

THE OPEN DOOR; THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:1-21

March 20, 2016

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” John 10:9

The Lord Jesus was despised by the religious leaders of His day. Ultimately, they crucified Him. Christ described their treachery and His saving power by an allegory recorded in John 10.

Chapter 9 reports His healing of a man who had been blind from birth, illustrating His claim, “I am the light of the world” (8:12, 9:5). It was the Sabbath, and Christ’s enemies seized this as evidence that He was not of God, but a sinner (9:16, 24), and possibly demonic (10:21).

Dispute with these religionists had included Christ’s repeated claim to be “I am,” a title understood to identify Jehovah (Exodus 3:14). He said, “I am the bread of life” (6:35) and “I am the light of the world” (8:12). He warned that if they did not believe that He is “I am,” they would die in their sins (8:24). He affirmed “Before Abraham was, I am” (8:58).

The allegory in chapter 10 adds two more “I am” statements: “I am the door” (v. 9) and “I am the good shepherd” (v. 11). It describes a “sheepfold,” which was a roofless, stone enclosure with an entrance secured by a door. Legitimate entrance was by way of the door only, so anyone seeking to climb in by another means was illegitimate, a thief or a robber. Sheep entered only by the door, and only as the shepherd led them through the door. In this double-metaphor, Christ is both the door and the shepherd.

The religious leaders rejected Christ the door, thus, they did not seek legitimate entrance to the fold. They were the thieves and robbers of which Christ spoke. A thief seeks to take that which is not his, which is what Israel’s religious elites were doing as they rejected Christ in their bid to have His people for their own designs. A robber is a thief who uses violence to take that which is not his. Again, this described the religious class, who threatened the people to keep them from Christ (9:22), were ready to stone Jesus to death (8:59; 10:31-33), and eventually had Jesus crucified and His servants martyred (Acts 7:54-60).

When Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd,” he used Jehovah’s title “I am,” but also used Old Testament imagery by which Jehovah was revealed. “Jehovah is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1). “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock” (Psalm 80:1a). “For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand” (Psalm 95:7). “I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah (Ezekiel 34:15).

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd.” Therein He showed Jehovah’s goodness to be His own. “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isaiah 40:11). The “good shepherd” is the only door into the safety of Jehovah’s everlasting fold of safety. All who enter in at that door “shall be saved, and shall go in and out,” for “Jehovah shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore” (Psalm 121:8). They will “find pasture,”

for “he maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters” (Psalm 23:2; Ezek. 34:14-15). They will “have life, . . . [and] have it more abundantly” (10:10).