

The Shepherd and His True Sheep

John writes of the sheepfold and the requirement that the sheepfold must enter in through the one door in John chapter 10. The door John is writing about is Jesus. Throughout the Old Testament we see God presented as the True Shepherd as He guided, guarded, instructed, and watched over His people. One of the most notable examples of God being the True Shepherd is found in Psalm 23. Most are familiar with the opening of the Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1). Sadly, throughout most of the Old Testament we see the sheep, God's people, not listening too nor following the lead, guidance, and direction of the True Shepherd. Accordingly then, it was necessary that God send His only begotten Son, Jesus, to be the True Shepherd under the New Law (the New Testament) to save man from his sins.

John records the words of Jesus as He describes Himself to be: "the door" (John 10:7), and the "good shepherd" (John 10:11). Jesus also describes the relationship He has with His sheep: "I know my sheep" (vs. 14), "the sheep hear His voice" (John 10: 3), and His sheep "follow Him" (John 10:4). Because of this special relationship between the True Shepherd and His sheep, the sheep: will not "follow a stranger" (John 10: 5), and will "flee from" the stranger (John 10:5), pointing out the need for the sheep to listen only to the True Shepherd. The analogy of a physical shepherd and what a shepherd does in his job helps us understand and appreciate how the True Shepherd cares for His spiritual sheep. The True Shepherd cares so much for the spiritual life of His sheep that He gave "His life" for His sheep (vs. 11, 15, 17-18). The True Shepherd cares for His sheep of by His own choice, offering Himself at the will and command of the Father (John 10:18).

Peter states, "For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25). Jesus, as the True Shepherd, died and arose from the grave for us. He, as the True Shepherd, has our best interest at heart, even above His own well-being. Thus, He is not like one who was simple hired for a job and may care nothing for the sheep (John 10:17-18). Jesus loved us and gave His life - Ephesians 5:25. He knows each of us. He leads us having gone down the path of life Himself. Therefore, He is not only our savior and shepherd, He is an example (1 Peter 2:21).

True Christians are His sheep. True Christians need to listen to His voice and follow His examples and commands. And, when it comes to those who would pervert the Truth and present a doctrine that is false in any manner (Galatians 1:6-9 & 4:16), a true Christian will not listen and will turn them away. There is One True Shepherd. Purpose to follow His guide and directives, knowing that in the end the Shepherd will lead His true sheep into His Father's heaven.