

“Gate-Keeping”

I recently saw “gate-keeping” used as a description of a social media post (or tweet or some such- yeah, I’m “old”!) wherein the o.p. (how’s that for being up-to-date? It’s the abbreviation for “original post” for you other “old” people!) tried to discourage those 35+ from going to concerts... saying it just made them look “weird.” So much for being “inclusive”!

Well, I grew up on a farm, and “gate-keeping” and being the “gate-keeper” meant something very different. It was the job usually given to the youngest child (me!) when cows were being cut (separated out of the herd) in the lot. It was the job of the “gate-keeper” to open the gate at just the right time for the “culls” to get out of the pen, but quick enough to prevent any of the “keepers” from escaping.

Interestingly, this concept of “gate-keeping” is biblical, though not in the way the social media poster used it. Jesus incorporated it in John 10 in a couple of ways...

- He metaphorically identified Himself as “*the door of the sheep*” John 10:7, and further stated that “*if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture,*” v.9. But in the same context,
- He also mentions a “*doorkeeper*” who *opens the door* for proper *shepherds*, cf. John 10:1-3. Though the “*doorkeeper*” is not the primary point of emphasis for Jesus’ analogy, in keeping with the illustration contextually, the “*doorkeeper*” would have to be God the Father.

Thus, God “*the doorkeeper*” functions exactly as you would assume from the term- He conversely *opens the door* of the *sheepfold* (think *pen* or *lot*; an enclosed place of security and safety in which the sheep are kept at night or other times of particular danger) to allow *the sheep* in and keep the *thief, robber, hireling, or wolf* out, cf. vv.1,8,10,12! However, the *gate/doorkeeper* also prevents *sheep* who are not the *good Shepherd’s* out. These DON’T “*hear his voice,*” *wear His name,* and *follow Him*, vv.3-4, and those who DO *hear, follow,* and thus *belong to “a stranger”* rather than the *Good Shepherd!*

These simple truths revealed through a then commonplace practice that everyone understood fly in the face of a of *now* common myth regarding *God, the Good Shepherd, and His sheep*: Though the *Doorkeeper* and the *Good Shepherd* ARE willing to accept and admit *anyone* who wants to and is willing to be *Theirs*, there ARE requirements. One must *hear* and *follow* the *Good Shepherd’s* voice to be allowed in by the *Gate/Doorkeeper*, v.3! The *sheepfold* has a *gate/door*, and One who *keeps* it! To get “in,” you have to *hear, follow,* and thus *belong to* the Good Shepherd.

Wouldn’t you like to have Jesus the *Good Shepherd* loving, leading, and providing for you? Wouldn’t it be wonderful for the *Gate/Doorkeeper* God the Father protecting you from *wolves, thieves,* and those who only want to *kill and destroy* your soul? Then *hear* and *follow* Jesus’ voice by doing what He says and you can! (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)