

# The Christian Arsenal

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## John 10:1-42

A major part of today's lesson contains word pictures... "figures of speech." As we go through this chapter, we really need to take note of each word picture and discern its meaning. And we need to take note of its meaning

- by the **context**...
- by the **culture**...
- by other **Scripture**...

So, before we begin, let's take a "trip" in our minds and our imaginations to the land of Israel and let's view it as it was in the day of Jesus Christ.

The land then must have been very much as it is now...rough, rugged and rocky. However, even though the land of Israel is still rough, rugged and rocky...they have the benefit of modern technology and irrigation. They didn't have that back then.

The land of Israel was far better suited to raising sheep back then than it was to raising crops. And raising sheep required constant moving from one place to another so that they could find enough grass to sustain them.

Let's also keep in mind just a couple of facts about sheep and shepherds...

- sheep are not self-sufficient...they need a shepherd...
- the shepherd never leaves the sheep alone or unguarded...
- because of the amount of time the shepherd spends with the sheep, the shepherd really gets to know his sheep...

So, with all that in mind and with our minds concentrated on the culture of that day, let's look at our lesson...

Verses 1-3...

The greatest failure is to neglect to take the story in its context. The context is to be found in the preceding chapter in the story of the man born blind and in his mistreatment by those who were the leaders of the people.

This is obvious because of the absence of any transitional words at the beginning of **chapter 10**. When John indicates a transition either geographically or in time, he usually says something like "after these things," "after this," "on the next day," or some other transition phrase.

Here, the words of Jesus flow on immediately after His comments about the Pharisees at the end of **chapter 9** and are related to them.

And most commentators believe it does mean Jesus had the incident of the blind man in view as He taught about the shepherd and the sheep.

Keep this in mind, because we need to be aware that this passage of Scripture deals with the Jews.

Let's define some of the figures of speech found in these first six verses...

### 1) **the fold...verse 1**

There were two different types of folds in those days.

One fold would have been found in outlying areas where the shepherd must spend the night with his sheep because he would have been too far from the village to bring them back after having

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them in the field grazing all day. This fold would have been makeshift, with its boundaries made of stones and thorn bushes.

The other type of fold would have been in a village and would be slightly more sophisticated. It would have had a gate and perhaps more than one flock of sheep would have been penned up together in this fold.

## 2) *the door...verse 1*

There would be only one opening or one way to enter and exit the fold. In the village this opening would be a gate attended by a doorkeeper. In the wilderness, this would be a simple opening and would be attended by the shepherd.

## 3) *the shepherd...verse 2*

The shepherd must enter the fold by the door. If someone attempted to enter some other way, he was not a true shepherd, he was a thief and a robber.

And lastly...

## 4) *the call...verse 3*

Many times different flocks of sheep would be kept in the same fold and when morning came and the shepherds would call their sheep out...the sheep would come because they recognized the voice of their own shepherd.

Now that we've defined some of these figures of speech, let's make some interpretations that will become clearer to us as we go along:

I believe the key to understanding this passage is to understand that

- the fold is **Judaism...**
- the thieves and robbers are false teachers, even the **Pharisees...**
- the shepherd who has entered the proper way is **Jesus Christ...**
- the sheep who have been called out are believers who have been called out of **Judaism...**

Let's remember that Jesus has just healed the blind man's eyes...and saved the blind man's soul. The blind man was a Jew and he has been led out of Judaism into salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

So, Jesus is saying,

"I entered the fold of Judaism legitimately. I fulfilled prophecy in every way. I didn't climb over the walls. I didn't sneak over the hedges. All that had ever been foretold about the Messiah has been and will be fulfilled in Me.

- So, I am the Shepherd who leads those who believe in Me
- from the fold of Judaism...
  - from the fold of tradition..."

Jesus not only calls them out – He also leads them.

Verses 4-6...

Several weeks ago we took our grandson out to a dog show out at the AgriCenter. It wasn't your typical show where dogs were judged on their breeding and the way they carried themselves around a ring.

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This was more of an exhibition and a demonstration of many different varieties of dogs and their expertise in different fields. For instance they had a K-9 demonstration from the police force.

But they also had a demonstration of sheep herding. They had ten or twenty sheep in a penned in area and different little sheep dogs would take their turn in rounding them up.

First they would circle around them, maybe nip and bark at their heels a little. When they had sufficiently gotten the sheep into a circle...then they would lie down very quietly and just wait for one of the sheep to get out of line. It was fun to watch these little dogs do their thing...

But, Jesus doesn't round up His flock by sending a sheepdog to bark at their heels. He calls His sheep by name. He doesn't drive them...He leads them. He goes before them and they follow Him because they know Him and trust Him.

They know His voice and will not listen to the voice of a stranger.

**Verse 6** tells us they didn't understand what He was talking about...but, He goes on...

Verses 7-11...

Jesus says, **"I am the door of the sheep..."** in **verse 7...**

**"I am the door. Anyone wishing to leave the fold of Judaism and enter My flock must come through Me."**

Then in **verse 9** He says, **"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me..."**

Here He does not limit Himself to being the door of the fold of Israel...He is the Door...period! He is indeed the only way of salvation **to the Jew first** but **also to the Greek!** (**By the way, this the third "I am" statement in the Gospel of John.**)

**Verse 8...**

Jesus is saying that those false teachers who came before Him did not lead His sheep. And if you want to see how God feels about false teachers...false shepherds...go home this afternoon and read all of **Ezekiel 34.**

**Verse 9...**

Let's see what happens to those who enter through this **door...**

- **they shall be saved...perfect security...**and we'll see much more about that in just a minute.
  
- **they shall go in and out...perfect liberty...**if Jesus makes us free we shall be free indeed.
  
- **they shall find pasture...perfect provision...**God supplies all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

**Verse 10...**

This thief is any man Satan uses...any false teacher he can dredge up...to steal and kill and destroy.

But, Jesus came to give us life and to give it abundantly.

***What is full and abundant life?***

It's not always a **long** life, although there are verses that promise a long life to some, such as to those who honor their father and mother.

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It's not always a life free from sorrow or sickness either.

It's not a life of ease, where everything is always beautiful or wonderful.

The abundant life, as Scripture speaks of it, is, above all, the contented life, in which contentment comes from the confidence that God is equal to every emergency and does indeed supply all our genuine needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

I wish we had the time to look at this lesson in light of **Psalm 23**. We really don't but I do want to at least touch on a couple of things that David teaches us in that psalm... **"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want..."**

Not to be in want is to be content, and this state can exist only when the sheep is in the care of a good shepherd.

Then, David says, **"He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters, He restores my soul."**

Phillip Keller has written several little books based on his knowledge of sheep. Phillip Keller was a shepherd in Kenya as a young man and let me just share with you something Mr. Keller wrote in [A Shepherd Looks as Psalm 23](#).

In writing of the fact that there is great difficulty at times in getting sheep to lie down he says:

"It is almost impossible for them to be made to lie down unless four requirements are met. Owing to their timidity they refuse to lie down unless they are free of all fear. Because of the social behavior within a flock, sheep will not lie down unless they are free from friction with others of their kind. If tormented by flies or parasites, sheep will not lie down. Lastly, sheep will not lie down as long as they feel in need of finding food. They must be free from hunger."

Freedom from fear, tension, aggravation and hunger! These are the four necessities. And the important thing, as Mr. Keller points out, is that it is only the shepherd himself who can provide them.

David goes on in **Psalm 23** to point out that the other advantages of having the Lord as our Shepherd is that He gives us guidance and comfort and safety and provision and a destiny, but it all begins with a picture of sheep who have found their shepherd to be a good shepherd...one who is able to meet their physical needs and to provide them with release from anxiety.

And that brings us to the very next verse...

**Verse 11...**This is the fourth "I am" statement.

So, Jesus is not only "the door", but He is also "the Good Shepherd."

Remember in Bible times the shepherd was also the door. He not only led the sheep by day, but He protected them by night. Remember we said earlier that when the shepherd would bring his sheep in for the night and if they weren't in a village but in an outlying area, that this fold wouldn't be a real fenced in area.

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It would just be a cleared place with stacked rocks as the boundary that would keep the sheep in. There would always be an opening called the door, and many times the shepherd would sleep across that opening.

**He did this because there was no gate and a predator could come during the night and kill or maim one of his sheep. If harm threatened the sheep in any way, he was willing to defend and protect them.**

Do you see the application here? The Lord Jesus Christ is our Good Shepherd who lays down His life for us.

Throughout the Bible God's people are compared to sheep and when you think about it...that's a very good comparison or analogy. There's no way that we have the time to go into an exhaustive list of reasons why God compares His people with sheep, but let's look at a few...

- sheep are clean animals, unlike dogs and pigs which are also mentioned in Scripture.
- sheep are defenseless, they need constant care by the shepherd
- sheep are dumb animals...they are "prone to wander", easily led astray and must often be brought back to the flock...

I think God knew what He was doing when He compared us to sheep, don't you?

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows us. We get to know **Him**

- By listening for and to His voice...
- By trusting Him
- By following Him
- By spending time with Him...

## **Verses 12-15...**

Jesus draws a contrast here between Himself and the hireling. The hireling is the false teacher He has already referred to.

Look at Jesus' profound description of these folks:

***"...he is not concerned about the sheep..."***

False teacher, false shepherds, scribes, Pharisees, hirelings are never concerned about the sheep...they are only concerned about their own agenda. ***And let me remind you that false shepherds abound today. We can see them any day or night of the week on our televisions...***

By contrast, our Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. Not only does He die for us, but He ever lives for us...He makes intercession for us!!

## **Verse 16...**

Aren't you glad Jesus included "other sheep?" You and I are these other sheep! These sheep are not Jews...they are Gentiles!

Remember we said the "fold" spoken of in the first part of this chapter is Judaism?

Well, here, the "flock" is the church. In the early ministry of Jesus, He concentrated on "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." In fact, even at Pentecost, the people converted there were Jews or Jewish proselytes...***but the church would not remain an exclusively Jewish flock.***

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The disciples were commissioned by Jesus to take the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the world...so they did and now there is one flock and one Shepherd and this flock includes both Jew and Gentile. We call it the church.

I think it's so interesting to note that early church in Israel was almost entirely Jewish! Then, God told Peter to take the Gospel to a man named Cornelius. And little by little, the Gospel was spread into more and more Gentile areas.

But, as I was reading in the **Book of Acts** this week, Paul quoted  
From the **Book of Isaiah** and he said,

“For thus the Lord has commanded us,  
I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles,  
That You should bring salvation to the end  
Of the earth.”

Even in Isaiah's day, God had prophesied that the Gospel was not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles.

The **old fold** still stands...a monument to unbelief. Judaism  
with its enmity toward Jesus still flourishes.

The Shepherd they have despised and rejected is coming back one day to fulfill God's purposes concerning the old fold. In the meantime, in God's plans the important entity is the flock, the church. We must never confuse the church with Israel or the flock with the fold.

God is not through with Israel. One day, many will come to know Jesus...but it will take a time of severe tribulation for their eyes to finally be opened.

Verses 17-18...

Here we see that Jesus had the authority to lay down His life and the authority to take it up again.

Other places we read that Jesus did only what pleased the Father. Was this a contradiction?

No! It was a give and take situation. God gave this authority  
to Jesus...Jesus took this authority, but at the same time, Jesus  
always yielded His will to the Father!

Verses 19-21...

Doesn't this all sound familiar? It seems we've heard this before! Why are they divided? They are not His sheep!

Verses 22-30...

**Verse 26** sums it all up quite well, doesn't it? Jesus says, “**You do not believe because you are not of My sheep.**”

And then He follows that with this beautiful teaching on the security of the believer! We see three important truths in **verse 28**...

1) “**I give eternal life to them...**”

We don't have to wait to receive this eternal life. It is a gift given to us in the present, not the future.

2) “**They shall never perish...**”

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The verb “perish” here means more than physical death. It means ultimate disaster. Believers will not ever experience ultimate disaster!

### 3) **“...and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.”**

The last thing I want us to see in **verse 28** is the precious fact that we are in the hand of the Savior and no shall snatch us away and then He follows that up with **verse 29!!!**

Now, just think about these two verses for a moment. Isn't there something absolutely wonderful about this truth?

- the Lord Jesus closes His hand around us!
- the Father closes His hand around us!

Notice also in **verse 28** that no shall snatch us and in **verse 29** that no one is able to snatch us. I'd say this covers all possibilities of being snatched from the safety and security of our Lord!

**I don't know why folks have a problem with eternal security. I choose to take these verses as proof positive that I cannot be lost once I am saved!**

Verse 30...

Here Jesus again proclaims His deity.

**Verses 31-33...**

The Jews once again attempt to stone Jesus. Don't you just love the quiet question Jesus asks in **verse 32**? The Jews aren't interested in thoughtful questions that require thoughtful answers. They are interested only in stoning Jesus for blasphemy.

**Verses 34-36...**

These are interesting verses and on the surface appear troublesome. The Scripture Jesus is referring to here is **Psalm 82:6**.

This psalm is about unjust judges. The Hebrew word for judge in the **Old Testament** is the same word used for God... “elohim”...

**Does this mean these judges, whether just or unjust were divine? No, of course not!**

These judges were to act on behalf of God. They were supposed to be God's men doing God's work.

**But, the point that Jesus is making is simply this...**

**The Pharisees did not accuse the psalmist of blasphemy when he calls mere men gods, but they are charging the Son of God with blasphemy!**

**Deity is standing in their midst and they seek to stone Him!**

**Verses 37-38...**

Jesus appeals to them to believe the works He has done. We have to remember that Jesus loved these spiritually blind men of Israel just as much as He loved the physically blind man that He had healed.

**Jesus wanted them to believe on Him!  
Jesus is not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance!**

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But, they refused to listen to His voice...because they were not His sheep!

Verses 39-42...

Once again, Jesus eludes the grasp of the Jews... "because His hour had not yet come..."