



The Book of John

Chapter 10

January 21, 2018

Meanwhile back at the ranch. . .

We just finished studying John Chapter 9, where Jesus had just told the Pharisees that since they refused to admit their need, that they were “blind”. Because of this refusal on their part, their sin remained. Not everyone will admit their need, their sinfulness and accept Jesus and His offer of forgiveness.

So, to further explain this, Jesus just dives right into a discussion of spiritual livestock management? He talks about the sheep, their eating habits, who their shepherd is, how their shepherd treats them and how they interact with their shepherd. Actually it is one of the most beautiful word pictures in the New Testament. It draws on this picture of God as our shepherd found throughout scripture. The Lord is my Shepherd.

Parables/Word pictures-There is a general rule of thumb when reading and interpreting parables. It goes like this, “Don’t try to make a parable stand on all four legs or it will fall over.” At best they will even wobble if you try to force them. (mustard seeds are round, so the kingdom of God is round, hard and tiny) A parable is intended to teach a spiritual point and as such, you shouldn’t try to carry it further than Jesus intended.

But here we have a parable where Jesus carried it further than normal, expanding it to teach a number of lessons in the various applications He gave. An amazing feat! He knew how far to carry it, how far it would apply accurately. Another point, some might claim that Jesus is mixing metaphors, for in this parable, at first, Jesus is the door, he who enters by the door, then the doorkeeper and the good shepherd, and the owner of the sheep. I say let Jesus explain Himself in whatever way He wishes and just sit back, enjoy it and see what we learn. He created all this, rhetoric, logic, communication, so He can be whatever He wants to be.

(And we can rest assured, Jesus is not verbally or linguistically challenged. He says exactly what He means to say to communicate exactly what He wants it to communicate. He knows how we will hear His words.)

Parable of the Good Shepherd

10 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*

This reminds me of one of my favorite, most comforting passages in the Bible. Written on a scrap of paper on my dresser

Isaiah 43 ¹*“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! ²“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. ³“For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;*

We will pass through the waters, we will pass through rivers and walk through the fire. But God, our Savior will be with us, and we will be kept. He will keep us through all the trouble we encounter. How comforting!!

Back to John 10:

⁴ When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.

⁷ So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

There is so much here, “***go in and out***”, “***have life, and have it abundantly***”! Go in for rest, safety, go out for fun, nourishment, playing like sheep, go in to rest, go out to do sheep stuff, go in and out, Abundant Life! Safe, secure, HIS!

We could do an entire lesson, an entire series on that one verse, John 10:10. ***I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*** The Abundant Life! Life sustained and protected by Him!

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Beware little sheep: Follow only Jesus’ voice, no one else’s.

Be comforted little sheep: Your good shepherd, Jesus, laid down His life for us, so we won’t be scattered.

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

Hmmm, Other sheep not of this fold. The most apparent meaning is probably the most probably correct interpretation. Jesus was sent to the Jews and spent most of His time speaking to the Jews. They thought that only Jews could be God’s people. However, as we know, Gentiles or non-Jews could also become His followers, His sheep if they believe, in the same way that every truly faith-filled Jew comes to God. But, they are “not of this fold” being the Jews. Seems simple to us, but it was one of the most radical, hard to believe concepts for the Jews of the day. How could a non-Jew be saved? Nonsense!

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

¹⁹ A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words. ²⁰ Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?” ²¹ Others were saying, “These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?”

Rather humorous! Remember how they had first accused Jesus of being an illegitimate son, then suggesting that maybe his real father was really a Samaritan. Now they are accusing him of even worse, saying He was demon-possessed! Obviously they were desperate and had no qualms or moral reservation about lying or slandering other people. It was all about their power and influence. Jesus was different, He was speaking the truth. Not jockeying for position.

Jesus Asserts His Deity

²² At that time the Feast of the Dedication (only mention in scripture of Hanukah celebration) took place at Jerusalem; ²³ it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴ The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. ²⁶ But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will 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 the Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are One."

In that little wonderful discourse, I think we must be careful to read it as an observation and statement of facts, not necessarily as an itinerary or historical timeline of events as they occur. But if you did, you'd kind of have to say that first we are "of" His sheep, then we hear His voice and He knows us and we follow Him. He gives eternal life to us and we will never perish. And, in this passage it doesn't define when the Father has "given them to me" his sheep. A beautiful story, to be read, to be enjoyed and rest in the assurances of His protection of us, His sheep.

But Jesus' last little remark really got them going! **³⁰ I and the Father are One."**

³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" ³³ The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'?"

Now this quote has always been a little confusing to me. Why did Jesus quote this?

Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees, who held themselves up as the interpreters, the holders of the Law, they held the keys to scripture interpretation. Jesus threw this use of the word "gods" before them.

At least they needed to examine what they meant by "God" or "son of God" and decide what they thought about Jesus, was He who He said He was? His miracles were the ones who testified to who He was, the one sent by God, speaking God's word, God's truth. He was the Son of God. Jesus was saying, "OK, if you want to throw about these terms, let's really discuss this, and who I am. Let's clarify our terms." It was a logical argument calling for clarification due to apparent confusion of terms.

Okay, guys, Pharisees, so you want to attack me for claiming to be sent by God, God's Son, demanding honor as His Son.

This is what it's really all about. Am I who I claim to be? Let's talk about this in clearly defined terms, in the glaring light of the works that I have done, works that **testify** to my words.

Jesus was **not** saying that, "Just as God said that you are gods, in Psalms, that is why I say that I am God's Son." Actually in Psalm 82 that Jesus is quoting from, if you look at the next verse, verse 7, it becomes obvious that God was speaking to very mortal men, ungodly rulers and officials, much like the Pharisees, who were on the brink of judgement due to their unrighteous judgments. UNgodlike, and on the brink of destruction.

The Pharisees were well acquainted with verse 7 in Psalm 82, and so when Jesus quoted vs. 6 to this learned group, he was also obviously, at least to them, pointing to verse 7.

7 "Nevertheless, you will die like men, and fall like any one of the princes.

Jesus was reminding them that He knew the word of God, that they were acting like "gods" little rulers who defined righteousness for the masses and that they would die in their sins if they did not line up with God and His Son whom He sent.

So Jesus wasn't saying that, since God says we are gods, then it's okay for me to say I'm the Son of God., but it was more of a call to a real substantive discussion, a consideration of who Jesus really is, no more bantering about terms or titles and proper usage of words.

Do you believe in Me(Jesus) or not? Enough swashbuckling with word sabers. I created communication! Let's talk, **really** talk about the real issues, what I am saying, backed up by what I'm doing.

Am I, Jesus a little feeble ruler god, that is unrighteous, like in Psalm 82:-7 or have I proven, by my works that I am truly the Son of God, sent from above? (Now let's reread the passage from John 10)

30 I and the Father are one."

31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

For MANY GOOD WORKS, not just 7 or 8 miracles listed in John. John is not trying to just retell the same story and events that were given in the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. He is explaining, giving us deeper discourses that he heard and remembers. John was there! He was in the room, on the hillsides with Jesus. He too saw all the miracles, as we read them in the other gospels, but John is filling out and telling the meaning behind all this.

An interesting little point (In John, he uses the word for "attesting sign" sēmeion instead of "works of power" *dunamis*. These attesting signs were for a purpose, so that we could know who Jesus was and believe in Him. ***Believing!*** The underlying theme throughout John.)

33 The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." 34 Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'? 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'? 37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; (evil rulers do evil deeds and will die) 38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may [f]know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

You Pharisees talk a lot about God. Do you even know God? The sad answer, no. So enough bantering and prideful positioning for power and relevance in the eyes of men. Who am I? Do you believe? Either I'm doing the works of God or I'm not! Believe or not! There is no struggle for power.

Side Note of Relevance for today-

We do need to be aware that many of the "name it and claim it", "faith" teachers are actually using this passage nowadays in Psalms 82 to teach that we are little gods and as such have authority. Hard to believe, but I guess some or many are falling for this teaching. Another example of people gathering about themselves teachers who will tickle their ears-telling them what they'd like to think, what they like to hear.

So this chapter finishes with the focus on what this book written by John is really about, Believing In Jesus!

Do ya, or Don't ya? Here are the works of Jesus, what do you think? Here, Jesus is giving them instructions- He is appealing to their reason. Look at the facts and choose, act accordingly.

37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." 39 Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.

40 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there. 41 Many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true." 42 Many believed in Him there.

Conclusion: Jesus takes everlasting, loving, guiding care of His sheep, those of us who believe in Him.