

I AM THE DOOR; IF
ANYONE ENTERS
THROUGH ME, HE
WILL BE SAVED,
AND WILL GO IN
AND OUT AND
FIND PASTURE.

JOHN 10:9

I AM

THE DOOR

DATE

August 29 & 30

WEEK

3 of 7

OVERVIEW

John 9:13-10:10

KEY VERSE

John 10:9

SETTING THE STAGE

We have seen the progression of the *I Am* statements with *I Am the Bread of Life*, *I Am the Light of the World*. Jesus has always given very practical illustrations and comparisons for understanding the context of the situation.

Jesus has been teaching, preaching, and performing miracles throughout the region and beyond. His reputation has been established as one who cared not only about the masses, but also the individuals. In John 9, Jesus and His disciples are passing by and a blind man catches their attention. The disciples ask Jesus who had sinned, this man or his parents. This discourse allowed Jesus to enlighten and teach them, and ultimately to heal this blind man. John 9, is a transitional chapter that leads to the next two *I Am* statements found in John 10, which we will cover over the next two lessons.

Jesus heals a man who had been blind since birth. Jesus uses His spit and dirt to make mud, putting the mud on the man's eyes and telling him to go wash it off. It was an unusual thing to do and ask, yet it was an incredible miracle that took place. The man was able to see for the first time in his life and in telling his story speaks these amazing words in John 9:25b, *"...this one thing I do know that I once was blind, now I see."*

Continued on page 24 >

LESSON OUTLINE

1. The Question (John 9:39-41)
2. The Teaching (John 10:1-6)
3. The Result: Salvation (John 10:7-10)

THINGS TO KNOW

- **Greek word Amen:** "*Amen*" at the beginning of discourse means "truly, surely, of truth." At the end of discourse it means, "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." ¹ When used two times in a row, it is emphatic to call the attention of the listener.

I AM THE DOOR

Setting the Stage, continued >

Jesus performed this miracle on the Sabbath which meant the Jewish leaders of the day, the Pharisees, were once again not happy with Jesus. In response, Jesus paints a picture that would be very understandable in the first century, explaining the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. Note that John 10:1 literally picks up where John 9:41 leaves off. In fact, if you have a “red letter” edition of the Bible you will notice that Jesus is speaking in John 9:41 and continues in John 10:1. That is important to remember because of the context of the situation.

We will pick up the lesson with the dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees at the end of John chapter 9.

NOTE FOR TEACHERS ONLY: Please make sure you do not go beyond John 10:10 in this lesson. Next week’s lesson will pick up where this leaves off, as Jesus says, “*I am the Good Shepherd*” in John 10:11. You may consider coordinating with your co-teacher on these two lessons, *I Am the Door* and *I Am the Good Shepherd*.

1. THE QUESTION

In John chapter 9, Jesus has a rather combative moment with Jewish leaders known as Pharisees. Much of it centered around them questioning Jesus’ authority to heal the blind beggar, restoring his sight on the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders were so hard-hearted, that they could not accept the fact that Jesus had the authority or ability to accomplish the miraculous, much less the audacity to do it on the Sabbath.

They began an investigation and alleged that the young man was not truly blind. That theory was exposed as wrong when they interrogated his parents and discovered he was indeed born with the disability (John 9:18-21). Since that did not work, they chose to intimidate the young man and demand him to renounce the power of Jesus. Amazingly, the healed man stands strong and invites the Pharisees to become disciples of Jesus alongside him! (John 9:27)

The Pharisees become furious and cast him out from the synagogue (John 9:34). This ban was far worse than it sounds. He would be kicked out, not only from a building but from Jewish life altogether.² Jesus heard about this fallout, so He came to find the dejected young man and engaged in a brief discussion with him. Jesus revealed His messianic identity as the “Son of Man” to the

¹ biblehub.com/greek

² Michael Card, *John the Gospel of Wisdom*, Inner Varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2014, p. 121.



once blinded young man. At that moment, the ostracized Jew immediately began to worship Jesus, seeing clearly now both with his eyes and his heart. (John 9:35-38)

The Pharisees observed this happening and once again go on the offense against Jesus, with a surprising question.

JOHN 9:39-41 *And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.”*

⁴⁰ *Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?”* ⁴¹ *Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”*

Remember, they recognized that Jesus did heal the man who had been blind since birth. They understood it was not just physical sight, but also spiritual sight, as the young man began to worship Jesus.

In this story, we are not told these are “blind Pharisees” so it is safe to say they can physically see; yet, they were moved to ask Jesus, “*We are not blind too, are we?*” It is a great question and a question we ought to ask ourselves.

The Pharisees were educated in the Law of Moses and the Prophets. The Pharisees were the most “religious” people in all of Israel, holding to the letter of the law in specific detail. These are the Jewish leaders to the Jewish people, and these are the ones asking, “are we missing something?”

- We are educated; but are we missing something?
- We are religious; but are we missing something?
- We observe the Sabbath unlike “some” people; but are we missing something?
- Are we blind too?

Notice the response of Jesus in verse 41.

JOHN 9:41 *Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”*

They had a sin of pride, a feeling that they did not need a Savior and Lord, not recognizing their own spiritual blindness. Jesus very simply tells them if you are asking the question, then the answer is “yes,” you are missing something.

This leads Jesus to turn His attention to the Jewish leaders in chapter 10. He knows they need to understand His true identity, so He tries to explain it in terms they can understand. And Jesus proceeds to say in John 10:1, “*Truly, Truly I say to you.*” Jesus in essence is saying, “Hear Ye, Hear Ye” or “Pay Attention, this is what you are missing.”

Jesus revealed His messianic identity as the “Son of Man” to the once blinded young man. At that moment, the ostracized Jew immediately began to worship Jesus, seeing clearly now both with his eyes and his heart. (John 9:35-38)

They had a sin of pride, a feeling that they did not need a Savior and Lord, not recognizing their own spiritual blindness.

2. THE TEACHING

JOHN 10:1-6 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.”² But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep.³ To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.⁴ When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.⁵ A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”⁶ This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.*

Jesus tells them a story about sheep and a shepherd. Even though they were not shepherds themselves, as Pharisees they were professional religious people, they knew and understood the job of a shepherd. They understood the concept of a shepherd in ways that we do not. For many of us when we think of a shepherd we think of a drawing or a painting of a shepherd with a staff sitting on a rock with a lamb or a few sheep within sight, neatly groomed, hair in place, beard trimmed, clothing clean, and either smiling or looking contemplative.

In the first century, they knew differently. They knew that being a shepherd was not easy, not a path to financial independence, not contemplative, and definitely not clean. Shepherds lived the vast majority of their lives with the sheep, often weeks at a time. They smelled like sheep. They did not trim their beards or press their clothes. Their skin was not smooth, more than likely it resembled worn out, weathered leather. Their hands were probably callused and even scarred. It was a hard way to make a living. It was lonely. And yet it was vitally important to the economy.

The relationship between the sheep and the shepherd was unique because the sheep were not being raised for slaughter. The sheep were raised for their wool. Year after year, season after season they would be sheered, and the shepherd would take the wool to market. The shepherd and his sheep were together for years. There was a very real relationship between the shepherd and his sheep. The sheep were his source of income and each sheep was important for not only the

present season but also to build for the future. Therefore, he nurtured and protected each sheep for years, some say even decades. The shepherd would sacrifice his own comfort and even his own safety to provide a safe environment for the sheep to graze on the land and not be in danger.

John chapter 10 revolves around a metaphor that every listener would have been familiar with that even goes beyond the actual life and duties of a shepherd because of the secondary meaning. “Why? Because to the Jewish mind, a ‘shepherd’ was any kind of leader, spiritual or political. People looked at the king and prophets as shepherds. Israel was privileged to be ‘the flock of the Lord.’”³ Jesus uses this culturally relevant illustration to communicate His authority to the Israelites.

In the first six verses of John 10, Jesus focuses on a specific part of that illustration: the sheepfold. The sheepfold was an enclosure of some kind with only one entrance, often built with rocks, and it served to keep the sheep contained at night. After the shepherd took his sheep out to graze the fields, he would return them to the sheepfold for protection at night. Jesus mentions that thieves and robbers would try to come in and attack the sheep, but they always had to climb over a wall.

Now with that understanding of a shepherd, his sheep and the sheepfold, look at the words of Jesus again.

JOHN 10:1-2 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep.”*

Jesus makes sure He has their attention with the phrase using the Greek words “Amen, Amen,” *“Truly, truly I say to you.”* Then He talks about the door into the fold of the sheep. There was always only one way into a sheepfold, and that was through one door. And that opening was not accessible to the general public, instead, it was guarded by a shepherd. In fact, it was common for the shepherd to lay down across the opening of his sheepfold at night to protect the flock from outside attackers.

³ Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary, New Testament*, David C. Cook, Colorado Springs; 2007, p. 263.

The shepherd would sacrifice his own comfort and even his own safety to provide a safe environment for the sheep to graze on the land and not be in danger.

The sheepfold was intended to be a place of security, where the sheep implicitly trust the shepherd. Jesus plants this seed of the “door,” which would protect the sheep and graciously allow the sheep to enter the sheepfold. This is contrasted with the thieves and robbers who bypass the door in order to ultimately harm the sheep, which will be developed later in these verses.

The sheepfold was intended to be a place of security, where the sheep implicitly trust the shepherd.

JOHN 10:3-6 *To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.*

The shepherd knew his sheep, and perhaps even named them like we would name our pets, knowing if one was lost or lagging behind. He would know when they were thirsty or hungry. And they would “*know his voice*,” the voice of their shepherd.

There was an amazing relationship between sheep and shepherds. When the door (the shepherd) would arrive at the sheepfold, he would begin calling for his sheep. His familiar, comforting voice would draw the sheep into his fold, where he planned to protect them and give them rest at night. When morning came, that “door” would rise up to call them out once again, leading them to nourishment at green pastures.

Now conceptually and intellectually the Pharisees knew all of this, they knew the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep, but they did not have a clue to why Jesus was telling them this. They had asked, “Are we blind too?” as if they were missing something.

And Jesus starts talking about sheep and shepherds in answer to their question. They were not physically blind, but they were spiritually blind, they could not see what Jesus was trying to tell them.

3. THE RESULT: SALVATION

Jesus realized they did not understand, and so Jesus tells the same story, but this time makes it very plain and very simple. One can almost picture Jesus using hand gestures and motions to help tell the story.

JOHN 10:7-8 *So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.”*

Jesus starts out again, “Truly, truly; Hear ye, hear ye; Pay attention.” Picture Him speaking very slowly and articulating every word and saying, “*I am the door of the sheep*” while He is patting His chest to make sure they “see” He is talking about Himself.

And then He goes on to say, “*All who came before Me*” and probably using His arms and hands pointing in various directions as He continues, “*are thieves and robbers.*” Perhaps pausing for a moment and then says “**BUT**” and again pauses to make sure they are with Him “*the sheep did not hear them.*”

Jesus tells the Jewish leaders that He IS the door to salvation for Israel. Our Savior is asserting that the only way the Jews will be able to find rest, is if they go through Him. He is establishing His messianic identity and inviting them to enter the fold following His voice, walking through the door.

There is only one way to find salvation and rest for our souls. It is through “the door,” Jesus Christ.

Jesus came to call on the Jewish flock and invite them to enter His fold. However, their rejection did not close the door to the sheepfold. Instead, it swung the door open further to all the Gentiles of the world (Romans 1:16). So now the church is welcomed into Jesus’ fold through that exact same door. But just like any other sheepfold, there is no secondary entrance. There is only one way to find salvation and rest for our souls. It is through “the door,” Jesus Christ.

All other religions would dispute that statement. Other belief systems teach that there are many doors that lead to eternal life and security. However, the Bible is clear that there is only one sheepfold that leads to eternal life, and that is the one with Jesus Christ as the door. All things were made by Him, through Him, and for Him, and He alone has the authority to grant entrance to eternal life (Colossians 1:16). Romans 10:9 explains, *“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”* It does not matter what culture says, the Bible is clear that there is only one door to salvation.

And repetition is the key to learning as Jesus repeats Himself in vs. 9-10, emphasizing the truth once again.

JOHN 10:9-10 *I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”*

If you miss verses 9 and 10 you are indeed missing something significant. Jesus is telling the Pharisees that He is the door emphatically when He says for the second time, *“I am the door.”* He is the protector. He is the provider. He is the only way to salvation. The thieves and robbers, in the context, are false prophets along with other religious teachers who deny Jesus Christ as the Messiah, including the Pharisees.

Again, Jesus uses the word “thief,” taking it a step further saying the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Anything or anyone who distracts you from your walk with Jesus Christ is a thief and robber. Anything or anyone who distracts you from prayer and worship is a thief and robber. Anything or anyone who distracts you from fellowshiping with other Christians and giving of your time and money to the Kingdom of God is a thief and robber. Anything or anyone who distracts you from your Shepherd is a thief and a robber.

Jesus makes the contrast very clear in these verses. Through Jesus we have salvation and because of that salvation we will *“go in and out and find pasture.”* Because of that salvation, we have freedom, security, and purpose in Jesus Christ.

Because of that salvation, we have freedom, security, and purpose in Jesus Christ.

When we are listening to the voice of our Shepherd we experience freedom. In verse 9, it says *“go in and out”* which means we have freedom. We can come and go, we are not pinned down in legalism or hibernating in our closet, we have freedom in Christ. We hear the voice of our Shepherd, guiding us, encouraging us, and teaching us: Freedom to be creative. Freedom to be faithful. Freedom to be obedient. Freedom to follow our Shepherd, Jesus Christ throughout the pasture of life.

But we also have security. Jesus is our Shepherd and we can have security that He will provide for our needs when He says, *“find pasture.”* The sheep must find pasture in which to graze and live day by day. The Shepherd makes sure that happens for the sheep, guiding and

⁴ www.biblestudytools.com/lexicon

⁵ Chuck Swindoll, *Swindoll’s New Testament Insights: John*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 190-101.

directing them along the way. This is the daily nutrition of food and water for the sheep; without the pastures, they would fade away and die. We can be secure that Jesus will meet our daily needs.

Here we see the security of daily provision. He will allow us to find pasture. And that means it is partly our responsibility. It does not say the Shepherd will bring the pasture to us. Part of the freedom and security means we are responsible sheep. Make no mistake we are sheep that need a shepherd, but it is the responsibility of the sheep to graze, feed and drink the water.

And then we also have purpose, in the words of Jesus, *“that they may have life and have it abundantly.”* The NIV says *“life to the full.”*

This verse oftentimes is misquoted and misinterpreted for “prosperity.” It does not mean prosperity. The Greek word, “*Perissos*” literally means: “exceeding some number or measure or rank or need; over and above.”⁴ It is a picture of being filled to the brim and then overflowing.

In our western culture when we think of abundance we think of “stuff;” more stuff, bigger stuff, and even nicer stuff. Instead of thinking of it as “abundance of prosperity” it would be more accurate to think of it as “abundance of purpose.” Purpose to bear fruit, please the shepherd, show kindness, gentleness, joy, and peace to others. To live life to the fullest. Chuck Swindoll puts it this way,

Instead of thinking of it as “abundance of prosperity” it would be more accurate to think of it as “abundance of purpose.”

“The abundant life is life that never ends; yet we do not have to wait until the end of our physical life to receive this abundance and to enjoy it. Abundant life includes peace, purpose, destiny, a genuine purpose for living, the joy of facing any adversity—including the grave—without fear, and the ability to endure the hardship with confident assurance.”⁵

Considering the illustration of Jesus and the sheep; year after year the sheep would grow their wool and be sheered; grow it again and be sheered; grow it again and be sheered, that was their purpose. When the sheep were with their shepherd, they experienced freedom, security, and purpose, season after season, year after year. Likewise, we are to follow our Shepherd in all seasons of life as He continues to lead, provide, and protect.

HOW HIS PLAN SHAPES OUR PURPOSE

So often people want to focus on the miracles of Jesus, which are without a doubt extraordinary. The Gospel of John records only seven miracles, which John refers to as “signs.” And as we have been studying there are seven “I Am” statements. It was just as important for John to communicate the relational Jesus as it was the miracle worker Jesus.

From the beginning of creation in the Garden of Eden, God has wanted to establish a relationship with men and women. In this lesson, we see Jesus saying *“I am the Door”* which leads us to enter into the sheepfold of His-story. Life change takes place when we fully understand Jesus as the Door. He wants to let us into a relationship that will change our life for all eternity.

The good news for us is that our eternity has already begun. We can experience abundant life here and now as sheep who have a Shepherd regardless of circumstances. God’s plan for a personal relationship should shape our purpose for life as we embrace true freedom, security, and purpose by walking through that door, the door named Jesus.