

I AM “I Am the Door”

Introduction

John 9:39-41

39 And Jesus said, For **judgment I am come** into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. KJV¹

Recall the context. A blind man has been healed on the Sabbath and excommunicated for his faith. Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees has to be understood in that light. As we proceed to examine Jesus the Messiah as the door to life eternal and the self-sacrificing protector of the sheep, we need to keep in mind the contrast between the Good Shepherd and self-serving shepherds and hirelings.

He said, “For judgment I am come.” As His “I Am” statements tell us about his identity and being, His “am come” statements inform us of the purpose of His first advent. These statements are a study unto themselves. Those that use negation (i.e., I am come not to...but to) are particularly informative.

He came:

- Matt 9:13
 - Not to call the [self] righteous;
 - But to call sinners to repentance.
- Matt 10:34-35 (Luke 12:53)
 - Not to bring peace;
 - But to send a sword (to give division). [*Jesus is intentionally confrontational!*]
- Matt 20:28
 - Not to be ministered to;
 - But to minister and give His life a ransom for many.
- John 7:28-29 with 5:43 (separate construct)
 - Not of Himself (John 7:28-29);
 - [But] in His Father's name (John 5:43).
- John 12:47-50
 - Not to judge the world;
 - But to save the world.

He was sent by the Father as a servant to save the world. His mission is encapsulated in Luke 4:18.

¹ All references are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

As we shall see, this is the very definition of a good shepherd of God's flock. But first we must examine the door.

I. The Parable of the Sheepfold – John 10:1-6

1. Thieves and Robbers – vs. 1-2

John 10:1-2

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

True shepherds must access the flock through the door. Whenever one clambers and climbs over walls to get to the flock, we should consider that one a thief or a robber or worse yet, both! What is the difference between thieves and robbers? Barabbas was a robber (John 18:40), Judas was a thief. Thieves steal stealthily, robbers violently.

A. Thieves steal by stealth. John 12:3-6

John 12:3-6

3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a **thief** [Greek – *kleptes*, from *kelpto*], and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Note Judas' belligerent treatment of a gentle ewe. Even though he took by stealth, the flock is still abused.

B. Robbers take openly by violence. Matt 21:12-15

Matthew 21:12-15

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of **thieves**. [Greek – *lestes*, robber.]

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,

The KJV consistently translates this quotation from Jeremiah 7:11 as “den of thieves.” It is incorrect. Jesus called them a den of robbers. They were taking what was not theirs by force (temple rules) in broad daylight!

God severely criticized self-serving shepherds in the Old Testament.

C. Shepherds in Israel. Ezek 34:1-5

Ezekiel 34:1-5

- 1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?
- 3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.
- 4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.
- 5 And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

Compare their actions as listed in verse 4 with Jesus’ purpose stated in Luke 4:18. Not only did these shepherds not strengthen, heal, bind up, search, or find – they ruled with force and cruelty.

It is common in our culture for people to look for a church to belong to. In John 10, the Head of the Church gives us clear criteria for differentiating a healthy church from an abusive one. What are sheep to do in an unhealthy church? Verse 5 tells us the natural result of this situation: they scatter.

2. The Porter and the Hireling – vs. 3, 12-13

John 10:3

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

*In verse three, we learn what the porter (gate-keeper) and the shepherd do. The porter is supposed to **recognize** the shepherd.*

A. The porter’s responsibility. Mark 13:34-37

Mark 13:34-37

- 34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.
- 35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:
- 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

*The Shepherd expects to find His porters **awake**. This wakefulness is developed through prayer. Those who are in continual communication with the Shepherd have no difficulty in recognizing His voice when He comes and can be safe in opening the door to the sheep.*

B. His relationship to the Shepherd. vs. 3

“To him the porter openeth.” The porter knows the shepherd. Remember, He is the One who comes through the door, not over the wall.

C. The hireling – vs. 12-13

John 10:12-13

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

*Hired-gun preachers, professional clerics, in other words, those who tend the flock **only for pay** will not stand in the way of threats to the sheep. They will not, like David, take up their sling (prayer) or rod (declaration) to fend off the lion or the bear. At the first sign of trouble, they run (read “find another job”).*

3. The Shepherd – vs. 2-6

*Unlike thieves and robbers, the shepherd comes through the door (John 10:2). Can you see the underlying gentleness of His approach? The Lord Jesus (Who is the door) enters into the church and into your life **through the proper opening**.*

A. He speaks to the sheep, and they hear Him – vs. 3

“The sheep hear his voice” axiomatically implies that the Shepherd spoke to them.

B. He calls them by name – vs. 3

He knows His sheep by name! We are His flock (group), the sheep (individuals) of His pasture.

C. He leads them – vs. 4

John 10:4

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

Sheep can be driven (from behind) or led (from the front). Eastern shepherds typically lead their sheep, unlike their Western counterparts. Our Lord goes before us.

II. I Am the Door – John 10:7-9

1. To the Sheep – vs. 7-8

John 10:7-8

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

He is not only calling attention to false shepherds who appeared in the past, but present scribes and Pharisees who were eating the flock then.

A. Those who came before – Matt 23:8-16; Luke 11:52

Matthew 23:8-16

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

Luke 11:52

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

In their self-righteous ignorance, they barred others from true enlightenment.

2. To Salvation – vs. 9

John 10:9

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

3. To Life – vs. 10

John 10:10

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

The least common denominator of the “I am” statements is life.

III. I Am Come – John 10:10

He came to bring us a life that is superabundant in quantity (eternal life) and quality (eternal life with him). We must take the comments about the thief in the context of thieves and robbers gaining entrance into the sheepfold. The greatest destruction is brought to the church not by clear enemies of the cross (pagans, totalitarian governments, etc.), but by hirelings; false apostles, prophets, or teachers; and false brethren who prowl as wolves in sheep’s clothing. These must be seen for who they are: agents of the enemy come in to destroy the flock for which the Shepherd gave His life.

He is the door: to the church, to salvation, to very life itself. As such, no man can come to the Father but by Him.

As the Good Shepherd, He not only laid His life down for us, He also exemplified for us how we are supposed to minister to the church. But that is the topic of our next lesson.