

The Good Shepherd

Leader Bible Study

Jesus' teaching caused division among the Jews. They argued about who He was and where He had come from. Had He really come from God? Was He crazy or demon-possessed? In John 10, Jesus taught about Himself by using a comparison that is found throughout the Old Testament: the Lord as the Shepherd of His people.

In Bible times, shepherding was a common occupation. Leaders of nations—even non-Israelite nations—would refer to themselves as shepherds of the people. A good shepherd would guide, provide for, and protect his people. Yet Old Testament prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel criticized Israel's leaders for failing to shepherd God's people well. The Israelites were like sheep—helpless and wandering—and they longed for a truly good shepherd.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who provides abundant life for His sheep. A shepherd would gather his sheep at night and form a pen to keep the sheep in and to keep wild animals and thieves out. The shepherd would lay across the opening. Like a shepherd provides safety for his sheep, Jesus provides salvation and eternal life.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. A shepherd protects his sheep from wolves and other wild animals, even at risk to his own life. Jesus gave up His life on the cross to rescue sinners from sin and death.

Finally, Jesus is the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep. Even when two or more flocks gathered in a pen, a shepherd could call for his sheep and they would respond to the sound of his voice. Jesus knows His sheep personally.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came to do His Father's plan: to die on the cross and rise again so that we might be saved. We can live sacrificially as we point others to the sacrifice Jesus made for us.

The **BIBLE** Story

The Good Shepherd



John 10

Jesus told a story to the Jewish leaders: “If a person climbs into a sheep pen, he is not the shepherd; he is a thief. A shepherd enters the pen through the gate. When the sheep hear the shepherd’s voice, they recognize him and follow him. A shepherd calls his sheep by name, and he leads them. If the sheep hear the voice of a stranger, they will run away.”

The people did not understand Jesus’ story. Jesus was talking about God’s people as sheep. The Jewish leaders were the stranger, and **Jesus is the Shepherd.**

Jesus said, “I am the gate for the sheep. They come in through Me and are saved.” Jesus was saying that He is the gate that leads to true life. People who come to Him are like sheep who come to green pastures. **Jesus warned, “A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.”** Jesus was talking about the devil, who does not want people to follow God. **Jesus said, “I have come so that they may have life.”**

“I am the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep,” Jesus said. “I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me.” Like a shepherd risks his own life to protect his sheep from wolves, Jesus was willing to die for His people. Jesus came to do His Father’s plan, and He was going to die and rise again.

The Jews argued with one another. Many said, “Don’t listen to Him; He has a demon. He’s crazy.” Others said, “That’s not true. How can a demon give sight to the blind?”

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus, “Are You really the Messiah? Just tell us.”

Jesus answered, “I did tell you but you do not believe because you are not My sheep. My miracles prove who I am.” Jesus reminded them that He is the good shepherd. **“My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of My hand.** The Father and I are one.”

Christ Connection: Jesus is the Good Shepherd. God sent Him to rescue sinners. Jesus laid down His life for His sheep so they could have forgiveness and eternal life. When we trust in Jesus, we are His sheep

who listen to, follow, and obey Him.

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