



Walking With the Savior

Through An Eyewitness Account of John

John, one of the sons of Zebedee, stood as an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He began his journey as a fisherman, leaving behind his nets and the future he had planned for himself to follow a teacher, a prophet, and a miracle worker. At the outset, John did not fully understand who Jesus was or what lay ahead. In faith, he aligned himself with Jesus, drawn by His words and deeds.

As John walked alongside Jesus, witnessing His teachings and miracles, he gradually realized that Jesus was far more than a prophet or a remarkable teacher. John came to understand that Jesus was God in the flesh. This revelation was not just a turning point for John personally, but a moment of eternal significance. By choosing to follow Jesus, John's future was forever changed, and his decision would go on to impact the world—not only in his own time but throughout every generation to come. ***Let's embark on an inspiring journey with John as we walk alongside Jesus.***

Background Matters

THE GOOD SHEPHERD DISCOURSE (10:1–21)

The discourse on the Good Shepherd continues the same setting as in chapter 9. Comparing people to a shepherd and his sheep was common in the Middle East. Kings and priests called themselves shepherds and their subjects sheep. The Bible makes frequent use of this analogy. Many of the great men of the Old Testament were shepherds (e.g., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David). As national leaders, Moses and David were both “shepherds” over Israel. Some of the most famous passages in the Bible employ this motif (cf. Ps. 23; Isa. 53:6; Luke 15:1–7).

Jesus developed this analogy in several ways. The connection with the preceding chapter is seen in Jesus' contrast of the Pharisees with the man born blind. The Pharisees—spiritually blind while claiming insight (John 9:41)—were false shepherds. As the True Shepherd, Jesus came to seek and to heal. His sheep hear and respond to His voice.

10:1–2. Verses 1–5 describe a morning shepherding scene. A **shepherd** enters through a **gate** into a walled enclosure which has several flocks in one **sheep pen**. The enclosure, with stone walls,



is guarded at night by a doorkeeper to prevent thieves and beasts of prey from entering. Anyone who would climb the wall would do it for no good purpose.

10:3–4. By contrast, the shepherd has a right to enter the sheep pen. **The watchman opens the gate**, and the shepherd comes in to call **his own sheep by name** (out from the other flocks). Shepherds knew their sheep well and gave them names. As **sheep** hear the sound of their owner's familiar **voice**, they go to him. He **leads them out** of the pen till his flock is formed. Then he goes **out** toward the fields with **the sheep** following **him**.

10:5–6. If a **stranger** enters the pen, the sheep **run away from him because** his **voice** is not familiar. The point of **this figure of speech** consists in how a shepherd forms his flock. People come to God because He calls them (cf. vv. 16, 27; Rom. 8:28, 30). Their proper response to His call is to follow Him (cf. John 1:43; 8:12; 12:26; 21:19, 22). But this spiritual lesson was missed by those who heard Jesus, even though they certainly understood the local shepherd/sheep relationship. In their blindness, they could not see Jesus as the Lord who is the Shepherd (cf. Ps. 23).

10:7–9. **Jesus** then developed the shepherd/sheep figure of speech in another way. After a shepherd's flock has been separated from the other **sheep**, he takes them to pasture. Near the pasture is an enclosure for the sheep. The shepherd takes his place in the doorway or entrance and functions as a door or **gate**. The sheep can go out to the pasture in front of the enclosure, or if afraid, they can retreat into the security of the enclosure. The spiritual meaning is that Jesus is **the only Gate** by which people can enter into God's provision for them.

When Jesus said, **All who ever came before Me were thieves and robbers**, He referred to those leaders of the nation who cared not for the spiritual good of the people but only for themselves. Jesus the Shepherd provides security for His flock from enemies (**whoever enters through Me will be saved**, or "kept safe"). He also provides for their daily needs (the sheep **come in and go out, and find pasture**).

10:10. **The thief**, that is, a false shepherd, cares only about feeding himself, not building up the flock. He steals sheep in order to **kill** them, thus destroying part of the flock. But Christ has **come** to benefit the sheep. He gives **life** which is not constricted but overflowing. The thief takes life; Christ gives **it to the full**.

10:11. Jesus then developed the sheep/shepherd figure in a third way. When evening settled over the land of Palestine, danger lurked. In Bible times lions, wolves, jackals, panthers, leopards, bears, and hyenas were common in the countryside. The life of a shepherd could be dangerous as illustrated by David's fights with at least one lion and one bear (1 Sam. 17:34–35, 37). Jacob also experienced the labor and toil of being a faithful shepherd (Gen. 31:38–40). Jesus said, **I am the Good Shepherd** (cf. John 10:14). In the Old Testament, God is called the Shepherd of His people (Pss. 23:1; 80:1–2; Ecc. 12:11; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 31:10). Jesus is this to His people, and He came to give **His life** for their benefit (cf. John 10:14, 17–18; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:2, 25; Heb. 9:14). He is also the "Great Shepherd" (Heb. 13:20–21) and "the Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4).

10:12–13. In contrast with **the Good Shepherd, who owns**, cares, feeds, protects, and dies for His **sheep**, the one who works for wages—**the hired hand**—does not have the same commitment. He is interested in making money and in self-preservation. If a **wolf attacks** (*harpazei*, lit., "snatches away"; cf. this same verb in v. 28), he **runs away** and his selfishness causes **the flock** to be scattered. Obviously he **cares nothing for the sheep**. Israel had many false prophets, selfish kings, and



imitation messiahs. The flock of God suffered constantly from their abuse (Jer. 10:21–22; 12:10; Zech. 11:4–17).

10:14–15. In contrast with a hired workman, **the Good Shepherd** has an intimacy with and personal interest in the sheep (cf. vv. 3, 27). **I know My sheep** stresses His ownership and watchful oversight. **My sheep know Me** stresses their reciprocal knowledge of and intimacy with Him. This intimacy is modeled on the loving and trusting mutual relationship of **the Father** and the Son. Jesus' care and concern is evidenced by His prediction of His coming death for the flock. Some shepherds have willingly died while protecting their sheep from danger. Jesus willingly gave His **life for His sheep** (vv. 11, 15, 17–18)—on their behalf as their Substitute (Rom. 5:8, 10; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). His death gives them life.

10:16. The **other sheep ... not of this** flock refers to Gentiles who would believe. His coming death would **bring them also** to the Father. **They too will listen to My voice**. Jesus continues to save people as they hear His voice in the Scriptures. Acts 18:9–11 illustrates how this works out in the history of the church. "I have many people in this city" (i.e., Corinth), the Lord told Paul. **One flock and one Shepherd** speaks of the church with believers from Jewish and Gentile "sheep pens" in one body with Christ as Head (cf. Eph. 2:11–22; 3:6).

10:17–18. Again Jesus predicted His death, saying four times that He would voluntarily **lay down His life** (vv. 11, 14, 17–18). The **Father** has a special love for Jesus because of His sacrificial obedience to the will of God. Jesus predicted His resurrection twice (He would **take ... up His life again** [vv. 17–18]) and His sovereignty (**authority**) over His own destiny. His death was wholly voluntary: **No one takes it from Me**. Jesus was not a helpless pawn on history's chessboard.

10:19–21. For the third time Jesus' teaching **divided** the people (cf. 7:43; 9:16). **Many** in this hostile crowd judged Him to be **demon-possessed and raving mad** (cf. 7:20; 8:48, 52). **But others** figured that He was not demon-possessed, for how could **a demon open the eyes of the blind?** (cf. 9:16)¹

This week in "Walking With the Savior,"

It is truly remarkable how the Lord assumed human form to establish a connection with humanity, intending to lead individuals out of darkness and into His magnificent light. He restored sight to a blind man, enabling him to comprehend profound spiritual truths. This act underscored the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees, illustrating their inability to understand the realities of the kingdom.

In Chapter 10, Jesus presents one of His essential teachings, aimed at facilitating engagement with His messages. The metaphor of the sheep and the shepherd was familiar to many, as sheep held significant importance in their lives, providing sustenance and symbolizing agricultural existence. This theme resonates deeply with their everyday experiences.

¹ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 309–311.



This week, let us engage in the classroom of faith and enhance our relationship with the concept of being sheep under the authority of a shepherd.

Study Guide 32

This study guide presents daily assignments that are specifically crafted to enhance your growth in the Word. Embrace each moment to meditate and reflect, and watch as your spiritual maturity flourishes through your dedicated efforts.

The Shepherd and His Sheep John 10:1–21

Topics:

Eternal Life, Follow, God, Jesus Christ, Life, Listening, Love, New Life, Obedience, Relationships, Sacrifice, Salvation

Open It, Mondays. Open your heart and mind to the truth of the Word.

1. What qualities do the best friends possess?

Explore It, Tuesdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

2. Who did Jesus say was a thief and a robber? (10:1)

3. What kind of relationship do sheep have with their shepherd? (10:2–4)

4. *Why won't sheep follow a stranger? (10:5)



5. What effect did Jesus' words have on His audience? (10:6)

6. What did Jesus say He was? (10:7)

7. To whom did Jesus say the sheep did not listen? (10:8)

8. What did Jesus say would be the result of entering through Him? (10:9)

Push on Wednesdays; keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

9. *How did Jesus contrast His coming with the coming of a thief? (10:10)

10. Who did Jesus claim to be? (10:11)

11. Why did Jesus say the hired hand would abandon his sheep? (10:12–13)

12. What type of relationship did Jesus say He had with His sheep? (10:14)

13. *What did Jesus say He did for His sheep? (10:15)

14. What did Jesus say He had? (10:16)



15. Why did Jesus say the Father loved Him? (10:17–18)

16. What effect did Jesus' words have on the Jews who heard Him speak? (10:19–21)

Get It Thursdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

17. In what way is Jesus like a gate?

18. *In what way is Jesus like a shepherd?

19. How are we like sheep?

20. In what way is Jesus your shepherd?

21. How would you describe your relationship with Jesus?

22. *How can we better hear the voice of Jesus?

23. What tempts people to follow a stranger? Why?

24. How has Jesus made your life full?



Drive it Home, Fridays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

25. How can you develop a more intimate relationship with Jesus this week?

A Journey Through The Gospel of John **2026**

Download your study guide at:

Unlockingthetruth.us