

John 10:1-21, "God's Son, the Good Shepherd."

**Read John 10:1-5...** Shepherding was always a part of the life in Israel. Being a shepherd was excellent training for one who was to be a leader, as sheep are so needy, helpless and in reality, defenseless. Israel's history is replete with prominent men who were shepherds and leaders of God's people, e.g., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David, just to name a few.

God's Word uses the imagery of Israel being the flock of God, of which God is said to be her Shepherd.

**Psalms 23:1**, "A psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."

**Isaiah 40:11**, "He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young."

**Ezekiel 34:11-12a**, "For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after My sheep.'"

In the New Testament those who lead the church are called to shepherd God's people, for they have been bought with the blood of Christ.

In Palestine during the time of Christ, the sheep in most villages grazed during the day, each flock with its own shepherd; at night the shepherds bring their sheep into a communal sheep pen [sheepfold], an enclosure surrounded by a rock wall of loosely stacked stones that provides protection, so the sheep don't wander off, and so thieves and other predators, like wolves, can't get to the sheep.

The enclosure had one opening for the sheep to come in and go out; often a watchman or doorkeeper [a hired hand] would keep guard during the night.

The shepherds would come back in the morning and call out their sheep, for the sheep would only respond to the voice of their own shepherd.

In the Old Testament God's prophets warn the leaders [shepherds] of Israel who don't care for the sheep [God's people] (see **Isaiah 56:10-11; Jeremiah 23:1-2; Ezekiel 34:2-10**).

Jesus warns God's people (Matthew 7:15), "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."

Paul exhorts those who lead the church, those called to shepherd God's people who have been bought with the blood of Christ (**Acts 20:28-29**), "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock."

**Read John 10:6-11...** Jesus spoke in such a way as to reveal spiritual truth to His followers, yet it remained concealed to those who rejected Him. Jesus is the gate or door to the sheep pen, in that, no one could enter or leave except through Him.

There were many false teachers [shepherds] who came before Jesus and were still in Israel at the time of Jesus ministry; these were false prophets, corrupt priests, and self-righteous religious leaders like the Pharisees; but the true sheep (children of God) did not hear them and were not led astray by them.

Only those who come through Jesus Christ will be saved, for they will find safe green pasture, eternal life through God's Son, for He is the Good Shepherd.

The Greek Word [kal-os] translated "good" here, means authentic, excellent, eminent, preeminent above all others, perfect; this is the Servant Savior sent by

God, to lay down His life for the sheep, providing propitiation or full payment for sins to all who believe in Him.

**Read John 10:12-16...** The hired hand or doorkeeper, is not the Shepherd of the sheep; in fact when the hired hand sees the wolf coming he runs away and leaves the sheep unprotected; he doesn't care for the sheep.

**Note:** The shepherds in Israel move their sheep differently than most cultures. The majority of other shepherds lead or drive their sheep from behind the flock; however, in Israel, the shepherd goes out in front of the flock, leading them, protecting them from any dangers up ahead, often fighting off wild animals (wolves, lions, bears) or thieves and robbers, using only a sling or a staff for protection (see **1 Samuel 17:32-37, 48-50**).

The sheep know their Shepherd, for as the Son knows and belongs to the Father, the sheep know and belong to the Good Shepherd. Jesus says (**verse 16**) there are other sheep [Gentiles] that belong to Him, they are not in this pen [meaning Israel], but they are His and they will respond to His voice.

As we have mentioned many times, the Jews despised the Gentiles, but Jesus is clear that God's flock contains both Jew and Gentile who respond to the Shepherd, Jesus Christ (see **Acts 10:9-16, 24-28, 34-38, 44-48; Ephesians 2:11-16**).

**Read John 10:17-18...** When God the Son was in the flesh, He was always obedient to the Father, who loved Him and had sent Him to save those who would believe in and obey Him (see **Matthew 3:17; 17:5; John 6:25-29**).

**Read John 10:19-21...** It seems that every time Jesus talks about God being His Father, or about coming from God, it riles up the religious Jews. Here we see that Jesus' words about the Father causes a heated disruption among the people. In fact some of them said Jesus has a demon and he is out of His mind, insane, raving mad! Why would anybody want to listen to a mad man?

We have already seen this response from the Jews many times (cf. John 7:20; 8:48, 52). But we also read that some of the people didn't agree with the Pharisees' assessment of Jesus (**verse 21**), "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Remember the blind man in **John 9:25**, the Jews wanted him to denounce Jesus as a sinner, one who could not be from God; but the blind man responded, "Whether He is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" The healing power and compassion of Jesus was proof that He indeed was sent from God.

By referring to Himself as the Gate [door] for the sheep (**John 10:9**) and the Good Shepherd (**John 10:11, 14**), Jesus presents a clear picture of Himself as the Savior and Shepherd of all those who belong to God.

Jesus cares for us by not only feeding us, but also by providing for us, protecting us and finally, by taking us to be with Him in heaven forever.

God's Son is the Servant Shepherd who lays down His own life for the sheep, for you and for me; what a wonderful Savior He is.

Pastor Mike °°<'(((><