***Good News for Sheep***

**Walking with Jesus in John’s Gospel February 25, 2024**

***“I am the good shepherd;  
I know my sheep and my sheep know me . . .  
and I lay down my life for the sheep.”*John 10:14-15**

**Jesus knows sheep**

*“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” 6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.*

*7 Therefore Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

*11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”*

John 10

1. Jesus’ “figure of speech” continues his reflection on the fifth sign in John’s gospel. This is another example of an unfortunate chapter division in our English texts. The Pharisees are still in the background trying to trap Jesus, especially after Jesus turns to the first person in 10:5-7.

1. The “I am” passages largely begin here (the exception is the “Bread of Life” in John 6)   
   reflecting that John is particularly focusing on how Jesus is revealing his Messianic character, illustrating authentic (and inauthentic) faith, and calling disciples (sheep!) to follow him.

3. Jesus assumes we know the long biblical history of God’s and his shepherds:

good shepherds: 2 Samuel 5:2, 7:7; Psalm 23, 28, 78:71-72, 80:1; Isaiah 40:11, 44:28;   
Jeremiah 3:15; Ezekiel 34:23, 37:24, Micah 2:12-13, 5:4

bad shepherds: Ezekiel 34; Isaiah 56:9-12; Jeremiah 2:26-28, 23:1-4; 25:34-38, 50:6  
Zechariah 5:1-4, 10:3-12, 11:16-17; and Amos 3:12 for the ineffectual shepherd

4. The Good Shepherd is easy to identify, but Jesus makes us work a little to identify the “thief and robber,” the “watchman,” the “hired hand,” and the “wolves.”

**A warning for thieves, hired hands and unfaithful under-shepherds**

1. The sheep should be able to recognize the thief

*“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”*

John 10:1-5

2. The hired hand does not protect the flock from the world (he cares more for his own safety)

*11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”*

John 10

**What sheep learn about the Good Shepherd (even more next week!)**

1. The sheep are known (and know!)

*2 “The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”*

John 10:2-5

2. The Good Shepherd has in mind the best interest of the sheep

*7 Therefore Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

John 10

3. If there’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Shepherd, there can be only \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ flock

*14 “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”*

John 10

4. Jesus begins to point to his death and resurrection

*17 “The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”*

John 10

**Going back to John’s three questions**

Question 1: What is Jesus revealing about the kind of Messiah he will be?

Question 2: What is Jesus revealing about authentic or inauthentic faith?

Question 3: What is Jesus teaching his followers about walking in the light?

1. This Shepherd-Messiah will give his life for his sheep

*7 He was oppressed and afflicted,*

*yet he did not open his mouth;*

*he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,*

*and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,*

*so he did not open his mouth.*

Isaiah 53 (see 1 John 3:16)

1. Jesus is revealing that he is the only, the unique, gate

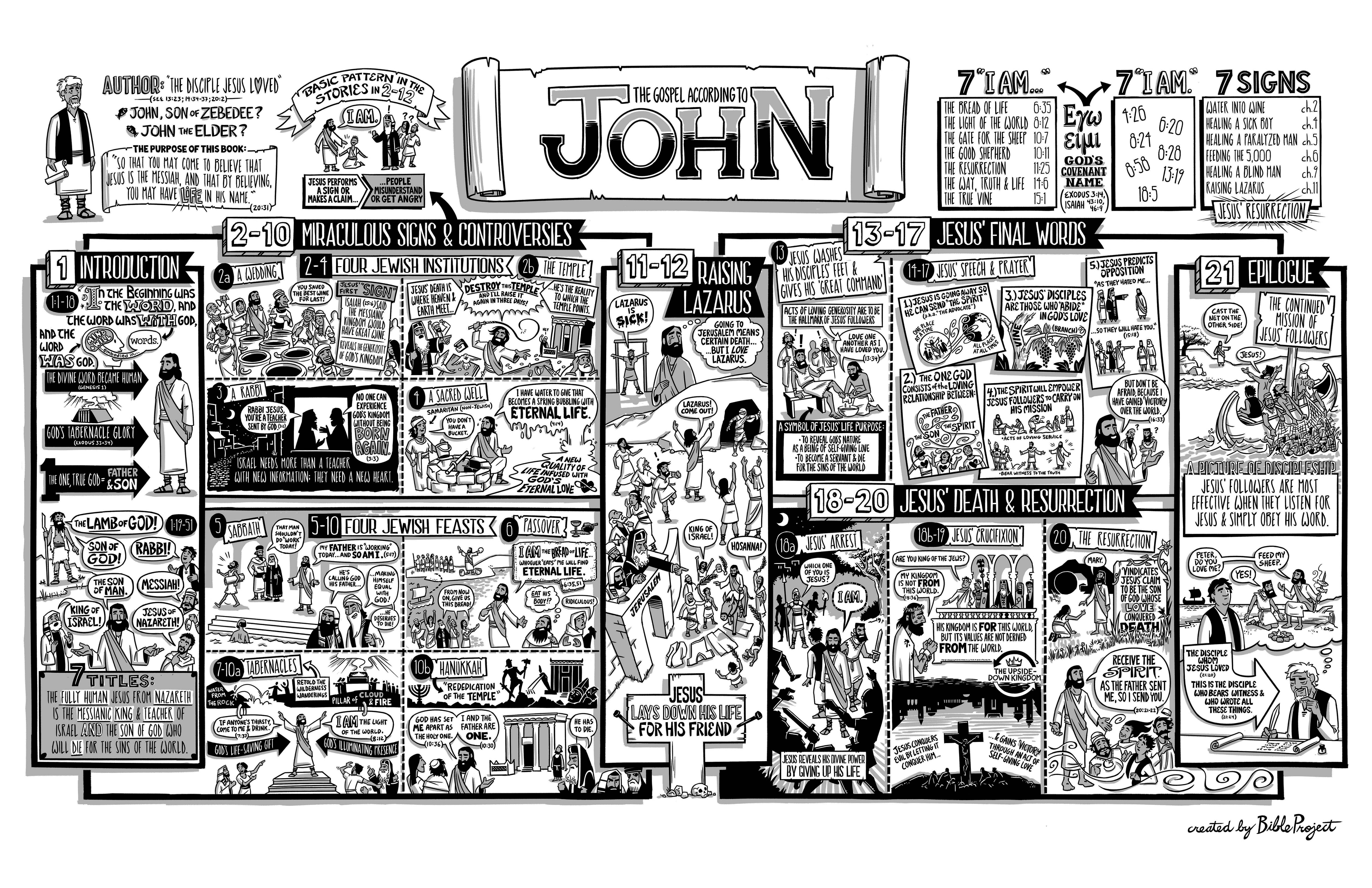
*7 Therefore Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.”*

John 10:7-9 (see Matthew 7:13-14 and M’Cheyne’s articles)

1. Walking in the light was always designed to work best with a “shepherd”

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

1 Peter 5



**Resources for further study**

The Bible Project team does a great job of introducing John’s themes even if it might be too busy at  
[*https://bibleproject.com/downloads/posters/*](https://bibleproject.com/downloads/posters/)

Doug has referenced these commentaries:  
Hendricksen’s *New Testament Commentary* (Baker, 1953)  
D.A. Carson has a great commentary (Eerdmans, 1991)  
Merrill Tenny’s commentary in the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1981)

Gary Manning argues that the “thief” is not Satan but human bad shepherds, especially the Pharisees in this story at [*https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2016/misinterpreting-the-thief-john-10-10*](https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2016/misinterpreting-the-thief-john-10-10)

Spurgeon has a sermon on “The Sheep and their Shepherd” at [*https://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/0995.htm*](https://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/0995.htm)

Robert Murray M’Cheyne has a wonderful commentary on this text at [*https://www.monergism.com/christ-door-church*](https://www.monergism.com/christ-door-church%20)and [*https://www.monergism.com/hireling-and-true-shepherd*](https://www.monergism.com/hireling-and-true-shepherd)

Martin Luther has a helpful commentary on this text at [*https://www.monergism.com/christ%E2%80%99s-office-and-kingdom-or-how-christ-true-shepherd-john-1011-16*](https://www.monergism.com/christ%E2%80%99s-office-and-kingdom-or-how-christ-true-shepherd-john-1011-16)

Sproul has helpful words for under-shepherds at [*https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-does-it-mean-be-shepherd-over-flock*](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-does-it-mean-be-shepherd-over-flock)

Doug likes Terry Johnson comments at [*https://www.reformation21.org/blog/the-good-shepherd*](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/the-good-shepherd)

Bob Deffinbaugh has a good sermon series on the Gospel of John at [*https://bible.org/series/you-might-believe-study-gospel-john*](https://bible.org/series/you-might-believe-study-gospel-john)

# Christ, the Door into the Church

### by Robert Murray M'Cheyne at [*https://www.monergism.com/christ-door-church*](https://www.monergism.com/christ-door-church)

John 10:6 "This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly."

**C**hrist is the kindest of all teachers. He was speaking to a crowd of ignorant and prejudiced Jews, and yet how kindly he deals with them. He told them one parable, but they understood not. "This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were he spake unto them." And yet, we are told, Christ spake unto them again. He hath given them a description of the true and false shepherd, and of the door into the sheepfold; but they seem to have been at a loss to know what the door meant; therefore he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep." You see how kindly he tries to instruct them. My brethren, Christ is the same kind teacher still. Are there not many stupid and prejudiced persons here? And yet has he not given you "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little," Isaiah 13.28. He has broken down the bread for you.

 Let us now examine this explanatory parable:

1. Christ is the door into the Church.  
2. The invitation here given to enter in.  
3. The promise to those that enter in.

 I. Christ is the door into the Church. "I am the door." The only way into the Church of God, either for ministers or members, is by Christ, and through faith in him. Many enter in by learning; learning is not to be despised, but yet it is not the door. There are many that have entered into the ministry, by having eminent gifts, but these are not the door. And those who enter in such a way are thieves and robbers, for they enter not in by the door. Again, many enter in by the door of worldly favour, some by the favour of the rich, some by the favour of the common people, some by the favour of the patron; but still they are thieves and robbers, for they enter not in by the door. Remember then, and never forget it, that the right way into the ministry is through Christ. None can tell of sin, but those who have felt its burden. None can tell of pardon, but those who have tasted of it. None can tell of Christ's power to sanctify but those who have holiness in their hearts. Brethren, hold such in reverence; flee from all others; they may have learning, they may have gifts, they may have the flattery of the common people, but they are thieves and robbers.

     But further, there are many members who enter into the fold another way; they also are thieves and robbers. There are many who enter in by the door of knowledge ? they have got acquainted with Bible knowledge, they can tell of the way of a sinner's acceptance with God; but if you have not come into the fold by being washed in the blood of Christ, you are a thief and a robber.

     Some enter into the fold by a good life. As touching the law they are like Paul, blameless. You are not a thief, you are not a swearer, you are not a drunkard, and you think you have a right to enter in ? a right to sit at the Lord's table; but Christ says it over and over again, you are a thief and a robber. Ah, brethren, remember if you are admitted into the fold on account of your morality ? your outward decency ? your good life, you are a thief and a robber. Brethren, there is a day coming when those who have entered into the sheepfold, not by the door, but some other way, will look back and see their guilt when they shall enter an undone eternity.

     Observe, brethren, before I leave this part of the subject, that Christ is a present entrance. Brethren, there is a time in each of your lives ? or rather I should say, history ? that the door of the sheepfold is open to you. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"; but that time will pass away. It is but a moment compared to eternity. This is a solemn truth. Brethren, if I could promise you that the door will stand open for a hundred years, yet it would still be your wisdom to enter in now; but I cannot answer for a year, I cannot answer for a month, I cannot answer for a day, I cannot answer for an hour; all that I can answer for is, it is open now ? tomorrow it may be shut for ever.

 II. I come now to the second thing proposed, and that is, to shew you Christ's invitation. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." There are many sweet invitations to sinners in the Bible; I have often felt these words to be the sweetest. There are some invitations addressed to those who are thirsty. It is said in Isaiah, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," etc. Christ said on the last day, that great day of the feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." And he says, near the end of Revelation, "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Again, there are some invitations that are addressed to those that have a burden; "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Again, there are some that are addressed to those who are prisoners; "Turn you to the stronghold ye prisoners of hope." But this appears to me the sweetest of all, for it is said, "If any man." It is not said, if any thirsty man, if any weary man, if any burdened man, but if any man enter in he shall be saved. I have seen some rich men's doors, where none could enter but the rich; and where the beggar must lie at the gate. But Christ's door is open to any man, whatever your life, whatever your character may be. Christ is not like the door of some churches, where none can enter in but the rich; Christ's door is open to the poor; "To the poor the gospel is preached." Some, perhaps, can say, "I am the most vile one in this congregation," yet Christ says, "Enter in." Some, perhaps, can say, "I have sinned more than all; I have sinned against a father, I have sinned against a mother, I have sinned against mercies, and against judgments, against the invitations of the gospel, and against light," yet Christ says, "Enter in."  
     Observe still farther that the invitation is not to look at the door, but to enter in. There are many that hear about the door, but that is not enough; it is to enter in at it. And there are many that like to hear about the door, but yet they do not enter in. Ah, my brethren, that's a great cheat of the devil. I am persuaded many of you will go away this day well pleased because you heard about the door, but you do not enter in. There are many that go a step farther, they look in at the door, but yet they do not enter in. I believe that many of you are often brought there; but when it comes to the point, that you must leave your idols, that you must leave your sins, you do not enter in. "By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

     Again, there are some who see other people enter in, but they do not enter in themselves. You, perhaps, have seen a father, or a mother, or a neighbour enter in; you have seen a change come over them, and a peace possess their minds, and you say, "I wish I were them"; but you do not enter in. Ah! if you would be saved, you must enter in at the door; convictions will not do, tears will not do, etc. And this is the reason why so many of you are not happy; you do not enter in.

 III. I now come to the third and last point, and that is, the promise; "If any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The first part of the promise is, "They shall be saved." Christ pledges his word for it, that those who enter in shall be saved. Those who do not enter in shall be damned. If you are not Christ's, you are without, and without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. But those who enter in shall be saved. It is immediate pardon. There will be even now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. O my brethren, it is immediate pardon we offer you from the Father, "If any man enter in, he shall be saved." And then, "He shall go in and out, and find pasture." That is to say, you will have all the privileges of a sheep; it goes out to the well; it goes out to the pasture. So, if you are his, you can go in and out to find pasture. My dear brethren, there may come a time in Scotland, when there will be little pasture, when there will be no under-shepherd, when the witnesses will be slain. Yet the Lord will be your shepherd, he will feed you. You shall "go in and out, and find pasture." Amen.

Sabbath Forenoon,11th September 1842.

# The Hireling and the True Shepherd

### by Robert Murray M'Cheyne at [*https://www.monergism.com/hireling-and-true-shepherd*](https://www.monergism.com/hireling-and-true-shepherd)

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."

**I**n our first lecture we saw that the people did not understand Christ. There were two things that they did not understand. The first thing that they did not seem to understand was the door of the sheepfold; the second, who the shepherd was. And we saw last Sabbath that he explained to them what the sheepfold was. And now he begins to show who the shepherd is: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." It is exceedingly interesting to know the many names by which Christ calls himself in the Bible. These are above a hundred, I think a hundred and seven. He calls himself a rose, "I am the rose of Sharon," and a lily, "I am the lily of the valley." The reason why he has so many names is that one name would not describe him; he has so many offices that one name would not explain them; nay, all of them put together do not, for Paul said, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Of all the names given, that of a shepherd is the sweetest. We understand things best by figures; so, at the beginning of this chapter, he contrasted himself with a stranger, and in these words he contrasts himself with a hireling, whose own the sheep are not. We shall consider these two things, the hireling and the true shepherd.

I. The hireling, verses 12, 13. There can be little doubt, I believe, that the hireling represents unfaithful ministers. Let us then go over the features, here laid down, of an unfaithful minister:  
  
     1. He is a hireling; that is to say, the end he seeks is the hire. You know, dear friends, that a minister should be maintained. It is written in the law, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." "They that preach the gospel should live of the gospel," 1 Cor. 9.14. But then, dear brethren, observe that this should not be the end of the ministry. The hireling here mentioned, is one who seeks the hire and not the flock. This was often complained of by the prophets. Isaiah complained of it in his day. "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs; they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." Isaiah 56.10, 11. Now, this is just the hireling. Jeremiah complained of them in his day: "For, from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet, even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely," Jer. 6, 13. This is the hireling again. Ezekiel complained of them in his day. "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" Ezek. 34.2. Paul complained of them in his day: "For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's, Phil. 2.20, 21. Ah! brethren, this is the black mark of the hireling: verse 12, "He that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth," etc. But, brethren, it is not merely the seeking money that marks the hireling, but seeking our own ease ? our own honour ? our own fame. Pray for ministers ? pray that they may not be given to covetousness.  
  
     2. "Whose own the sheep are not." You know, dear brethren, that faithful ministers stand in a peculiar relation to the sheep. They are called fathers ? watchmen that stand on the watch tower, etc. It is a relation that outlasts death. You know, dear friends, that Paul often calls himself a father; see 1 Cor. 4.15; Gal. 4.19; 1 Tim. 1.2; Philemon, l0th verse. Ah, friends, this shews you the union between the minister and the flock. He is a father ? he begets them through the gospel. It is not so with a hireling ? his own the sheep are not. God does not own him as a father. God does not own him in the conversion of souls. He cannot say as Paul said, "My dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown." He will not meet a crown of saved souls in the judgment. Ah! this is the mark of a hireling ? a withered branch. Pray that ours may not be so.  
  
     3. "The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep." You know that the ministers who are sent of God, take care of the sheep. Observe the apostle Paul ? what labours did he not undergo; what sufferings did he not endure! 2 Cor. 11.23. Hear how he prayed for them ? "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers," Rom. 1.9. "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh," Col. 2.1. How he cared for the sheep! And hear how he speaks to the elders at Ephesus ? "Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears," Acts 20.31. And observe, brethren, what tears he used to shed for them ? "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears," 2 Cor. 2.4. "I fear lest when I come, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned," 2 Cor. 12.21. And then what thanksgiving he used to offer up to God ? "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy," Phil. 1.3. "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God" 1 Thess. 3.9. "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers," Eph. 1.16. This is the mark of a true shepherd. But a hireling cares not for the sheep, he does not and cannot weep for the sheep, he has no anguish of heart for them. Pray that we may so love Christ that we may care for the sheep.  
  
     4. He flees away when the wolf comes; verse 12, "But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth." The wolf is taken in Scripture to represent two things, either false ministers or heresy. See Acts 20.29. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing flock." The grievous wolves are evidently those false teachers who bring in another gospel which is not another. See also Matt. 10.16, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," etc. There you see the wolves are evidently those men who bring them before the councils. The time when the wolf comes is the time to mark who the true shepherd is. He stands between them when heresy comes in, or when a persecuting world stretches out its hand towards them; that is the time for the true shepherd to stand between the fold and it; but ah! the hireling flees. The time when he can get no more his own ease ? his own comfort ? is the time he flees. Pray that Scotland may have true shepherds; not those who care not for the sheep; not those whom God has never owned in the conversion of souls; not those who will flee in a time of heresy or persecution. Pray that the true shepherds may be known in a time of heresy or persecution, and that the day may never dawn on Scotland when it will be given over to hireling ministers.

II. I come now, secondly, to consider the true shepherd. Oh! it is sweet to turn from looking at the hireling to the true shepherd: "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," etc. Christ here gives us three marks of the true shepherd.  
  
     1. The true shepherd gives his life for the sheep. Jacob was a good shepherd to Laban. You remember his care of the sheep; he says, "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night," etc., Gen. 31.39,40. But he did not give his life for the sheep. David was a good shepherd. You remember when a lion and a bear came and took away the sheep, that he went after it and rescued it, and slew both the lion and the bear; 1 Sam. 17.35. But David did not give his life for the sheep; but Christ gave his life. The sentence was written against the sheep, "Thou shalt die;" ? Christ came between and died for them. Observe, brethren, that it was not merely temporal death that he died; but it was equal to eternal death. It was death under uniquity ? "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities," Isa. 53.5. It was a death under sin ? "The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6.23. And observe, it was freely; he did it out of free love; therefore it is always said, "He gave himself for us". Love one another, even as Christ loved the church, "and gave himself for it." There is one Mediator "who gave himself a ransom for all." Brethren, observe that Christ so loved the sheep that he gave his life "What are these wounds in thy hands? These are the wounds I have received in the house of my friends." Brethren, if ever you and I get to heaven, this is what we will see, "A Lamb as it had been slain." Are you attracted by the sight? What are you made of, that you do not see this love? O brethren, to whom will you go if not to him? Observe what he offers ? himself. "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep;" that is, lam willing to give myself to you.  
  
     2. "I know my sheep, as the Father knoweth me." You know, brethren, how completely the Father knows his Son. He knew him from all eternity: "Then I was by him as one brought up with him, I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Brethren, so Christ knows his sheep. "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." You know, brethren, that the Father knows him with a love of delight. So Christ knows his sheep with the same love; "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." "As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters!" "My love, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother." Christ delights in every one of his sheep. And you know the Father knew Christ during all the time of his sufferings on earth. So Christ knows his sheep in all their temptations. And you know the Father will know Christ to all eternity. So Christ says, "I know my sheep." Christ knows his sheep to all eternity. "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Father's hand." Ah, brethren, is there any shepherd like this shepherd?  
  
     3. "I am known of mine." The sheep know Christ, and Christ knows the Father. Christ has a perfect acquaintance of the Father: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee," so the sheep know Christ: he manifests himself unto them. Ah, brethren, has Christ made himself known unto you? Has he given you an understanding to know him that is true, and are you in him that is true? This is the mark of all his sheep. "I am known of mine." And this is one of the excellencies of Christ to his own. He lets fragrance forth when he passeth by, and we follow him. Brethren, has he let out his fragrance to you, and do you follow him? Are you known of him even as he is known of the Father? Amen.

# The Good Shepherd

Terry L. Johnson at [*https://www.reformation21.org/blog/the-good-shepherd*](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/the-good-shepherd)

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"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep"  
 — [John 10:11](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/John%2010.11)

Among the most cherished titles of Christ is that of “The Good Shepherd.” Never resting, ever vigilant, exposed to the elements, vulnerable to predators, the beloved Shepherd persists in leading, caring, providing and guarding His sheep.

His sheep? That’s us. We are defenseless sheep, creatures capable of neither flight nor fight, prone to wander, easily lost, blindly following, and desperately needing wise shepherding. Jesus is all that for us.

Note the plural noun at the end of the preceding sentence: For us. The blessings of the shepherding of the Good Shepherd certainly apply to us individually. The Lord is my shepherd and consequently, I shall not want. He leads me to the green pastures. He leads me to the still waters. The first person pronoun is prominent right through to the end of the 23rd Psalm: “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Yet the primary application of the metaphor of the Good Shepherd of John 10 is to us collectively, the people of God together. “Sheep” in English can be either singular or plural. Not so in the original language; in Greek it is plural. The blessings of the Good Shepherd are promised to God’s people collectively. Jesus locates us together in the sheepfold ([Jn 10:1-5](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/John%2010.1-5)). He leads us in and out, together, to pasture and abundance ([Jn 10:11](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/John%2010.11)). There are “other sheep” who are “not of this fold,” that is, not of the then current ethnic-national entity the Bible calls Israel that must be brought into the “fold,” so that there might be “one flock” under the direction of “one shepherd.” That one flock is the church into which Israel is transformed:

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd ([Jn. 10:16](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/John.%2010.16)).

Sheep, fold, flock: These are all plural entities. The cherished promises of God in connection with the Good Shepherd are given to the people of God collectively, initially Israel, then the church.

Consider this teaching the Gospel of John’s equivalent of [Matthew 16:18](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/Matt%2016.18). Jesus is building His church. The primary application of the Good Shepherd metaphor is to the flock. The primary beneficiary of Jesus’ shepherding, His care, His provision, His protection, is the church collectively—I individually benefit in so far as I am a part of the whole. His blessings are realized within the flock as He fends off wolves and thieves (10:2, 10). His provisions are received by the sheep (plural) as He leads them to pasture and abundance (10:9, 10). The “they” of “that they might have life, and have it abundantly” is plural. The life of the people of God collectively is in view.

The application of the “Good Shepherd” metaphor to which we are driving is obvious. The blessings of the shepherding of the Good Shepherd are found in the church along with the other sheep. That is where safety and provision are to be found. A sheep on its own, separated from the flock, is also separated from the shepherd’s care. Such are vulnerable. Such will not long survive. Such are in mortal danger. Likewise a small group of sheep, wandering off on their own, away from the flock, are exposed to the elements and predators.

Sheep belong in the flock under the care of the Good Shepherd and His undershepherds to whom He has entrusted their care (10:1-5). “Shepherd the flock of God” as undershepherds of the “chief Shepherd,” the elders are charged ([1 Pet 5:2](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/1%20Pet%205.2), [4](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/1%20Pet%205.4)). “Pay careful attention… to all the flock, on which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God,” elders again are charged. Life is dangerous enough inside of the flock, particularly because of the danger of “fierce wolves” who from outside “will come in among you, not sparing the flock” ([Acts 20:28-30](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/Acts%2020.28-30)). Outside it is altogether lethal. Only as part of the flock may I have confidence of the correction of the Good Shepherd’s rod, and the guidance of His staff.

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