's work, and this is not called blasphemy, then how can you accuse Me, the Son of God, of blasphemy?" (Kent Hughes) He is attempting to remove their argument against Him.

7. In verses 39-42, how do the Jews react?
8. How does this section tie in with verses 1-21? How does it speak to your heart?



