

John 10 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Outline of John

I. THE SIGNS Chs. 1-11

II. THE END Chs. 12-21

I. THE SIGNS Chs. 1-11

U. Jesus, the True Shepherd 10:1-29

1. False shepherds 10:1-6

We covered vs. 1-10 Sunday. But what Jesus says in the rest of ch. 10 flows out of these vs. so we'll briefly recap them tonight.

1 "Most assuredly, I say to you, . . .

I want to stop right there & just say that John records Jesus saying this phrase **25 times** in his gospel.

It translates the Greek phrase – αμην αμην λεγω υμιν = Amane, amane, legoh humeen.

Our word "Amen" from this word. The Greeks *transliterated* it from the Hebrew.

The word was used in Jesus' day to mark something as absolutely trustworthy.

It meant one could place complete confidence in something because it was utterly true.

To repeat the word in this formula was to elevate what was being said beyond the realm of mere human expression. It was claiming divine authorship for what was being said.

This helps us understand why John quotes Jesus using it 25 times in his gospel.

In ch. 1 he calls Jesus the Word of God & he ends the book by saying his aim was to convince his readers that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

1 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

Sheep & shepherds were a common fixture throughout Israel.

In fact, as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob, the Jews drew their origins as a pastoral people.

Several passages of the Tanach, the OT, likened Israel to the flock of God.

The prophecies of the coming Messiah were the built in screening process God had given them to know their true Redeemer.

They provided the proper doorway through which He would come.

But there'd been many imposters who'd come claiming they were the Messiah.

They'd not fulfilled the prophecies; they'd climbed in other ways.

3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

The civil & religious leaders of Israel were but doorkeepers of God's flock who

ought to have recognized Jesus as the rightful Shepherd and led, not the *opposition to* Him but the *worship of* Him.

4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

Jesus emphasizes here how the sheep have a strong attachment to their shepherd and won't be fooled by imposters.

6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

Which was in itself an illustration of the very thing He was saying.

They didn't understand Him because they weren't part of His flock.

If they had genuine faith in the God of Israel, they would have recognized Jesus for who he was – Israel's God.

Now Jesus applies this pastoral image to Himself directly . . .

2. The Good Shepherd 10:7-29

7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.”

Once the sheep were gathered in the sheepfold, whether a cave or a circular fenced in pen, the shepherd sat down in the opening & made up the door with his body.

The sheep could not get out & predators could not get in without his leave.

8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

There were several false messiahs both before & after Jesus.

In fact, it was these false messiahs that led to the eventual destruction of Israel by the Romans.

9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

There is one very important *difference* between a normal shepherd & his flock & the flock of God.

With *real sheep*, their condition is a *direct reflection* of their shepherd's care.

If they're healthy, with thick coats, frisky movements, & plenty of little lambs, it's because their shepherd is skilled & doing a great job.

If they're emaciated, flea-bitten, & lethargic, their shepherd is a bum.

With the flock of God, the image is reversed – Our Shepherd is the best there is and His care is complete.

So if we're not doing well, if we're spiritually anemic & weak, the problem is with us!

We're not staying close to the Shepherd; we've wandered off & resisted His loving care.

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Jesus now makes the pastoral image clear – it’s an illustration of Who & What He is – Israel’s *rightful* Shepherd.

And as a faithful keeper of the flock, He puts His own life at peril to protect them.

We read the last half of v. 11 as referring to the cross, which it does.

But it was also part of the job description of a shepherd.

It was expected that when a wolf or lion menaced the flock, the shepherd would intervene & attempt to drive the predator off.

So when Jesus said this, they understood Him to simply be clarifying what He meant by saying He was a GOOD shepherd. That’s made clear by what comes next . . .

12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

A shepherd could not manage a flock much bigger than about 50 sheep.

Any larger than that & they simply got beyond his ability to oversee well.

If a shepherd’s flocks increased & there were no other family members to assign them to, then he’d have to *hire* shepherds.

But because they were only hired, they rarely showed the kind of care for the flock as the owner.

And when danger came in the form of a predator, they weren’t going to risk the loss of life or limb to protect a bunch of dumb sheep.

Jesus is contrasting the quality of His ministry to the rulers & others who’d come claiming to be the Messiah.

They were ambitious with no concern for the flock other than what they could be *used for* in pursuing their own selfish ends.

The flock of God wasn’t something to tend for The Lord’s glory; they were the source of wool & mutton for themselves.

This is ever the way to assess a leader’s quality: Is the effect of his/her work to advance the condition of those he/she is leading, or his/her own position at their expense?

This is why we can be so proud of the man God appointed to be the leader of the move of the Spirit we call CC – Pastor Chuck Smith.

He is a true pastor; the word is simply a synonym for ‘shepherd.’

Though he remains virtually unknown, the movement he’s led for nearly 40 years has gone round the world & touched hundreds of thousands of lives.

He lives a modest & unassuming life while staying faithful to the vision God gave him 4 decades ago.

As a door-keeper, an under-shepherd, he reflects the heart of the Chief Shepherd.

14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by

My own.

Because the shepherd spends so much time with his sheep, He gets to know them real well.

Not only does he lead them from pasture to pasture, but he spends a lot of time just sitting and watching them as they eat, sleep, & play.

He gets up close & personal with them often by grooming them to make sure no ticks or parasites have attached themselves.

The shepherd checks their eyes, their ears, rubs his hands through their coats & feels for tell-tale signs of concern. He listens as they baa to for any sound of distress.

And over time, he gets to know the unique personality of every sheep.

Jesus knows you.

He knows your name. Oh, not the name stuck on you by your parents; I'm talking about your *real name*, the one assigned you by the Creator.

Just as the shepherd gave names to the sheep of his flock based on his knowledge of them, God has given you a name that is more than just a label to call you by.

It's a *description* of who you are in His eternal plan.

Rev. 2:17 tells us about this new name that will be revealed to us when we step into the glory of heaven.

We read there that God will give us a white stone on which our new name is written.

We'll take a look at that name, & realize in that instant all that God created us to be & do.

Everything about our lives here that was a mystery will fall into place.

That name will be like a key that unlocks a whole new realm of understanding to us.

Not only does Jesus know us, as the sheep know their shepherd, so we know ours.

But what sheep know their shepherd best? Those that stay closest to Him.

In vs. 3-14, Jesus makes frequent reference to the *intimate relationship* between the shepherd & the sheep.

Drawing on this picture of *intimate relationship*, Jesus turns it in another direction -

15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

There was no mistaking that Jesus was referring to God when He spoke of His Father.

And while it was one thing to say the Father *knew Him*, it was an altogether different thing to say He knew His Father *with the same kind of intimacy*.

I mean, we can all agree that Jesus *knows us* intimately, perfectly.

In fact, He knows us better than we know ourselves.

But no one would dare to presume that we know Him to the same degree He knows us.

In v. 15 Jesus says that the knowledge He has of the Father is on the same level as the Father's knowledge of Him. That's huge – and another unmistakable claim to deity.

Then Jesus reaffirms that His care for the flock of God extends all the way to the point of self-sacrifice.

16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

Who is Jesus referring to here? Well, that's answered by keeping the *context* in mind.

The chapter began with Jesus making reference to the door prepared by God through the prophecies of the Messiah who would come to His flock—Israel.

The *sheepfold* was the *covenant* God had made with them through the Law of Moses.

But Jesus spoke in v. 9 of a *new fold* He was comprising that would be entered by faith in Him.

Here He says He possesses *other sheep* who are *not part* of Israel's covenant. He's referring to Gentile believers in God.

The Gospel will tear down the old distinctions between Jew & Gentile so that the only distinction will be between the lost & the saved.

Paul talks about this in greater depth in Ephesians 2:11-22.

The Mormon's claim this verse refers to Jesus' appearance in the New World after His resurrection to preach to people here. How shall we answer that?

Don't really have to. Mormonism is in a rapid state of collapse.

Many of their foundational doctrines have been shown by genetics & archaeology to be absurd.

So a segment of the Mormon leadership has begun discussions with Evangelical leaders on what it would take to become accepted as an orthodox evangelical church.

About 10 years ago, a cult known as the *Worldwide Church of God* shed its aberrant views & aligned itself with Fundamental, Evangelical Christianity.

Certain Mormon leaders are pressing for the same thing. They are the minority at present, but the move is genuine and growing.

17 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

Jesus knew what lay before Him; He knew the cross was coming & makes it clear He would not be dragged off kicking & screaming to His execution.

He would lay down His life for the sheep, & by so doing complete the mission He'd been given in the eternal counsel of the Godhead.

Once His death had fully satisfied the requirements of justice, He would rise again.

For generations, anti-Semitism has justified its persecution of the Jews by calling them “Christ killers.”

The opposition the movie *The Passion of the Christ* received was due mostly to the concern that a graphic demonstration of the suffering of Christ would

renew this age-old invective & a new wave of anti-Semitism would propel another round of persecution of Jews.

What Jesus said here ought to forever dispel the attempt to blame the Jews for the death of Christ.

Jesus was no helpless victim, led away against His will.

He was the Master Who went to death as part of the eternal plan of God.

Sure it was hateful hands that laid hold of Him, who held the whip & hammer.

But it was my sins & you sins that brought Him to Earth *in the first place* – all so He could die that day on that cross – our Good Shepherd laying down His life for the Sheep.

19 Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.

This isn't the first time Jesus' words have caused people to be divided; John has already told us *several times* the people were divided in their opinions about Him.

20 And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?"

One side found Jesus' words totally outrageous; the ravings of a lunatic.

21 Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

In the ch. 9, Jesus had healed a man born blind.

The miracle created a huge brouhaha in Jerusalem so everyone knew about it.

The people who found Jesus' word's credible answered the charge that He was crazy & demon-possessed with a logical challenge: Lunatics are cogent & eloquent as Jesus was, & they don't perform miracles!

They're so messed up they make no sense & their lives are a mess!

They NEED a miracle, they don't dispense them!

22 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.

This would have been a good place to insert a ch. break because we go from the season of the Feast of Tabernacles which takes place in Sept/Oct. to late December and the Feast of Dedication—Hanukkah.

Hanukkah celebrated the re-dedication of the Temple in 164 BC after the brutal Syrian tyrant *Antiochus Epiphanes* had desecrated it.

The prophet Daniel had given an extensive picture of this period of time, painting Antiochus as an antichrist-type figure who would defile the Temple but then be ousted from the land by the faithful Maccabees.

Once the pagan idols were cleared out of the Temple & the original furnishing replaced, the priests lit the menorah, only to realize too late that they didn't have enough of the sacred oil to keep it lit for more than a couple days.

The process of making the special oil took 8 days, & miraculously the lights stayed lit.

To celebrate the Jewish victory over the Syrians & the miracle of the menorah, they celebrated the Festival of Dedication – Hanukkah.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

This was a roofed area located at the eastern side of the temple platform.

It's called Solomon's porch or colonnade because it's thought to be the only portion of the temple mount left undisturbed by the Babylonians in their destruction of the temple nearly 600 years before.

It was the place where the scribes would meet to hold their discussions on interpretations of the law.

24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, [the Messiah] tell us plainly."

If you've been with us consistently on Wednesday night, you know this is a ridiculous challenge.

In fact, *tonight* we've seen Jesus making a clear claim to being Christ.

The whole "Good Shepherd" claim was such.

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. ²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

The ask if He's the Messiah. He tells them He's already made that clear.

The works He does confirm His claim.

But they *don't believe* because they *won't believe*.

Their problem wasn't their heads, it was their hearts.

They had all the evidence they needed to draw the right conclusion, but when they saw where the evidence was leading, because they didn't want to go there, they blamed their confusion on a lack of clarity in Jesus.

V. 28 has become a premier proof-text in the debate between those who say once-saved/always-saved & those who say you can lose your salvation.

Both sides are wrong!

Let's take a closer look at this. Speaking of His sheep, Jesus says . . .

28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

That looks like a slam dunk support for the once-saved/always-saved side.

Jesus gives His people eternal life, & they shall *never* perish.

No one can take them "out of His hand," meaning from under his care as the shepherd.

Psalm 95:7 says, "For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand."

As I said, taken in isolation, this looks like a slam dunk for the case *against* losing one's salvation.

But if we remove the verse markers & look at what Jesus said here *in totality*, we'll see a different picture emerging. We need to start with v. 27 –

27 My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me.

Before we get to v. 28 we have people who are described as *actively hearing & following Jesus*.

His words & works have divided people into two groups; those who believe & those who don't. Those who carry on in an active belief in Him come into eternal life.

The promise of v. 28 is for those who *are following Jesus*.

"Follow" is in a Present-Active-Indicative = It speaks of an on-going event.

V. 28 is not a proof-text for the once-saved/always-saved argument.

Rather vs. 27 & 28 are further evidence of the Biblical position that our *security* is IN Christ & Christ alone.

It's not in an altar call when we were 18, or the sinner's prayer recited in Sunday school 15 years ago.

The reason I say both sides of the classic debate are wrong is because in the NT, our security is always **CONDITIONED** on our abiding IN Christ, so that militates against the once-saved/always-saved position.

But it is equally wrong to say someone can *lose* their salvation.

Salvation cannot be **LOST**. *WE* are lost before Christ graciously saves us.

But if we fail to *abide in Christ*, if we *stop following &* forsake His merciful hand, we can come to the place where we of set purpose *forfeit faith &* turn our backs on Christ.

But make no mistake, this isn't done easily or casually – it only comes after much long resistance to the *voice* of the Shepherd.

The NT speaks of those who fall away & warns believer repeatedly about the danger of hardening ourselves to the voice of God. That's what the whole book of Hebrews is about.

The Spirit would not spend so much time cautioning us about falling away if the threat were not real.

The question ought not be whether or not we can lose our salvation.

The question ought to be – Where is security?

Vs. 27-29 tell us security lies in following Jesus.

Simple – Think about it from the sheep's perspective.

Where's it safest? At the shepherd's feet.

Where's the danger? Playing lose with the commitment to follow him.

They had challenged Jesus to what they called a more blunt or obvious claim to being the Messiah. He replied that His claims were *crystal*.

After all, they'd already taken up stones to kill Him for blasphemy!

But then He goes ahead & says something that was calculated to secure a strong reaction from them.

V. Jesus & the Father Are One 10:30-39

30 I and My Father are one." 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

This was no new claim. He'd already said much the same thing before.

But now they are left with no doubt about what He means by claiming this kind of unity with the Father – He's claiming equality with Him.

So they again initiate stoning.

Normally at this point, Jesus would slip away, just blending into the crowd while

they've stooped to look for a suitable rock.

This time He challenges them! They've challenged Him – which HE answered, & now fires it right back at them.

32 Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”

Don't lose the trail of Jesus' reasoning or you'll get confused & end up putting words in His mouth. He begins by claiming essential unity with the Father.

Then He says the works He did were those assigned by God.

Which work were they going to now hurl stones over?

33 The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You,

Ah – they admit His works were good!

but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

See – there it is – in their own words: They understood Jesus to be claiming deity.

34 Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods”?”

In Psalm 82, the judges of Israel during the Exodus were poetically referred to as “elohim” = gods.

They were given this label because in their office as judges they determined the fate of other men.

The people came to them to discern what the Lord's will was and the Judges made determinations based on the moving of the Spirit on them.

In 2 passages in Exodus, God refers to earthly judges as gods because they're His representatives. [21:6 & 22:8-9]

After referring to these passages, Jesus said . . .

35 If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?

Jesus isn't saying that men are gods. He argues from the lesser to the greater here.

His logic goes thus: “If God can call imperfect human judges ‘gods’ just because they *represent God* in their judgments, *how much more* applicable can I who do all things perfectly, call Myself the Son of God?”

People who use what Jesus said here to support the New Age idea that we're actually gods only show they don't know how to interpret scripture.

37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸ but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him.”

This is an earnest piece of pleading on Jesus' part because He knows that time is running out, the last grains of sand are slipping from the top of the hourglass on their chance to believe in Him.

So he says, “Stop & think clearly about the miracles I've done.

If they aren't of God, then it's right for you to dismiss Me.

But, if they are, then what does that say about Me?”
Jesus knew an honest evaluation of the evidence would bring them to faith in Him.
Since they didn't come to faith in Him, what does that tell us about their
consideration of Him? It wasn't honest!

39 Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

They have come now to the point where they just reject Jesus out of hand.
This is it – it's over. The fate of the rulers is settled – as is evidenced by what
happens next.

W. Retreat 10:40-42

40 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. ⁴¹ Then many came to Him and said, “John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.” ⁴² And many believed in Him there.

Jesus left Jerusalem & the region of Judea to cross over the Jordan & hang out for
a time in the area where John the Baptist had been.

Since it was a well known place with easy access, many went to see Him, and
came to faith in Him.