

A Study of John's Gospel

Lesson 13: Jesus the Good Shepherd (10:1-42)

Jesus continues to teach the Pharisees that challenged Him over the healing of the blind man in chapter 9. He talks to them about something familiar to help them to understand His mission and purpose. He discusses the characteristics of a shepherd and the sheep that they care for. The Jews still fail to believe in Him and desired to stone Him for blasphemy. Just as He had told them they were spiritually blind in chapter 9, He told them that they were not His sheep. He goes across the Jordan and finds many that believe in Him after they heard John's teaching.

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved" (10:1-10)

Jesus begins this chapter by shifting from His discussion of the blind to that of sheep and their pen. He speaks of a gatekeeper and the shepherd entering in at the gate. This is in contrast to those that would not enter in at the gate because they are not entering for good intentions. Jesus begins to introduce how the sheep react to the shepherd and the stranger. The sheep know the shepherd and listen to his voice following after him. The sheep do not recognize the stranger's voice and run away from them. Jesus teaches that as the gate, whoever enters will be saved—having life to its fullest. This is in contrast to the thief that comes to steal, kill and destroy.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (10:11-18)

After Jesus' teaching in the preceding verses about the sheep and the shepherd, He drives home the point that He as the "Good Shepherd" will lay down His life for the sheep. This is looking forward to what He knew He would be doing when He went to Calvary. This is in contrast to those that do not truly love their sheep and run when danger appears abandoning the sheep. Jesus states three times in this section – "I lay down my life (for my sheep)". This is an important point as it shows that He willingly gave His life at Calvary (v18- "I lay it down of my own accord").

"How long will you keep us in suspense? . . . If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly" (10:19-30)

The Jews continue to not believe. Jesus tells them they are not His sheep as they do not listen to His voice and follow him. He will give those that follow Him eternal life so that they never perish and will not be snatched out of the Father's hand.

"I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" (10:31-39)

The Jews seek to stone Him for blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God. Jesus tries to show them that they gave respect to "gods" in this world but still would not acknowledge who the Father sent. He even states, "believe the works (of my Father), that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father".

"Then Jesus went back across the Jordan . . . And in that place many believed in Jesus" (10:40-42)

Jesus escapes the grasp of the Jews that seek to stone Him and returns to the area across the Jordan where He finds many that believe in Him.

Questions:

1. What are the points Jesus makes by referring to himself as the gate (or door)?
2. What are the points Jesus makes by calling himself "the good shepherd"?
3. Who are the "other sheep" (16)? [notice the parallelism with 11:51-52 and then read Eph. 2:11-18]
4. What credentials did Jesus offer in support of His claim to be the Messiah (25)?
5. What was the explanation of Jewish unbelief, according to Jesus (26-28)?