

Summary Sheet for John 10

...to accompany Notes 18 & 19



GOAL of this 1-2-1 study

Come to Jesus confident that he is the good Shepherd who will complete his plan and avoid all alternatives as destructive frauds.

Context – how does this chapter fit in?

Chs 9-10 conclude this second section of John's gospel (chs 5-10). By the end of chs 5- 8 we may well have been perturbed by the hostile rejection of the Jews and been wondering if this means Jesus' mission is a failure. But ch 9 demonstrated that Jesus, the 'light of the world', does give miraculous spiritual 'sight' to those who know they need rescue, and also judges those who refuse to believe in him by 'blinding' them spiritually. And ch 10 explains that, rather than being a failure, Jesus is in total control of his mission and it is part of God's plan. Jesus is the true 'Shepherd' who determines who is part of the true 'flock'. Jesus will rescue (by laying down his life), protect and lovingly lead his people. He also exposes as false 'shepherds' all alternatives, including the unbelieving Jewish leaders who persecuted the blind man, and exposes as false sheep those who refuse to accept him.

Impact on us

Do we realise that only Jesus can offer us true, safe spiritual leadership? Both Jesus' words and works back up his credentials as the true Shepherd sent from God who is totally in control of his mission. Any alternative to Jesus is a phoney and if we follow them they will lead us to spiritual destruction. So who will we listen to? Who will we entrust with our souls?

How John writes to make his point

The miracle/sign and ensuing discussions in chs9-10 mirror what happens in ch 5, helping us see that chapters 5-10 are a unit within which we've seen more and more of Jesus' identity and work and the hostile rejection of many Jews. By the end of ch 10 we have seen the flaws, errors and reasons for the disbelief of the Jews, and been driven to Jesus as the only sure source of true rescue, life and freedom.

In chapter 10 Jesus uses the imagery of Shepherd, sheep and sheep pen to provide a framework for understanding who leads the people of God, how entry is gained and who is really inside and outside the 'flock' of God. Jesus thus criticizes the behaviour of the religious leaders (the bad shepherds) and sets up his own contrasting role as the good shepherd who will lay down his life for his sheep. In doing so Jesus explains that being part of the true flock depends on our response to Jesus and that membership is open to anyone who listens to his voice not just the Jews. The disbelief of many Jews in Jesus' day or anyone else now should not throw us off course. Jesus really is who he says he is and really does define true membership of God's family.

Structure

- 10:1-21 Jesus is the good Shepherd
1-6: *The parable: the true shepherd vs thieves & robbers*
7-18: *The parable explained:*
 "I am the door" – the route to life unlike the Pharisees who are thieves and robbers (7-10)
 "I am the good shepherd" – not like the hired hand who doesn't care (11-13)
 "I am the good shepherd" – who lays down his life and creates one flock by calling with his voice (14-18)
- 10:19-39 His opponents prove by their actions that they are not God's sheep even though they are Jewish
10:40-42 John closes chapters 1-10 "...Everything that John [the Baptist] said about this man was true."

John's references to the Old Testament and why they matter

- The Good Shepherd

Back in Numbers 27, Moses prays that God will provide another leader like Moses for his people so that they will not be 'like sheep without a shepherd'.

From that moment on, God's word often refers to the leaders of God's people as 'shepherds' and to the people as 'sheep' (e.g. 1 Kings 22.17; 2 Chronicles 18.16)

Whatever the state of the flock, however, the one true shepherd of his people is God Himself – the one who rules, judges, rescues and tends for his sheep (e.g. Gen 48.15; Ps 23.1; Isa 40.11; Jer 23.3)

All of these themes are drawn together within the Old Testament in Ezekiel 34. Just when God's people appear to be doomed, God promises a good Shepherd who will rescue his true sheep. Ezekiel here promises two things:

- First, judgment on God's failed shepherds, who should have been feeding the sheep but who have in fact exploited them.
- Secondly, God promises to rescue the sheep who have been lost and scattered. When he has done this he will provide a shepherd to tend His flock.

Jesus picks up on the prophecy in Ezekiel 34. This chapter therefore explains who is that long-awaited true Shepherd... none other than God himself – Jesus Christ.

- Psalm 86: "I said, you are gods"

The Jews want to stone Jesus for making himself out to be God. But In Psalm 82:6 God addresses his people as 'gods' and 'sons of the Most High'. Jesus is saying that if God can call his people his 'son' (cf. Exodus 4:21-22) then it is entirely reasonable for Jesus to speak of himself as 'God's Son'.

...But Jesus' authority to do this is all the greater in view of his works and words, which make him uniquely the Son of God – ie God himself.

Some questions to help guide someone else through ch 10 -

Opener: Who do you most tend to listen to (Christians and non-Christians) when it comes to thinking about spirituality, truth etc? How do you assess what they say?

Considering the text1: In the parable in vs 1-6, what does Jesus say about the true shepherd vs 'false' shepherds?

Considering the text2: Jesus picks up on different metaphors from his parable in vs 7-18. What does he say about himself, what he will do and his role in God's plan? What does he say about the alternatives on offer?

Considering the text3: In vs 19-39, how are we shown that Jesus' opponents are not part of his flock? How is the reader reassured about Jesus' mission in a world that rejects him and encouraged to listen to him alone?

Considering the text4: In v41 many people believe in Jesus because they realise that all that John the Baptist said about him was true. Look again at ch 1vs7 & 1vs19-51 - How has Jesus fulfilled what John had promised about him?

One to keep chewing on: List all of the reasons you can think of about why people don't listen to and believe in Jesus. How have these been answered and explained by chapters 5-10?