

## John 10:1-21 – “The Door and the Good Shepherd”

(Pew Bible Page: 896)

**Intro:** Because of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden, Man is separated from God and cannot find a way back into His presence no matter how hard he tries. In the soul of every man there is a longing, an unsatisfied desire that is the result of this separation. We try to satisfy it with lesser things, but to no avail. The longing persists and is captured in a lyric of a song by Joni Mitchell, popularized by Crosby, Stills and Nash. The chorus goes like this: *“We are stardust, we are golden; We are caught in the devil’s bargain, And we’ve got to get ourselves back to the garden.”*<sup>1</sup> Only we can’t. The door to God’s presence has been slammed shut, locked, and double bolted from the inside. If only there were a Door through which we could *“go in and out and find pasture.”* Tonight, in the next two of Jesus’ *“I Am”* statements we learn that the doorway we need to enter again into God’s presence has come down to us in Christ, and we’ll further learn that not only is He the Door, He’s also the Good Shepherd that brings His sheep all the way home and into abundant life.

**Proposition:** Jesus, the great *“I Am,”* opens the door and *“I Am”* leads the way. Hear His voice and enter His rest.

Billboard:      (vv.1-10)      I Am the Door  
                      (vv.11-18)      I Am the Good Shepherd  
                      (vv.19-21)      Words, the Watershed

(vv.1-10) “I Am the Door” – In order to understand correctly what Jesus is saying, we must consider the context in which Jesus’ claim was made. When we come to Jesus’ words in verse one of chapter ten, we are dropping in on a conversation already in progress. That conversation continues from chapter nine and is crucial to our understanding of what is being said by our Lord in chapter ten. In chapter nine we have the story of the man born blind, whom Jesus healed by putting mud on his eyes and telling him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Jesus healed the man’s blindness, which didn’t sit well at all with the Pharisees, who threw the man out of the Synagogue because of his good words about Jesus. Jesus found him and we have a record of the encounter in **John 9:35–41** - **35** *Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”* **36** *He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”* **37** *Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.”* **38** *He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.* **39** *Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”* **40** *Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?”* **41** *Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.* Verses 39 to 41 are the needed context for understanding the passage we are considering in chapter ten. In those verses Jesus explained why the Pharisees had thrown the man out of the synagogue: They did it because they were spiritually blind, accepting neither Jesus nor His Father. Some Pharisees who were listening immediately picked up on the spiritual significance of Jesus’ words asking, *“Are we blind also?”* Their question shows that they understand perfectly what Jesus is saying – He wasn’t speaking of physical blindness, but

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<sup>1</sup> “Woodstock” by Joni Mitchell.

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spiritual blindness. So, Jesus responded to their question by saying, *“If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”* In other words, *“If you really were in ignorance of who I Am, you would have no sin; but because you know who I am but refuse to receive Me, you remain in your guilt.”* Jesus then immediately proceeds to explain their situation in verses one and two of chapter ten: **John 10:1–2 - 1** *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.* To make things clear, Jesus adopted a well-known parable in the middle east centering on a shepherd, a sheep fold, and a flock of sheep. Everyone understood the basic parable as dealing with a king (the shepherd), a kingdom (the fold), and the citizens (the flock). When we understand this, we are rescued from confusion about the meaning of the parable: Jesus is the King; Israel is the kingdom; Jesus’ people are the citizens. Now the parable opens to us: Jesus is at once both *“the door”* and *“the shepherd”* of verse two. He is the door through which the sheep leave the fold of Judaism and the shepherd that leads them out to new pastures. The gatekeeper (probably God the Father or the Holy Spirit is intended) opens the door for the shepherd to enter and the sheep to exit. **John 10:3 - 3** *To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.* Note a thrilling truth revealed in this verse: Jesus calls His sheep by name. Jesus knows the name of each one who belongs to Him; He leads us out of the darkness and into the light. Out of the darkness of ignorance of God and into the light of the knowledge and presence of God. **John 10:4 - 4** *When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.* The sheep follow the shepherd because they know His voice. Their hearts hear the voice of their Savior before their minds even grasp fully who He is, as in the case of the man born blind in chapter nine. **John 10:5 - 5** *A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”* Who then are these *“strangers”*? They are those who climb into the sheepfold of Judaism another way, as Jesus described in verse one. They have not come into the fold through faith in the Father and His Son, but they have climbed over the wall and entered in as false teachers – the Pharisees are among them. The blind man, as a true sheep, refused to listen to them and followed Jesus instead. So, they put him out of the fold – out of Judaism. By this time, Jesus’ words have lost the Pharisees: **John 10:6 - 6** *This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.* So, Jesus tried again, speaking more plainly about Himself and contrasting Himself with them: **John 10:7–8 - 7** *So Jesus again said to them, “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 listen to them.* Jesus is the way out of the thicket and into pasture, out of the darkness and back into the light of God’s presence. When Jesus says, *“All who came before me are thieves and robbers”* He is not thinking of Abraham, Moses, the prophets, or John the Baptist, for they each pointed God’s people to faith in God. Jesus means that false teachers such as the Pharisees are the thieves and robbers who steal God’s sheep to satisfy their own lusts. In contrast to this Jesus says **John 10:9–10 - 9** *I am the door. If anyone enters by 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.* In contrast to the false teachers who came before Him, Jesus came to bring life and give it to the fullest measure to those who hear His voice.

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[DOCTRINAL POINT] Jesus is The Door through which men follow The Shepherd into life abundant.

[ILLUSTRATION] Hershel York tells of seeing a flock of sheep in Israel being driven by a man following behind them with two long sticks. He dodged from side to side, keeping the herd moving forward, directing them where he wanted them to go. York remarked to his guide that he had never seen a shepherd herd a flock of sheep that way. His guide replied that the man with the sticks was no shepherd – he was a butcher that had purchased the flock for slaughter. Shepherds always *lead* the sheep – butchers, thieves and robbers *drive* the sheep.

[APPLICATION] God has put within the heart of each one who belongs to Him a longing for the voice of the Good Shepherd, and a willingness to follow Him into God’s presence through the only door back into the garden – Jesus. Do you hear His voice? Are you following Him back to the garden, or are you letting a thief or robber drive you to slaughter? Jesus alone is the door through which men may enter the green pastures of abundant life with God.

(vv.11-18) “I Am the Good Shepherd” – Jesus now expanded the metaphor by going further into His “*I Am*” statement about being the good shepherd. Contrasting Himself to the “hired hands” that were the Pharisees, He said: **John 10:11–13 - 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 does not own 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 cares nothing for the sheep.* The point Jesus was making is that contrary to the Pharisees, Jesus cares for and loves His sheep, so much so that He came to die for them, to “*lay down his life for the sheep.*” We are told in **John 15:13 - 13** *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.* Jesus is the owner of His sheep, not merely a “*hired hand*” who cares only for his own life. Because of this He went on to say: **John 10:14–15 - 14** *I am the good shepherd. 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.* What an encouraging couple of verses! We are told that Jesus knows His own and has laid down His life for us so that we can share the same intimate union with the Father that Jesus shares. THE SEPARATION FROM GOD WE HAVE KNOWN EVER SINCE ADAM’S SIN IN THE GARDEN IS NOW DONE AWAY WITH IN CHRIST. We enter through the door and follow our shepherd into life abundant and our Good Shepherd does this simply because He loves His sheep. Jesus went on to tell His Jewish audience **John 10:16 - 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.* By this He signified that they would never return to the old fold of Judaism, but along with “*other sheep not of this fold*” – Gentiles – there would now be one flock with one Shepherd. The old was passing away and the new was coming. Finally, Jesus made it clear that He was doing all this freely, of His own accord: **John 10:17–18 - 17** *For this reason 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.*” No one was compelling Him to lay His life down for the sheep. His death and resurrection were entirely

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voluntary, done for love’s sake alone. The Father having given Him authority to both lay His life down and to take it up again, Jesus for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross so that His sheep might have life abundant.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] Jesus, the Good Shepherd, loves His sheep and lays down His life for them.

[ILLUSTRATION] Jesus is the final and sufficient proof of the Father’s love for His people. What greater love could ever exist than that God’s only begotten Son would lay down His life for you and me?

[APPLICATION] The Pharisees never “got it.” They never really saw that God loves His people. To them, God was the distant, unappeasable task master in the sky, who could only be satisfied by persnickety acts of self-righteousness performed precisely to fulfill 633 demanding laws. The Pharisees never got it, but the blind man did. Do you? Do you know that you are loved with an everlasting love? A love that will not fail. A love that cost Jesus everything to purchase for you. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep. What love could ever be greater than this love?

(vv.19-21) Words, The Watershed – As the blind man’s good words about Jesus had resulted in his being separated from the synagogue, so Jesus’ words caused division among the Jews who were listening, as these verses tell us: **John 10:19–21 - 19** *There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. 20 Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to 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?”* The good news about Jesus is point that causes among men separation. Jesus’ claim to be the “I Am” is the watershed that separates the sheep from the goats. The Pharisees, who knew who He was but were unwilling to receive Him, blasphemed. But others who could hear His voice were wiser. It is still so today. The word about Jesus always has this effect, either attracting men to the Savior or repelling them from Him.

**Conclusion:** *“We are stardust, we are golden; We are caught in the devil’s bargain, And we’ve got to get ourselves back to the garden.”* The desperate longing of lost men can only be satisfied by words. Words of life. Words from the Living Word, Jesus. Words are the watershed, which is why we can never allow ourselves to fall silent among those who are desperately trying to get themselves *“back to the garden.”* Jesus is the Door; Jesus is the Good Shepherd. The way back to the garden comes only through good words about Him.