

1. Jesus' "I am" passages are all found in John: a) The bread of life, 6:48-51; b) The light of the world, 8:12; c) The door of the sheep, 10:7; d) The good Shepherd, 10:11; e) The resurrection and the life, 11:25; f) The way, the truth, the life, 14:6; g) The vine, 15:1.
2. In chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 John portrays Jesus battling with His unbelieving enemies, especially the Jewish authorities and Pharisees. Four of the seven "I am" passages occur in these chapters. Our text was spoken in the temple, immediately after Jesus had healed the man who had been born blind, Jn. 9:1-41.
3. The sheepfold or pen was a yard with a high stone wall to keep out wild animals and other intruders. The gate was guarded by a gate-keeper. Several shepherds would use the same sheepfold or pen. In the morning each shepherd would call his sheep and they would follow their shepherd.
4. On the contrast between true and false shepherds, cf. Jer. 23:1-4; Ezek. 34; Zech. 11:4-17. Ps. 23 is the Good Shepherd passage. A prophecy of Christ follows Jer. 23:1-4. There is another in Ezek. 34, vss. 23 to 25. Note the shepherd and sheep theme in Paul's speech to the elders of Ephesus at Acts 20:28-35. In last Sunday's text, Jn. 21:15-23, Jesus pictured Peter as a shepherd. And Peter refers to this theme in I Pet. 5:1-4. The shepherd-sheep theme is used often in the Bible.
5. There are various illustrations of the intimate relationship between Christ and Christians: He is the Vine, we are the branches (Jn. 15); He is the Head of the Body, the Church (Eph. 4:15-16); The Church is Christ's bride (Rev. 21:1-2); Christians are stones in the spiritual temple (I Pet. 2:5). But the most familiar picture of all is that of the Shepherd and His sheep, found especially in Jn. 10.
6. The first two words of Jn. 10 (verily, verily) occur as a phrase only in the Gospel of John and only from the mouth of Jesus. It occurs 24 times: 1:51; 3:5,11; 5:19,24,25; 6:26,32,47,53; 8:34,51,58; 10:1,7; 12:24; 13:16,20,21,38; 14:12; 16:20,23; 21:18. Jesus used this phrase whenever He made an emphatic statement. He uses it twice in our text, the first time to state that the shepherd who does not come through Christ is nothing but a robber and a thief, and the second time to state that the only way into the church is through Christ, the Door.
7. Vs. 6 tells us that what Jesus said was an illustration, a picture, a parable. Jesus is the Door. The sheepfold or pen is the church. The shepherd who does not enter through the door is a false prophet, a thief, a robber, who serves his own purposes. A true shepherd, a true teacher of the Word (vs. 2) enters through Christ. For this one the doorman (the Triune God) opens and the sheep hear his voice and follow him. The sheep recognize the voice of a true shepherd (vs. 4). Sheep will not follow a stranger, a false prophet (vs. 5) but flee from him. Only Christ is the Door. All others are thieves and robbers. This door gives salvation, freedom from the enemy and food (vs. 9). The thief's only purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. But Christ has come to give life in abundant measure already in this life.
8. Vs. 6 tells us that Jesus' enemies did not understand what He said. Read 9:39-41. Jesus had healed a blind man in body and soul. Now he could see. The Pharisees claimed that they could see (spiritually) but remained blind. That is why they could not understand Jesus in our text. But Jesus did not give up. He went on to speak the beautiful words of Jn. 10:11-18, some of the most beautiful words in the Gospel of John. In those vss. He uses a different picture: He is the Good Shepherd Who lays down His life for the sheep. The Father, Jesus and the Sheep know each other. The Sheep hear Jesus' voice and follow Him. He gives them life eternal. The false shepherd is a hireling, a thief, a robber, who cares nothing about the sheep. He runs when the wolf, the devil, comes.
9. The central thought in vss. 1-10 is Jesus, the Door. The central thought in vss. 11-18 is Jesus, the Good Shepherd. In both sections Jesus warns about the false shepherds and stresses the salvation and safe-keeping of the sheep. Jesus loves His sheep.

Theme: FALSE AND TRUE SHEPHERDS

Introduction: Jn. 10 took place in Jerusalem in the fall before Jesus' suffering and death. He now distinguishes false shepherds from true shepherds. For three years Jesus' had been battling with the false shepherds among the Jews. They are described in John 5-9. They denied that He was true God. They rejected His mission. They rejected His miracles. They scorned the blind man whom Jesus healed. Now follows our text.

I-THE FALSE SHEPHERDS

- A-A description of these shepherds. In Palestine when shepherds brought their sheep in for the night they entered a door in a stone-wall enclosure and led the sheep in. Jesus compares Himself to this door. The false shepherds do not enter through this door. They enter elsewhere and so are really thieves and robbers. In vs. 5 Jesus calls this false shepherd a stranger, who is actually not acquainted with the sheep. In vs. 8 Jesus says that all before Him were robbers and thieves. In vs. 10 He says that the thief has come only to steal, kill and destroy. Thus Jesus describes false shepherds, false teachers. They deny the person, Word and work of Jesus Christ. These false shepherds actually know neither Jesus nor the sheep. They come to serve only themselves. They steal, kill and destroy. Jesus gives further description in vs. 12-13. The false shepherd is a hireling. When the hireling sees the wolf, the devil, coming, he flees because he cares not for the sheep.
- B-How the sheep react to the false shepherds. The sheep are the true Christians. In vs. 5 Jesus says that the sheep flee from the false shepherd because they do not know him. Sheep recognize the voice of their own shepherd. They flee the voice of a stranger. Christians flee from the voice of false shepherds because they know that false shepherd will only abandon them to the wolf, the devil.

II-THE TRUE SHEPHERDS

- A-A description of these shepherds. In vs. 2 Jesus tells us that the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. In vs. 7 Jesus says: "Truly, truly I say to you that I am the door of the sheep." And in vs. 9 He says: "I am the door. Through Me if anyone enters he will be saved and will go in and out and will find pasture." True shepherds preach only Christ and Him crucified. True shepherds are servants, not masters. They simply want to teach and preach Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life. When the true shepherd sees the wolf, the devil, coming, they do not run. They would rather die than to abandon the sheep.
- B-What the true shepherd gives the sheep. Vs. 9 gives us a good summary of what true shepherds give their sheep. They give them salvation, freedom from sin, death and the devil, and spiritual food. Jesus is the great Good Shepherd. He gives the sheep eternal life (vs. 28) and so these sheep will never perish. No one can seize these sheep out of Jesus' hand. He is true God, one with the Father.
- C-How the sheep react to the true shepherd. Vs. 3 tells us that the true shepherd calls the sheep by name and they hear his voice. Vs. 4 tells us that when the true shepherd takes the sheep out he goes before them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. Because of the voice of the true shepherd the sheep know Jesus, vs. 14. Because of the true shepherd Jesus says, vs. 27: "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me and I give them eternal life and they will never perish nor will anyone take them from My hand."

Conclusion: In Jn. 10:1-10; 11-18, 27-30, Jesus uses two pictures: He is the Door. He is the good Shepherd. False Shepherds disregard Jesus the only Door and Jesus the only Shepherd. True Shepherds faithfully enter through Jesus the only Door and direct sheep to Jesus the only Shepherd.