

I AM the Door

John 10:7, 9



John 10:7

**Truly truly,
I say to you,
I am the Door
of the sheep**

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The Third Great "I AM" statement in the Book of John is "I am the Door (of the Sheep)"

The Context (John 10:1-6): Jesus had just healed a man born blind and the Pharisees cast him (the former blind man) out of the synagogue, because he attributed his receiving sight to God (John 9:1-34). Jesus heard that they cast him out, found him, and ask him: “Do you believe on the Son of God?” (9:35). After he realized Jesus was the Son of God, he said: “Lord, I believe; and he worshipped Him” (9:38). Jesus then said that He “came into this world that the ones not seeing might see” (9:39). Jesus was reminding the hostile Pharisees that “I AM” the Light of the World (the 2nd I AM in the Book of John).

He now begins to teach another parable to these Pharisees and Sadducees who were continually expressing opposition to Him (and seeking to kill Him). Jesus said: “Verily, verily (amen, amen), I say unto you, the one not entering through the door (gate; entrance) into the sheepfold, but (rather) climbs up some other way; that one is a thief (pilferer) and a robber (a thief who also plunders and pillages)” (10:1). He goes on to say: “the one entering through the door is the shepherd of the sheep” (10:2).

The Sheepfold: In further setting the context, it is essential to understand the contextual issue of the sheepfold in the first century Eastern culture. Having studied this, it is my understanding that there were two types of sheepfolds (pens) common during the time Jesus was on earth:

- 1) The first kind was a public sheepfold found in the cities and villages. It was large enough to hold several flocks of sheep. This sheepfold was in the care of a doorkeeper (porter), whose duty it was to guard the door to the sheep pen during the night and to admit the shepherds in the morning. The shepherds would come to the sheepfold and call their sheep (each of which knew its own shepherd’s voice and would follow its own shepherd and no other); and the shepherd would lead them out to pasture.
- 2) The second kind of sheepfold was in the countryside (where shepherds would sometimes keep their flocks in good weather). This type of sheepfold was usually just a rough circle of rocks piled up to make a wall with a small open space to enter. The shepherd would drive the sheep into the rock-walled sheep pen at nightfall. He would then lay in the small opening (since there was no gate to keep the sheep in and other wild animals or other threats out); becoming the gate/door to protect the sheep.
- 3) Initially, in this passage, it should be recognized that the sheepfold does not only contain Jesus’ sheep. It contains all the sheep of the house of Israel; awaiting a shepherd, while under the care of the porter (doorkeeper; guardian). God is the porter (doorkeeper) Who opens the sheepfold to the Shepherd of the sheep (10:2-3).

The False Shepherds: Another important contextual matter is false shepherds that do not enter through the door (gate; entrance) into the sheepfold, but (rather) they climb up some other way (10:1). These false shepherds are **primarily the present Jewish religious leaders** (Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees, false priests, etc.) that turned the people of Israel from belief in the true Shepherd/Messiah (Jesus Christ). Jesus initially describes them and speaks of their actions in verses 1, 5, and 8).

- 1) In 10:1, Jesus describes these individually as “a thief and a robber.” It is important to note that Jesus speaks of these individuals as both a thief and a robber. These two

Greek words are closely related but distinct. The first word (“thief”) means one who steals by fraud or in secret (by stealth; so as not to be discovered). It is used of Judas (John 12:4-6); who secretly stole from the bag. The second word (“robber”) means one who steals openly and by violence. Barabbas was a robber (John 18:40); and the temple had become a “den of robbers” (Matt. 21:13).

- 2) In 10:8, Jesus collectively says they (the Jewish religious leaders coming to Him) **are** (not were) thieves and robbers. The present tense makes it clear that He is talking of the present religious leaders and not necessarily (or primarily) those in the Old Testament that led the people of Israel away from God.
- 3) In 10:5, Jesus further describes them as “strangers” meaning one belonging to another (not of one’s own family). These Jewish religious leaders were not part of the family of God; but belonged to another (John 8:44- of their father, the devil) even though they were part of the people of Israel themselves.
- 4) The actions of these false shepherds are:
 - a) They don’t enter by the door (entrance)- v. 1
 - b) They climb up another way (over the wall)- v.1
 - c) The sheep will not follow them (the strangers)- v. 5
 - d) The sheep do not know the voice of them (the strangers)- v.5
 - e) The sheep do not even hear them- v.8
- 5) These Jewish religious leaders rejected Jesus and had to find another way in and out of the sheepfold (that required climbing over the wall). It was a false way, a way of rules and regulations, a way that required keeping the Law plus the added dictates of the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests. They were not true shepherds; they didn’t love the sheep; instead, they exploited and abused them just like they did with the (previously blind) beggar by expelling him from the synagogue.

The Door of the Sheep: We can now turn our attention to the third great “I AM” statement in the Book of John: “I AM THE DOOR” (10:7, 9). Twice Jesus declares this truth:

- 1) In John 10:7, the Scriptures say: “Then (therefore) Jesus said unto them again: Verily, verily (truly, truly), I say unto you, I am the Door of the sheep.”
 - a) The words, “therefore” and “again” are important in that they refer back to His teachings in 10:1-6. Jesus is clarifying His teaching that He is the “Door of the sheep” and not of the entire sheepfold. There are “lost sheep of the house of Israel” in the sheepfold (the first type of sheepfold which housed sheep of multiple shepherds).
 - b) Jesus had spoken of the “door” twice in 10:1-2, but in 10:6, it says: “This parable Jesus spoke unto them, but these ones (the Jewish religious leaders) did not understand (knew not experientially; Greek #1097 ginosko) the things He spoke unto them.” Because they did not experientially know Jesus (Christ), they did not understand that they were “lost sheep” (nor did they realize that they were “false shepherds”).
 - c) Jesus is clarifying that true shepherds come through the door of the sheepfold (they don’t come in another way as thieves and robbers climbing

over the wall). Then in 10:8, Jesus tells them that **“all”** (the shepherds) that **ever** came before Him through the door (entrance) of the sheepfold are thieves and robbers also (and His sheep heard them not). His sheep only hear His voice; not the voice of “strangers” (10:3-5).

- 2) In John 10:9, Jesus repeats this statement saying: “I am the Door; if anyone enters in through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and will find pasture.”
 - a) Jesus now declares that He is the Door of the second type of sheepfold (the one out in the pasture with only the Shepherd’s sheep in it). In this type of sheepfold, the shepherd would often lay across the entrance to prevent any encroachment by any person, animal, or other danger to his sheep as the actual door of the fold which only contained his sheep.
 - b) Jesus declares that the only way into the sheepfold is through Him (the Door). All the ones that come through the Door will be saved and will go in and out finding pasture. Thus, He is the Door, the Entryway, the Access, and the only way to salvation (Acts 4:12; Eph. 2:18). He is reiterating that only through Him is salvation possible. This is far removed from the ecumenical teachings popular in today’s liberal “religious” churches and educational institutions..

The Abundant Life: Jesus having declared Himself as the only Door to salvation (10:7, 9), adds two additional truths in John 10:10: the contrasting purposes of the thief and Jesus Christ.

- 1) The purpose of the thief: “The thief comes not except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (10:10a). The Jewish religious leaders devised a legalistic religious system to enrich and aggrandize themselves. The Old Testament Scriptures prophesied of this (Jeremiah 23:1-6; Ezek. 34:1-3). Today, there are examples of “thieving pastors” fleecing the church.
- 2) The purpose of Jesus Christ: “I came that they (saved sheep) will have life, and will have life abundantly” (10:10b). Jesus came to give spiritual, eternal life to all who believe in God and His Son, Jesus Christ (John 5:24-26). The Greek word “abundant” (#4053) means beyond what was anticipated; exceeding expectation; more excellent. Time does not allow us to look at the ABUNDANT CHRISTIAN LIFE in Jesus which is happy, free, overflowing, adventurous, and exciting beyond what we deserve. Thank you, Jesus!