

I Am the Door of the Sheep – John 10:7-9

Scripture Reading: John 10:1-10, 22-30

Jesus put forth a parable that no one understood (John 10:1-6). He then explained exactly which person, in the parable, He is (John 10:7-18). That was enough to get people arguing and ready to kill. Yet, eventually some did believe on Him (John 10:19-42). There are actually two “I Am” statements in this great story, but we must deal with them one at a time (John 10:7-11).

The Parable (John 10:1-6) and the Explanation (John 10:7-10).

This parable has sometimes been misunderstood to be talking about a person trying to get to heaven some other way but by Christ, who is the door – the only way to heaven (John 14:6). Rather, Jesus is talking about false teachers trying to get access to God’s elect (the sheep) and use them for their own evil purposes. Let’s examine each object and character in this parable.

The Sheep (John 10:2-16, 27-30)

This is a metaphor, describing God’s elect (true believers). They are vulnerable to wandering and to becoming prey to predators. They are defenseless and need the immaculate care of a shepherd. In this parable they are characterized as knowing and trusting only their true shepherd. See Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11; 53:6; Matthew 18:11-14; Hebrews 13:20-21; I Peter 2:25

The Sheepfold (John 10:1 cp. vs. 16)

This is a fenced-in area where the sheep are brought in at night for safety.

Thieves, Robbers and Strangers (John 10:1, 5, 8, 10)

The word “thief” simply means “a stealer.” The word “robber” describes one who plunders (i.e. takes by force). This implies selfish and destructive actions with no sincere care for the sheep. “Strangers” are outsiders. They have no proper relationship with the shepherd or the sheep. These characters represent false teachers who create their own following, but they are not of God (Matthew 7:15-23; John 7:18; Acts 20:28-30; Romans 16:17-18; Philippians 3:1-2, 18-19).

The Door / Gate (John 10:1)

To keep the sheep safe at night, the sheepfold must have only one entrance. God’s Word points to one way in which He will deal with His sheep. It is the way of faith and grace. The Scriptures reveal only one way that God saves sinners (Luke 24:44-48; John 5:36-47; Acts 4:12; Galatians 3:11-29; I Timothy 2:5-6).

The Porter / doorkeeper (John 10:3)

A porter must watch the sheep and guard the gate at night when the shepherd is not with his sheep. The shepherd and the porter work together, as a team, to care for the sheep. The Spirit of God is the one who guards and guides God’s elect, protecting them from false teachers and convincing them of the goodness of Christ (John 6:44-45; 14:15-26; 16:13-15).

The Shepherd of the Sheep (John 10:2-4)

The sheep belong to the shepherd. He loves them and cares for them. He would even die, defending them. The sheep know this and follow their shepherd exclusively. Much more needs to be said about the shepherd, but we must save some of it for the next lesson on John 10:11-18. Here are a few points that we must consider now:

- **The Porter yields to the Shepherd.**
The Spirit of God bears witness, through the Scriptures, that Jesus is the Christ. He convicts and convinces the elect concerning the truth as it is in Jesus (John 3:3-8; 16:7-16; I Peter 1:18-23; Galatians 3:1-3; 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:20-32; I John 2:18-27; 3:23-24).
- **The Sheep hear the Shepherd's voice and follow Him.**
Through the preaching of the Gospel, the Spirit of Christ is speaking to men's hearts today. As people respond in faith, their faith leads to discernment, loyalty and obedience (John 5:24-25; 6:63-69 [*cp. Mathew 16:13-17*]; Romans 1:16-17; I Corinthians 1:21-22; 2:1-16; Ephesians 2:1-10; 3:14-19; 5:11-21; I John 2:3-6; 5:1-5).
- **The Shepherd calls His Sheep and leads them.**
He will never forsake them or fail to care for them (Psalm 23; Matthew 18:11-14; 28:18-20; John 14:18, 23; Hebrews 13:5-6; Galatians 2:20). **This leads us to the main point of the lesson.**

Jesus Christ is the Door / Gate of the Sheep (John 10:7-10).

The Shepherd brings the sheep in to the sheepfold in the evening. He will release them to the care of the porter. Before he does, he stands at the gate and becomes like a gate himself, blocking the entrance and examining each sheep individually, before he steps aside (like a gate) and lets them into the fold. He is examining to see if they have any injuries or infestations. He looks to make sure that they are not limping or coughing. The shepherd cares for all of his sheep one-by-one. In the morning, before the sheep go back out to pasture, he checks them again, standing as a gate, letting them go by one-by-one, past his watchful, caring eyes. Do you know how much the Lord Jesus Christ loves you? Do you know that He is devoted to your well-being and that nothing can separate you from His great love? See John 16:33; Romans 8:28-39; Hebrews 13:20-21.