

John 10 Shepherd

PREFACE

God's Word contains the answers to all of life's problems and needs. As we apply God's Word to our daily lives, the Holy Spirit strengthens us, our faith grows, and our lives are transformed.

But for many the bible is a complex book, too huge to tackle.

By selecting important chapters of the Bible (20 from the Old Testament, 20 from the New Testament) and focusing on them, I hope to encourage you to get into God's Word. To help accomplish this, I have prepared a visual memory aid for each key chapter. The aids are purposely *weird* in order to increase retention. Each aid has three elements:

1. The *book* of the Bible
2. The *chapter*
3. The *theme* of the chapter

By studying the memory aid several times and focusing on it, you will recall the image and consequently the book, chapter and theme.

Remembering these key chapters will enrich your daily life. It will also help you to relate God's Word to others. As you write greeting cards or speak with people, you will be able to apply God's Word directly to their problems or needs.

At times, you will be unable to speak directly to a person. Send them a Key Chapter booklet! They are designed for sharing!

Each Key Chapter booklet is presented in the same format:

1. *Background* for the chapter
2. *Key verses* of the chapter
3. *Thoughts on* the theme of the chapter

Bible classes and small study groups will find the third section helpful for discussions. The *thoughts* will provide a variety of applications upon which to reflect.

God will not let his Word return void (Isaiah 55:11)!

He will bless you abundantly as you meditate on his Word (Psalm 119:48)!

He will enable you to be a blessing to others as you spread his Word (Genesis 12: 2-3)!

Soli Deo Gloria,
Paul R. Schroeder

Explanation of the Memory Aid

1. The BOOK of the Bible:
Think of a tractor: *John Deere*. = **JOHN** (the beloved)
2. The CHAPTER:
The *number* of sheep = **CHAPTER 10**
3. The THEME:
Sheep need a *shepherd*. = **SHEPHERD**

JOHN 10: BACKGROUND

Throughout his entire gospel, John emphasizes the deity of Jesus.

Many images of Jesus are presented to illustrate the work he had come to do among us. The 10th chapter of John presents some of these.

Perhaps the best known of all the images of Jesus is that of the *shepherd*. It was a simple and popular way to illustrate the work of Jesus. In the early church everyone could identify with a shepherd since shepherds were part of everyday life. The application could be made easily.

Today we find it helpful to review what the work of the shepherd was, so we can see the spiritual application.

One of the favorite chapters of Scripture is Psalm 23. It is commonly called The Good Shepherd psalm of the bible. Psalm 23 and John 10 go together. They present the identical theme. In contrast, Ezekiel 34: 1-10 presents the image of evil shepherds who do not care for nor protect their flocks.

Scripture shows us the positive characteristics of a shepherd and relates them to Jesus. By contrasting those positive characteristics with those of an evil shepherd, John highlights the beauty and greatness of Jesus the good shepherd. When those qualities are taken to their ultimate perfection, you no longer have a good shepherd—you have *The good Shepherd*—Jesus Christ himself!

KEY VERSES OF JOHN 10

Verses 4

When he has brought all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

A walled sheep pen was entirely enclosed, with only one gate. The sheep were kept from wandering off and wild animals were kept from entering in.

Verses 9

I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

There is only one way to salvation! Just as Jesus is the *gate*, he is also the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life* (John 14:6).

Verse 10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Jesus loves his sheep. His love for them produces *abundant* blessings.

Verse 11

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

A hired shepherd will not risk his life for the flock, since he does not value them as being his own. Jesus values us as his own. He has laid down his life for us.

Verse 14

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.

Jesus knows those who are his, and they know him.

Verse 18

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

Jesus was not a sad victim of circumstance. He came to lay down his life for us willingly, knowing that only in that manner could we be saved.

Verses 27

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Again the knowing is emphasized. He knows us. We know him by faith. We will follow him.

Verse 28

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

God's gift to those who are his: eternal life. No one can rob us of this treasure. It is secure in him.

Verses 29

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

The Father's hand (power) is greater than any enemy, making us completely secure in Christ.

Verse 30

I and the Father are one.

Clearly, again, Jesus refers to his deity. (See John 5: 16-18; 8: 48-59; 10:33; 14:6-14)

Verse 38

But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

Again Jesus refers to his deity. He invites those who are having trouble believing their ears (words) to believe their eyes (miracles). This is the same invitation he makes to Philip in John 14: 9-11.

THOUGHTS ON THE SHEPHERD

Day 1

We have an enemy who uses every type of deceit and trickery to get us away from the Good Shepherd. Satan is indeed a thief (John 10:1).

In the opening verses of John 10, Jesus, in referring to himself, uses two different concepts:

1. Verses 1-5: Jesus refers to himself as the *true shepherd* who is the true owner of the flock. This illustration refers to a communal sheepfold—the type that one would find outside a city gate, a sheepfold in which numerous flocks would be tended for a short time while the shepherd was on business in the city. False shepherds may try to make off with a flock that is not theirs. But the true owner of a flock would come in by the gate. As the owner called his sheep, they would separate themselves from the rest and follow their master. They know his voice and follow him lovingly.
2. Verses 7-10: Jesus now refers to himself as the *gate*. No one can enter his sheepfold without passing “through” him. As they pass “through” him he counts them and tends to any injuries or needs. The anointing of the head with oil in Psalm 23:5 can be understood in that manner. This pictures Jesus’ own protection and care of his believers, his sheep.

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Psalm 23:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Day 2

Notice the reference to sheep being “led” rather than “driven”. Jesus calls us to *follow* him. Prior to conversion our will was in bondage to sin and Satan. In conversion, God works a change that sets us free. (See Key Chapter booklet *Galatians 5: Freedom*). Led by the Spirit, the believer has freedom of choice.

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Be cautious of following strangers until you know which way they are going.

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There is only one gate into the heavenly fold: Jesus Christ.

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Old Testament prophets spoke of the coming Shepherd (Isaiah 4):11; Ezekiel 34: 11-31).

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We are not borrowed or rented. We are *owned!* Thank you, God! (See Romans 8:5; 14:8).

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Christ knows his sheep! We may have trouble at times distinguishing whose sheep are whose. Often they look so much alike. He has no problem—he knows the heart!

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The unity of the Father with the Son is stressed throughout John 10. (See Key Chapter booklet *John 14: Heaven*).

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John 15:13: Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. Christ laid down his life for us—something a hired hand would never do (John 10: 11-13).

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Thousands of sheep had been offered as sacrifices in Old Testament days. Now the Shepherd is sacrificed!

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Christ's life was not taken from him. He laid it down (John 10:18). Note the answer Jesus gave to Pilate (John 19:11).

Day 3

There are only two reactions possible to Jesus—unbelief or belief. It was true then (John 10: 19-21); it is true now! Chapter 10 closes, “And in that place many believed in Jesus”.

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Jesus claimed over and over again to be divine. Even his disbelievers and his enemies knew that was his claim. It was for that reason that they accused him of blasphemy. They knew he claimed to be God (John 5:18; 10:33).

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When pride and intellect get in the way of faith, remember that sheep are not known for their brilliance.

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Nothing other than falling into unbelief can rob us of victory in Christ (John 10:29).

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Note how Jesus uses scripture to substantiate his claim. His reference in John 10: 34-35 is from Psalm 82:6. The magistrates were called “gods” because the word of God came to them and equipped them for office, but Christ was the *incarnated Word* of God.

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The life of David illustrates the shepherd as a defender of the flock (1 Samuel 17: 34-35).

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Sheepfolds in Israel often incorporated watchtowers from which the shepherd watched carefully over the sheep (2 Chronicles 26:10). The theme of watching and being on guard against the enemy runs throughout Scripture.

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Jesus is called our Shepherd (Isaiah 40:11; Mark 14:27; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4; Hebrews 13:20).

Day 4

John 10:16 emphasizes there is only *one* flock and only *one* shepherd. Outside the flock none are saved. The one flock, however, includes not only Jews but also Gentiles—all who receive him as the Messiah. Together, one flock!

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Jesus speaks of his resurrection in John 10:18. (See Key Chapter booklets *1 Corinthians 15: Resurrection* and *Matthew 28: Go*).

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To claim Christ as your Savior and not “follow” him is to claim faith without producing works. Impossible! (See Key Chapter booklet *James 2: Works*).

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John 10:25 refers to miracles Jesus did in the Father's name. Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, fed the multitudes, cleansed lepers, and raised the dead.

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In addition to leading, the shepherd healed and provided for the flock. Psalm 23:2 refers to the shepherd finding good pasture and quiet water for the sheep.

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The word *pastor* is the Latin word for shepherd. Their example is Christ, the Good Shepherd, as they lead the flock (church) over whom they have been made overseers (Acts 20:28; John 21: 15-19; Ephesians 4:11).

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Some explain that the shepherd's rod and staff (Psalm 23:4) were beaten together to make a clunking sound during times of poor visibility. The sheep would follow even if they couldn't see, as long as they heard the sound. They had explicit trust and confidence in their shepherd.

We are called to follow even when we cannot "see"—perhaps especially when we do not see our Shepherd at work. That is the very essence of faith.

Day 5

The church, indeed, has dangers from the outside; but of greater concern are false leaders within. Good Shepherd, protect us from both.

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A primary function of a shepherd is to care for the young. Christ expects us to treat new believers tenderly and with considerable patience. They are to be enriched and encouraged by the example of mature Christians.

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1 Peter 5: 1-4: To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

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Hebrews 13:20: may the god of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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Revelation 7:14,17: These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb...For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.