

The Gospel of John

The Good Shepherd

John 10:1-21

Christ never missed an opportunity to reach people. Most of the time His miracles set the stage for an audience to hear His teaching. There has been great stir among the people with the healing of the blind man in the previous chapter. This bold and wondrous miracle has created a renewed interest in Christ's teaching. Christ takes the opportunity to tell them of His mission and purpose.

The Setting

- This appears to be a continuation of the previous chapter, so in Jerusalem between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication.
- Gaebelein - "The teaching of this chapter is closely linked with the preceding event. It has become evident that the true sheep of Christ, belonging to His flock, would be cast out of the Jewish fold. The healed man cast out had become one of His sheep. Therefore He teaches now more fully concerning Himself as the Shepherd and about His sheep."

The Story

- The Parable of the Sheepfold – vs. 1-6
 - Carroll - "There was one large enclosure for sheltering many small flocks. All the shepherds brought their flocks to this one enclosure and caused the sheep to pass under the shepherd's rod for the purpose of counting. A porter kept the door and knew all the shepherds. The porter guarded all night, but the thief did not come to the door, but climbed up some other way. In the morning each shepherd came to the one door and, being recognized by the porter, was admitted into the enclosure. There he called the names of his several sheep which heard and followed him. Then he counted them as they came out and passed under the rod, led them forth to pasture, guarded them by day, and defended them against the attacks of the wolves. Such is the story of the parable."
 - The Shepherd's access to His sheep contrasted with the thieves' – vs. 1-2
 - The "sheepfold" itself appears to represent Israel/Judaism.
 - It cannot be the world or church because there are other folds in vs. 16
 - It does not appear that all the sheep in the fold are Christ's because the custom was that many shepherds' flocks were combined in a sheepfold and the emphasized fact that not all the sheep knew or followed Him.
 - The "thieves and robbers" are the false teachers that had come to lead the Jews astray.
 - The Shepherd's relationship with His sheep contrasted with the strangers' – vs. 3-5

- The “porter” of vs. 3 is likely the Holy Spirit, but possibly could be John the Baptist.
- The audience did not grasp the meaning of this illustration – vs. 6
- The Explanation – vs. 7-18
 - Christ is the “door” of salvation and abundant living – vs. 7-9
 - This door appears to be different from the door of the sheepfold vs. 1. The earlier door is emphasized as an exit, but here it is also an entrance.
 - “The second kind of sheep pen was in the countryside, where the shepherds would keep their flocks in good weather. This type of sheep pen was nothing more than a rough circle of rocks piled into a wall with a small open space to enter. Through it the shepherd would drive the sheep at nightfall. Since there was no gate to close—just an opening—the shepherd would keep the sheep in and wild animals out by lying across the opening. He would sleep there, in this case literally becoming the door to the sheep.” – GotQuestions.org
 - Christ is contrasted to “thief” and “hireling” – vs. 10-13
 - The singular “thief” here is Satan who seeks to destroy – I Peter 5:8 – vs. 10
 - Christ comes to give His sheep life by giving His own life – vs. 10-11
 - The “hireling” is the false teacher whose motivation is only selfish – Ezekiel 34:1-6 – vs. 12- 13
 - The relationship of Christ to His sheep – vs. 14
 - The relationship of Christ to the Father – vs. 15
 - The inclusion of the Gentiles into Christ’s fold – vs. 16
 - Christ foretells His death and resurrection – vs. 17
 - The nature of His death and resurrection – vs. 18
- The Reaction – vs. 19-21
 - The people are divided at His words – vs. 19
 - Some say He is crazy – vs. 20
 - Others believe on Him – vs. 21
 - Proof #1 is the content and character of His teaching.
 - Proof #2 is the evidence of the miraculous healing of the blind man in chapter 9.