

John 10:1-10 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² "But he who enters by the door is the 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. ⁴ "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. ⁷ Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ "All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 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 does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

(technically Cantate, from the introit "Oh, sing unto the Lord a new song: for He has done marvelous things.")

Today is good shepherd Sunday, so it's not surprising that we have John 10 as our text. We are all familiar with the idea of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Many of you maybe even have that famous painting, and what a wonderful comfort that is. So the parable here is one we are very familiar with, but what does Jesus say about the parable? How does he explain it.

Verse 7 "I am the door . . ."

Jesus doesn't say "I am the Shepherd" but, "I am the door." The bit about Him being the shepherd comes in the next verse, verse 11. What we have before us today focuses not on Jesus as the Shepherd, but Jesus as the door. That is ok, the same analogy can be used to make more than one point, nothing wrong with that.

Jesus is the door. When we think of a door, we think primarily of the piece of wood or iron or whatever that sits on hinges and swings back and forth. But not so in the Greek, in the Greek the word primarily refers to the hole in the wall. Maybe in the English it would be better to say the door way. Jesus is not the piece of wood that swings shut and blocks you way. No Jesus is the way the opening through which you are able to enter.

You remember in Acts those who followed Christ were called followers of the "Way."

Many people get annoyed at Christian doctrine, how can you say that those who don't believe will go to hell? How can God condemn people just because they don't believe?

In this particular parable it make perfect sense. We are locked out of heaven because of our sin, which is like a big impenetrable wall keeping us from God. Jesus comes and blows a hole in that wall, now the way is open. If we go through that doorway we can go in and out and have life. But if anyone refuses to enter, how can he afterwards blame God?

Verse 8 – All who came before were thieves and robbers

Jesus was not the first man to wander around the Judean countryside claiming to be the Messiah. There were many before the time of Jesus, during the time of Jesus, and many since the time of Jesus. The Bible even mentions a couple such as Theudas and Judas of Galilee. Of course you have Mohammed and Joseph Smith and more recently men like David Koresh and others.

What makes Jesus different? Is Jesus different? A lot of people would say no, he isn't any different and they would use these other men to prove that all so called "Messiahs" including Jesus are fakes.

Let's remember though that there is only even the possibility of a single Messiah. And that it isn't surprising that many people claim to be the Messiah. Therefore it's hardly a good argument that because there are many false Messiahs therefore Jesus also is false.

What then makes Jesus different?

Jesus himself tells the main difference us "they came to steal and destroy" but Jesus came that "they may have life."

The difference between Jesus and the false Messiahs is night and day. He came to serve, they came to be served. He came to give they came to build up riches for themselves. He came to die for us, they came that others might die for them.

This is true of David Koresh, Joseph Smith, Mohammed and all the false Messiahs of Jesus own time. They all follow the same pattern. They gathered people to themselves. They made themselves as king of the group. They heaped up riches unto themselves. They took up arms against governments and those who opposed them.

Josephus the Jewish historian, who was not a Christian but a Jew who was born four years after the death of Christ, and who often writes against the many false messiahs because he blamed them for the destruction of Jerusalem, nevertheless says of Jesus, that he was a good and righteous man, who may have been the Messiah. The point being that even one who did not believe nevertheless saw that Jesus was clearly fundamentally different than all of the false Messiah.

Therefore whereas all of these others brought only death, Jesus gives life. And he proved it by rising from the Dead.

V 4,5 and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

Every time I go to Africa, I get asked the same question, how can we know who is a correct pastor and who is not. How can we know who teaches the truth and who does not? There are more false messiahs in Africa than there are true pastors in America, more than the hairs on my head. They recently did a documentary on Aljazeera about this "pastor" in Africa who claimed to do miracles. They went to his compound and found women chained up there. These false prophets, false messiahs are everywhere for the simple reason that nobody knows what the truth is. And the only answer to the question is read and study the word. When you study the Word you will know the voice of the shepherd and when you learn to know the voice of the shepherd you will know to follow his voice.

The problem with our society is that people listen to everything except the word and assume that it is the voice of the shepherd. They listen to society that says you can't ever say anything bad about anyone else's' life choices. They listen to their own desires that say I want this or that. They read an article online and they think they know everything.

The one thing they don't do is walk with Jesus as did the Emmaus disciples.