

Vicarious Sacrifice: Doctrine of Sheep: The Parable of the Good Shepherd: *Amén* Doubled: “I am telling you the truth”; Those with Sight but Negative to Truth are Blind, John 9:39–40; Details on the Sheep Gate, Sheep, & Shepherds; Pharisees Accuse Jesus of Sinning by Healing on a Sabbath, vv. 28–29; the Door to the Sheepfold Is the Virgin Birth; Jesus Is the Great Shepherd, John 10:2

II. The Parable of the Good Shepherd:

1. This passage provides a tutorial on the provision, protection, and guidance of God’s sheep by their willingness to submit to the leadership of Jesus Christ as their Shepherd.
2. The need for protection is dramatized by the threat wolves impose upon innocent, defenseless sheep. The wolf of the passage symbolizes Lucifer and, by extension, those he incorporates in his relentless attack on believers who are the Lord’s flock (v. 12).
3. Jesus is addressing the Pharisees with whom He was conversing at the close of chapter 9.
4. Those who fall under the protection of the Shepherd are those who believe in Him. Jesus presents Himself as “the Door to the sheepfold.”

John 10:1 - “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.” (NASB)
5. Jesus uses the formula “Truly, truly, I say unto you” repeatedly in the Gospels. The words “truly” is the superlative **ἀμήν (*amén*)** doubled. It is derived from the reflexive form of a verb meaning “to be firm.”
6. John quotes the Lord doubling this word as a liturgical formula to introduce His teaching on a given subject and is an affirmation of the absolute truth of what He is about to communicate.
7. The phrase used in the Greek is **ἀμήν ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν (*Amén amén légō humín*)** and the best translation to convey the importance of what the Lord is about to teach is, “I am telling you the truth.”
8. Jesus identifies Himself as “the truth” in John 14:6, so the One Who *is* truth is informing the Pharisees that He is about to *tell* them the truth.
9. The verb “to say” is the present active indicative of the verb **λέγω (*légō*)**. The present tense is progressive describing an action that is in progress and is continuous and uninterrupted.
10. The active voice identifies Jesus – the Truth – as producing the action, while the indicative mood confirms the veracity of what He is about to communicate.
11. Absolute truth is eternal and unalterable being a composite of the integrity of God. Righteousness possesses the standards of divine truthfulness while veracity insures they remain inviolable.
12. The truth He now reveals to the Pharisees amounts to an indictment. “He who enters not by the door into the sheepfold.”
13. Only the shepherd enters by the door; Jesus is the Shepherd. The sheepfold is Israel or in context Palestine into which Jesus has come to deliver His people.

I will not engage in detailed exegesis of John 10. All references will be from the New American Standard Bible.

14. One of those delivered was the blind man, a newly adopted member of the Shepherd's flock. The Pharisees who are trying to discredit Jesus are with the man and overhear the Lord's comments in:
- John 9:39** - And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those, and those who see may become blind."
- v. 40** - Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?"
15. In verse 39 it is clear that the many who were blind now see, both spiritually and physically. The Pharisees are among those who see physically but are blind spiritually.
16. Their blindness is devotion to the Mosaic Law which they readily attest. They have used their eyes to study the Bible, but are blind to its message.
17. The Lord then turns to a parable to teach the concept of true and false sheep and true and false shepherds. To appreciate the parable we must learn some things about Jerusalem, her Sheep Gate, sheep, and shepherds:
- The Sheep Gate.** Every morning sheep went out of it, and every night sheep came back into it. The sheep gate is always a sort of back door to a city and near the pens. Every night before sundown a shepherd would lead a flock through the sheep gate. Each sheepfold to which they were led had walls 12 feet high and one gate or door. Early the next morning the shepherd came down to the sheepfold where as many as five different flocks might be penned. The way he separates his sheep from all the others is with a call which he has used for years. All the sheep in his flock hear that call and accumulate behind him. He goes through the gate still making the call and his sheep follow him to some pasture located outside of the walls of the city. This was the common practice of all the shepherds in Palestine. Often there were thieves hanging out in the dark alleys trying to steal some of the sheep.
- The day the blind man expressed faith in Christ, Jesus went down to the sheepfold. When the controversy arose between the Pharisees and the man with restored sight, Jesus chose to explain to them what happened. The crowd that gathered includes the once-blind man whose conversion will be explained by, "I am the door, I am the shepherd." There will also be religious people there as well as the disciples. In verses 1-6, He sets up this parable standing at the door of the sheepfold.²**
18. The thieves and robbers depict the Pharisees and religious legalists in John, chapter 9, who tried to discredit the Lord's miraculous provision of sight to a man born blind.
19. The Pharisees are trying to enter the sheepfold. They are the false shepherds. Blind to the truth, they must crawl over the sheepfold's wall since they are not "the Door."
20. The Pharisees are trying to steal the sheep that belong to the Shepherd by their strict obeisance to rituals required by the Mosaic Law (9:28-29).
21. Jesus had, on a Sabbath, brought sight to the man born blind; the Pharisees claimed Jesus was "not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath" (John 9:16) and even accused Him of being a sinner (v. 24).
22. In the next verse of the parable, the Lord introduces the shepherd of the sheep:

² R. B. Thieme, Jr., *John*, R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 424-046, MP3 (1967).

John 10:2 - He who enters [into the sheepfold] by the door [Jesus identifies Himself as the Door in verse 7] is the shepherd of the sheep.

1. The door refers to the Messiah's entry into human history. The undiminished deity of God the Son was inseparably united with the perfect humanity of Jesus at the virgin birth on June 17, 2 B.C., in Bethlehem, Judea.
2. This fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament which informed the Israelites of the arrival of their ultimate Leader Who will govern them in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
3. As the promised Messiah, Jesus automatically became the Shepherd of the sheep of the nation Israel. The doorway through which He entered was the virgin birth.
4. Jesus went through that door into Israel and began the process of gathering His sheep into His sheepfold which would turn out to be the initial members of the universal church.
5. When Jesus entered Jerusalem He did so alone. When He leaves Jerusalem on the day of the crucifixion, He does so with sheep who follow Him.

John 10:3 - "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."