

Worth It (Part 3) – John 10:1-21

John 10:1-21. This is Part 3 of a mini-series in our study of the Gospel of John, titled “Worth It.” To say that discerning all the amazing truths in this passage, and especially applying them, is worth our time, our effort, and our life.

In Part 1 we found that . . .

Jesus is the door of salvation worth entering (v7, 9, 10b)

And . . .

Thieves are false teachers worth avoiding (v8, 10a)

In Part 2 we found that . . .

Jesus is the good shepherd worth following (v11-15)

Going where he goes, doing what he says, and thinking like he thinks.

- The one who died for us (v11b, 15b)
- The one who owns us (v12a)
- The one who stays with us (v12b)
- The one who cares for us (v13)
- The one who protects us (v12-13)
- The one who knows us (v14-15a)

Following Jesus is worth it. *He’s* worth it. Plus . . .

The church is Jesus’ flock worth treasuring (16)

- Because we’re included
- Because we’re gathered
- Because we’re led
- Because we’re one

It’s worth treasuring. Including *our* part of his flock.

That brings us to Part 3 and the 5th takeaway. That . . .

This account is a prophetic fulfillment worth noticing (v7-16)

The whole thing. It’s a prophetic fulfillment. But we miss it because we have such a limited *view* of prophecy. We tend to only think something is prophetic in the Bible if it includes pronouncements of events yet to happen, with verbs in the future tense.

Like when God spoke to David through the prophet Nathan in **2 Samuel 7**. Saying – [12] *I will raise up your offspring after you* [I will; future tense], *who shall come from your body* [another future tense pronouncement], *and I will establish his kingdom.* [13] *He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.* [14] *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.* (12-14) Pronouncement after pronouncement with future tense verbs. Prophetic. And we get it.

But we tend to miss prophecies *without* such pronouncements; without such verbs. Like the many examples or “types” in the Bible. Types, as in, events or people who foreshadow something greater. Something better. Something more.

Think Joseph for instance; in the Old Testament. Sold into slavery and left for dead, he was preserved against all odds to *save* the many. So with the benefit of hindsight, we see that he foreshadowed Jesus. Jesus is the fulfillment of Joseph’s prophetic example.

Same for Boaz. The kinsman redeemer of Ruth. Who rescued her out of misery, blessed her life, and made her his wife. All foreshadowing *the* Redeemer. Who rescues us, and considers the *church* his bride. Jesus is the fulfillment of Ruth’s prophetic story.

And the same is true of shepherding. Jesus is the fulfillment of several *shepherding* types in the Old Testament. A fulfillment worth noticing because it brings out the wonders of God’s *work* over the centuries, and the wonders of God’s *Word* to connect it all.

Like when he says in v7 – “*I am the door of the sheep.*” Implying he’s a shepherd. And v10b – “*I came that they [the sheep] may have life and have it abundantly* [way more than what shepherds of old offered]. And v11 – *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep* [a far greater sacrifice].

And then again in v14 – *I am the good shepherd* [still connecting the dots]. *I know my own and my own know me, [15] just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. [16] 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.*

It’s a prophetic fulfillment first of all . . .

• **After the pattern of Moses as a shepherd (Psalm 77:20; Isaiah 63:11)**

Moses. The very one the religious leaders mentioned in chapter 1 (21). And the one Jesus names in chapter 5 (46). And the one referred to by the people in chapter 6 (14) and chapter 7 (40). They were constantly making comparisons to Moses.

And Moses himself *prophesied* that someone like him would arise. (Dt 18:15-18) A prophet. Someone who would speak to God on *their* behalf, and speak to them on *his*.

But Moses also established a pattern of *leading* God’s people. Leading them out of bondage. Feeding them in the desert. Providing water. Keeping them together. All of it, just like a shepherd.

In fact, Asaph says in **Psalm 77:20**, speaking to God – *You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.* Implying they were *shepherds*. Under-shepherds.

And **Isaiah 63:11** says – *Then he [God] remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people.* [In the midst of punishing them, God remembered the good days. And then Isaiah asks,] *Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock?*

So Moses was not only a prophet, but a shepherd. A pattern God started in *him*, and fulfilled in Jesus. Someone greater. Someone better.

And don’t miss the fact, that Jesus fulfilled that pattern, not only by what he did and *does* – in leading *us* out of bondage, and providing for *us*, and holding *us* together – the pattern is not only fulfilled by what Jesus *does*, but what he said. Right here in John 10.

So this account is a prophetic fulfillment after the pattern of *Moses*. Just as Moses shepherded God’s people, Jesus shepherds God’s people. Only more. Better. Greater. A fulfillment worth noticing because it brings out the wonders of God’s *work* over time, and the wonders of God’s *Word* to connect it all.

Second, this account is a prophetic fulfillment . . .

• **After the likeness of God as our shepherd (Isaiah 40:11; Psalm 23)**

God the Father. A concept found all over the Bible. Sometimes named, sometimes described, and sometimes both. Like **Isaiah 40:11** – *He [God] will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom* [near to his heart], *and gently lead those that are with young*. Those who need special care. It’s a pattern worth noticing. God shepherds us.

But the most famous expression is **Psalm 23**. Where David says – *The LORD is my shepherd*. (1) And I’d like you to turn there. You know it well, but I’d like you to see it as I read it. Because I want to point out all the similarities. The fulfillment.

Psalm 23 – *A Psalm of David*. [1] *The LORD* [Yahweh; the proper name of God; indicated by all caps] *is my shepherd*; And now see if Jesus doesn’t fulfill the very same qualities. After the *likeness* of God.

[1] *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want*. [He provides. God provides and Jesus provides.] [2] *He makes me lie down in green pastures*. [Just like God, Jesus settles us; and gives us rest.] *He leads me beside still waters*. [Gives us supernatural peace.] [3] *He restores my soul* [nurturing us from within]. *He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake*. [Just like God the Father, Jesus sanctifies us for his renown.]

[4] *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me* [Protection. Just like Jesus]; *your rod and your staff, they comfort me*. [He puts us at ease.] [5] *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies* [Jesus came not to be served, but to serve. In spite of the opposition.]; *you anoint my head with oil* [he sets us apart]; *my cup overflows*. [Just like the Father, Jesus blesses us.]

[6] *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life* [“blessed assurance Jesus is mine;” never to leave or forsake me], *and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever*. The ultimate hope of faith, found in Jesus.

Psalm 23 is a prophetic likeness fulfilled in Jesus. Every single quality of the *LORD* as our shepherd, is found in *Jesus* as our shepherd. And just to make sure we get it, Jesus says it. *I am the good shepherd*. (John 10:11)

And third, as if that’s not enough, this account is a prophetic fulfillment in the traditional sense.

• **After the promise of a Davidic shepherd (Ezekiel 34:22-23)**

A few years into the Babylonian Exile, when the Israelites were taken into captivity in 586BC, God said this in **Ez 34:22–23** – [22] *I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep* [between those who follow and those who don’t]. [23] *And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd*.

He wasn’t talking about *King David*, somehow coming back to life, but one like him. A shepherd from his lineage, who would *lead* God’s sheep, *provide* for God’s sheep, and *protect* God’s sheep. And here’s Jesus saying, “I’m the one.” *One flock, one shepherd*. (16b) The good shepherd, after the promise of a Davidic shepherd, claiming to do the very same things, and more.

It’s worth noticing. Jesus wasn’t speaking in a vacuum. He was claiming to be the fulfillment of major Old Testament patterns, likenesses, and prophecies. Worth noticing because it highlights the wonders of God’s *work*, and the wonders of God’s *Word*.

That brings us to v17-21, back to John 10, and the *final* takeaway. That . . .

Jesus is sovereign even over death, and worth trusting (v17-21)

[17] *For this reason* [he said] *the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may 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 I have authority to take it up again*. *This charge I have received from my Father*.” It’s a statement of sovereignty, for the purpose of trust.

Sovereignty, because Jesus is stating in no uncertain terms that he is completely and categorically in control. Even of his death. Not to mention his resurrection. He’s sovereign; all powerful, all knowing, and all sufficient. And therefore, worth trusting. It’s a statement of sovereignty for the purpose of trust.

And he gives us three reasons for it. First of all . . .

• **Because he died intentionally and God loves him for it (v17)**

Notice in v17b that Jesus laid down his life *that* he would take it up again. Do you see it? *I lay down my life that I may take it up again*. In other words, Jesus died in *order* to rise. He *died* intentionally so he could *rise* intentionally.

That means, in addition to paying for our sins, his resurrection was one of the main purposes of his death. To show the world his power and sovereignty over the most powerful force in our lives. He’s Lord, even of death.

And God loves him for it. *For this reason* [v17; referring to his intentional death and powerful resurrection] *the Father loves me*. He loves Jesus for doing what he did. Loves him for carrying it out. Loves him for seeing it through. All of which makes him worth trusting. If *God* loves Jesus, you can love Jesus.

Second, he’s sovereign and worth trusting . . .

• **Because he died voluntarily and did it out of obedience (v18)**

“*This charge* [Jesus said; last sentence of v18] *I have received from my Father*.” It was God’s *command* that he die. And Jesus obeyed. He died out of obedience. Voluntary obedience.

“*No one takes it from me* [he said; v18a; no one *takes* my life], *but I lay it down of my own accord*.” He wasn’t *forced* into dying for our sins, it was voluntary. He laid his life down willingly. Obediently.

That’s huge. If someone had *taken* his life, *against* his will and wishes, it would have called his *love* for us into question. If he was *forced* to die, did he really love us? Thank God we don’t have to ask. Because he *gave* his life. Of his own accord and own will. Which means we can trust him. He’s sovereign *and* loving.

Third, he’s sovereign and worth trusting . . .

• **Because he has all authority and proved it (v18b)**

Authority, as in the right and power to carry out his death and resurrection. “*I have authority to lay it down* [he said in v18], *and I have authority to take it up again*.” (18b)

He has the authority to die and the authority to rise. And proved it 5 or 6 months later when he actually *did* it. Anybody can say it; he proved it.

You Are Loved

All of which makes him sovereign and worth trusting. Trusting with *our* life. *Our* death. *Our* resurrection. *For if we have been united with him in a death like his* [and we have; by faith], *we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his*. Certainly. Romans 6 (5). Jesus is sovereign even over death, and therefore worth trusting.

Now, does all this contradict passages like Acts 2:24 and at least 20 others that say *God* raised Jesus from the dead? God the Father? Is there a contradiction? Not at all.

It just means that God the Father and God the Son were in perfect harmony, and worked together in the Spirit. One, giving up and raising up his Son; and the other, laying down and rising up on his own. Both and. They acted separately and together, as one. Yet another glorious mystery of the godhead, the Trinity, and worth trusting.

He died intentionally, he died voluntarily, and he has all authority.

And then last, from v19-21, Jesus is sovereign and worth trusting . . .

- **Even if some don't (v19-21)**

Even if some *don't* trust him. V19 – *There was again a division among the Jews because of these words*. [Just like chapter 9 when he healed a blind man. (16)] [20] *Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?"* [Why trust him?] [21] *Others said, "These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"* No. He can't.

It's a rhetorical question indicating their trust; their trust in his *words*, and their trust in his *works*. And they hadn't even *seen* his greatest work. Much less knew the meaning of it. (Bible) They trusted him.

But others didn't. Choosing instead to cast aspersions. Slander him. And by implication, disparage his followers. *"He has a demon . . . Why listen to him?"* Some trusted and some didn't. Some believed and some slandered.

Just like those in our day. Especially *this* week. Saying heinous things about Jesus. Heinous things about the church. Some quietly and some loudly.

But it doesn't diminish his *sovereignty* one bit. It doesn't negate his trustworthiness one iota. It just means they're missing out. And their heart is hard. Making *our* testimony, and our example, and our trust, all the *more* important. Because Jesus is Lord no matter what. *Worth* trusting, even if some don't.

Summary

6 takeaways worth discerning and worth applying. Worth our time and worth our life. Because *Jesus* is worth it.

Prayer – Oh God, impress all this on our heart and mind. That Jesus is the door of salvation worth entering, and the good shepherd worth following. His flock worth treasuring and his fulfillment worth noticing. Lord Jesus, you're worthy. Worthy of our trust and worth our lives. So find us faithful, we pray. For your glory and our joy.