

SHEPHERDS, SHEEP AND THIEVES

JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD: AN OVERVIEW - PART 1 of 6

John 10

(Jn 10:1-14), “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. ³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. ⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. ⁶ This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 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. 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. 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. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 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. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.”



It is important to **SET THE STAGE** so that we might better understand John 10. We will begin with **FOUR FACTS**.

FACT #1 – CHAPTER 10 RELATES BACK TO CHAPTER 9

S THE CONNECTION between chapters nine and 10 is evident by the first two words of chapter 10. Jesus said:

C (V. 1), “**VERILY, VERILY**, I say unto you, . . .”

C According to A. T. ROBERTSON, “Verily, Verily” (: 0<, •: 0< [Am ‘n, am ‘n]) never introduces a fresh topic (Word Pictures in the NT). It always looks back to something that has been previously stated. One example is found in John 3:3 where Jesus said to Nicodemus:

(Jn 3:3), “. . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

S The connection between chapters nine and 10 appears to be the **SHARP CONTRAST** between **the way Jesus treated** the blind man, and the way the **religious authorities** treated the blind man. **JESUS pursued** the blind as if Jesus were a shepherd, and the blind man was one of His lost sheep. The religious authorities eventually **excommunicated** the blind man because he bore witness to Jesus.

FACT #2 – THERE IS A BREAK BETWEEN JOHN 7:2 and JOHN 10:22, BUT WE ARE NOT CERTAIN WHERE

If a person sits and reads from John 7 through John 10 at one time, he will discover **a smooth flow** that makes one think the events of those four chapters all took place in a brief period of time. Upon further investigation, one discovers that a period of approximately two months had passed.

(Jn 7:2), “Now the Jews’ **FEAST OF TABERNACLES** was at hand.”

(Jn 10:22), “And it was at Jerusalem the **FEAST OF THE DEDICATION**, and it was winter.”

S THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES was celebrated sometime during the months of September, or October. The time varied from year to year because the Jews used the lunar calendar. The Feast of Dedication, or **Hanukkah**, as it is better known, was celebrated in late December. For example, in this year of 2003 the Feast of Tabernacles will begin on **October 11**. The Feast of Dedication will begin this year of 2003 on **December 20**, more than **two full months after** the Feast of Tabernacles.

S The Feast of Dedication was a time of celebration that commemorated the purification and rededication of the temple after the overthrow of Antiochus IV Epiphanes on Kislev (December) 25, 165 B.C.

“Antiochus, the king of Syria, had captured Jerusalem, plundered the temple treasury, and sacrificed a sow to Jupiter on the temple altar. His attempt to Hellenize Judea resulted in the Maccabean revolt, which, after three years, was successful in defeating the Syrian armies and liberating the Jewish people.” (Expositor’s Commentary)

The eight-day celebration was **not** a required pilgrimage feast. None-the-less many Jews who lived nearby would come to Jerusalem and celebrate. The celebration would **result** in the gathering of a large number of worshipers in Jerusalem.

S So, where does the break take place? Most people believe it took place in John 10 between verses 21-22. **(V. 21-22)**, “Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? ²² And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.”

FACT #3 – JESUS SPOKE THE WORDS OF JOHN 10 WHILE AT THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

(V. 23), “And Jesus walked in **THE TEMPLE** in Solomon’s porch.”

S “**SOLOMON’S PORCH**” was located on the **east side** of the temple. It was a long covered walkway that served as a shelter from the summer sun and the winter cold and rains. It was called “Solomon’s Porch” because, according to Josephus, the historian, it was part of the original structure of Solomon’s temple (Antiquities, 20.9.7).

S Jesus was **IN JERUSALEM** and in the **TEMPLE**. It was a matter of only **three or four short months** until Jesus would be **arrested, tried and crucified**. In spite of that coming reality, Jesus refused to build a wall of protection around Himself that kept Him from that coming experience. Jesus went face to face into the strongholds of darkness. Jesus walked directly into **the eye of the storm**.

(Lk 9:51), “And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,”

His persistence to remain **the steadfast witness** in spite of persecution is a living example of Matthew 16.

(Mt 16:18), “. . . I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

FACT #4 – ALLEGORY IS USED IN JOHN 10

(V. 6), “This **PARABLE** spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.”

S The typical Greek word for “parable” is “**PARABOLE**” (B“D”\$@8Z /parabol’). The word “parabole” occurs fifty times in the NT and is translated as “**PARABLE**” **46 times**. An example of where it is used is found in Mt 13:24.

S ALL THAT TO SAY, “**PARABOLE**” IS **NOT** THE WORD that Jesus used in our John 10:6. Jesus used the word “**PAROIMIA**” [B“D@4: \” /parloyameelah/]. “PAROIMIA” is a compound Greek word:
1) “**PARA**” [B“DV /parlah/] is translated as “**WITH**” **42 TIMES**.
2) “**OIMAI**” [@ : “4, @ç@: “4/oiomai, oimai /oykomlahee/] is translated as “**SUPPOSE**” **TWICE**, and as “**THINK**” **ONCE**. It means “**to suppose**” or “**to think**.” Jesus was giving His listeners something to think about by using **figures of speech** which we call **ALLEGORY**.

AN ALLEGORY IS a figurative description of real facts. It has been said that allegory is in words what **hieroglyphics** are in painting. When looking at **hieroglyphics**, you are likely to see many images. You might see a soldier, a baby, a weapon, a river and the sun. Those pictures each represent **some detail** that has **particular meaning**. Each item has a corresponding significance. (New Commentary on the Whole Bible)

With that fact in mind, let’s pick out **TEN IMPORTANT DETAILS** in Jesus’ allegory from John 10 and seek to understand their meaning. We will consider those ten details in **TWO STAGES**. In stage one we will consider **THE HISTORICAL SETTING** for each detail. In stage two we will concentrate on the **SPIRITUAL APPLICATION** of each of the historical details.

I. THE HISTORICAL SETTING

#1. "SHEPHERD"

(V. 2), "But he that entereth in by the door is the **SHEPHERD** of the sheep."

- S The word "**SHEPHERD**" is used **SIX TIMES** in John 10.
- S A "**SHEPHERD WAS** a person who was in charge of a herd of sheep. There is nothing complicated about that. Shepherds were very common in both the O.T. and N.T. For example, David was a shepherd before he became king of Israel.
- S The Middle Eastern shepherd often lived among his sheep. Even today in Israel there are the shepherds who live among their sheep in their bedouin tents. They still roam the hillsides taking care of their flocks.

#2. "SHEEP"

(V. 2), "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the **SHEEP**."

- S The word "SHEEP" occurs **17 TIMES** in John 10.
- S A "sheep" is a stocky creature that is known for his ability to survive in rough, dry and barren land. For the most part they are timid and defenseless animals. They are raised for three primary purposes: wool, meat and hide.
- S As we drove through Israel a few years ago, it was very **common** to look out the bus window and see flocks of sheep and goats.

#3. "SHEEPFOLD"

(V. 1), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the **SHEEPFOLD**, . . ."

- S The Greek word translated as "**SHEEPFOLD**" (aul' / "08Z) occurs **12 times** in the N.T. That word is translated as "**court**" in Revelation 11.

(Re 11:2), "But the **COURT** (aul') which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months."

- S A "**SHEEPFOLD IS** an uncovered space enclosed by a wall where flocks of sheep were often kept overnight. The **fence** for the "sheepfold" was often made of **rocks**. The modern day **cattleman's equivalent** for the "sheepfold" would be called a **corral**, or **cattle pen**. The "sheepfold" was an enclosed pen used for the protection of the sheep. An example is found in Numbers 32.

(Nu 32:16), "And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones:"

#4. "DOOR"

(V. 1), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the **DOOR** into the sheepfold, . . ."

- S The word "**DOOR**" occurs **FOUR TIMES** in our text.
- S The "sheepfold" often consisted of **four stone walls**, one of which contained **an opening** called a "**door**" (or "**gate**"). The "**gate**" was used so the sheep could **enter** and **exit** from the pen.
- S An interesting thing about the ancient sheepfold was that the gate was often just an opening. They did not always have a door that swung on hinges as we do today. As a result, a person often had to serve as a **gatekeeper**. Sometimes a hired person guarded the entry to the sheepfold. At other times the shepherd himself would herd his sheep into the pen for the night and then he would **lie down** across the opening in the gate where he

would sleep for the night. In that particular instance, the shepherd served as the **guard** for the sheep. The only way for anything to get through the gate was for the shepherd to allow it.

#5. "PORTER"

(V. 3), "To him the **PORTER** openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."

"**PORTER**" comes from the compound Greek word "**THUROROS**" (2LDTD`H)

- 1) "**THURA**" (2bD" /thoolrah) means "**DOOR.**"
- 2) "**OUROS**" means "**WATCHER,**" or "**GUARDIAN.**" **THUS, A "PORTER" WAS A GATE WATCHER or GATE KEEPER. He was THE GUARDIAN of the gate. He was charged with watching the gate.**

S As previously stated, when the shepherd brought his sheep to the pen for the night, it was **common** for someone other than the shepherd to guard the sheepfold.

#6. "THIEVES" and "ROBBERS"

(V. 1), "... He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a **THIEF** and a **ROBBER.**"

S Throughout history there have been **cattle rustlers**. In a like manner there have also been **SHEEP RUSTLERS**. Some people attempt to make their living dishonestly by stealing from others.

S In light of the eventual spiritual application of these historical details it is interesting to note **the difference** between the two Greek words used to describe the **sheep rustlers**.

- 1) The word translated as "**THIEF**" (kleptace / 68XBJOH) indicates to take by **subtlety** and **trickery**. It would be used to describe an **embezzler** who took money from his employer by stealth. The thief works **in the shadows** carrying out his misdeeds in secrecy. **Judas** was a thief. He was so

effective in taking the disciples' money that none of them ever suspected it.

- 2) The word for "**ROBBER**" (laceftace / 8@FJZH) implies **violence** and **plundering**. It implies that something is **taken by force**. Between the two words "lestes" and "kleptace", "lestes" is the more intense. "Lestes" could be used to describe the **pirates** of the high seas who use to board ships in broad daylight and take the goods by force.

S People stole sheep in two different manners in Bible days. Some stole them **subtly**, while others took them by **force**.

#7. "CALL," "HEAR," "FOLLOW," "KNOW" "LEAD"

(V. 3-5), "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep **HEAR** his voice: and he **CALLETH** his own sheep by name, and **LEADETH** them out. ⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep **FOLLOW** him: for they **KNOW** his voice. ⁵ And a stranger will they not **FOLLOW**, but will flee from him: for they **KNOW** not the voice of strangers."

(V. 16), "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall **HEAR** my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd."

(V. 27), "My sheep **HEAR** my voice, and I **KNOW** them, and they **FOLLOW** me:"

S We are told by those who know, the **shepherds** in Bible days **often mixed** their sheep in a sheep pen with sheep that belonged to other shepherds. When the shepherd would come to retrieve his sheep in the morning, something amazing took place. The shepherd would call out for his sheep. His sheep would recognize the shepherd's voice and they would follow him out of the pen. **THAT IS AMAZING** when you think about it.

S Those who know shepherding tell us that the sheep and the shepherd would become so familiar with each another that the sheep literally responded to the shepherd's voice when he called out to them. Out of a pen mixed with other sheep, the sheep would separate themselves and follow their own shepherd. The months of shepherding on the Judean hillsides had produced **an intimacy** between the shepherd and the sheep so that the sheep recognized the shepherd's voice. It is also told that the shepherd knew his sheep so well that he called them by name.

S It is interesting how well a person can learn another person's **VOICE**. One Sunday morning I was looking for my wife sitting in the crowded church auditorium. I didn't spot her so I gave up looking. At a later time in the service I heard her **cough** and recognized her cough out of all the other coughs going on in the auditorium that morning.

S Some months ago Jean and I were in **Walmart**. We went two different directions as we were shopping. When I started looking for her, I could not find her immediately, so I started looking through the tool department. A few minutes later, a few isles from where I was standing, I heard a **sneeze**. It was Jean's sneeze. Out of all the sneezes in Walmart that day, Jean's stood out as unique and understandable to me. Would you like to have her demonstrate how she sneezes?

"CALL," "HEAR," "FOLLOW," "KNOW" "LEAD"

#8. "STRANGERS"

(V. 5), "And a **STRANGER** will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

S In the event another shepherd was first to call out for his sheep on a particular morning, the sheep would not follow the strange voice of that shepherd. They would not follow that shepherd because they did not recognize his voice. That shepherd was a "stranger."

#9. "PASTURE"

(V. 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**."

S Sheep have to eat something or else they will get sick and die. They need nourishment and water.

S The pasture was the place the shepherd led them so they might eat. It was the responsibility of the shepherd to make sure his sheep had something to eat.

#10. "HIRELING"

(V. 12), "But he that is an **HIRELING**, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, . . ."

S The word for "hireling" means "**HIRE HAND**." Sometimes the Judean shepherd had pressing responsibilities that required him to hire a person to watch his sheep for a period of time. Perhaps he had a **funeral** to attend. Maybe his wife was about to give **birth**. At such times, it was necessary for the shepherd to hire someone to watch his sheep.

S Even today, it is **not common** that **ranchers** place their cattle in care of someone else. There are people whose occupation it is, to do nothing other than watch over the animals that belong to another person.

I. THE HISTORICAL SETTING

II. THE SPIRITUAL APPLICATION

S With such simple historical details, it seems only logical that the spiritual application would be simple. It is simple when a person has spiritual eyesight. The problem is what might seem simple to us, was complicated and incomprehensible to the listeners in Jesus' day.

(V. 6), “This parable (paroimia) spake Jesus unto them: but **THEY UNDERSTOOD NOT** what things they were which he spake unto them.”

- C (1 Co 1:18)**, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”
- C (1 Co 2:14)**, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”
- C (2 Co 4:3-4)**, “But if our gospel be **HID**, it is **HID** to them that are lost: ⁴In whom the god of this world hath **BLINDED** the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”
- C (Mt 11:25)**, “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou **HAST HID** these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”
- C (Mt 16:17)**, “And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not **revealed** *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”

THE SPIRITUAL APPLICATION:

#1. “SHEPHERD”

JESUS SAID

(V. 11), “**I AM** the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

- S Every good quality** that can be used to describe a good shepherd can be used to describe Jesus. A good shepherd does many good things for his sheep:
- 1) **Guides**
 - 2) **Provides**
 - 3) **Protects** (etc.)

#2. “SHEEP”

(V. 3), “. . . The **sheep** hear his voice: and he calleth his own **sheep** by name, and leadeth them out.”

- S THE SHEEP ARE “TRUE BELIEVERS.”** The emphasis is twofold: “**true**” and “**believers**.” There are people who say they “believe,” but they are not “true” in their belief. Jesus referred to that category of people in Matthew 7.

(Mt 7:22-23), “**MANY** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

- S “TRUE BELIEVERS” FOLLOW JESUS!**

(Ro 10:9), “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the **LORD** Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

We **should not claim** to be one of God’s “sheep” if we do not follow Jesus.

(Lk 6:46), “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

#3. “SHEEPFOLD”

- S** The “sheepfold” Jesus referred to that day while in the temple was none other than the nation of **ISRAEL**. All who listened were members of that “sheepfold” by virtue of being **descendants of** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In that “sheepfold” called Israel, were **two different flocks**. One flock “heard” the voice of the Good Shepherd and “followed.” The other flock did just the opposite.
- S** Within a matter of three or four months, the other flock of sheep would take that shepherd and nail Him to a cross. They failed to realize that just because a person was a member of **PHYSICAL**

ISRAEL that did not make them members of **SPIRITUAL ISRAEL**. There was a difference between **"true Israel"** and **"false Israel,"** just like there is a difference between a **"true Christian"** and a **"false Christian."** For example, **Peter** was a member of Jesus' disciples and was a **true Christian**. **Judas** was also a member of Jesus' disciples, but he was a **false Christian**.

S Having a right relationship with God is not the result of being born in the right earthly family. It is the result of a having "right" relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

S **JESUS SAID TO THE PHARISEES IN JOHN 8:**

C **(V. 37)**, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because MY WORD HATH **NO PLACE IN YOU.**"

C **(V. 39)**, "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, **YE WOULD DO THE WORKS OF ABRAHAM.**"

C **(V. 42)**, "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, **YE WOULD LOVE ME:** for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."

C **(V. 49)**, "Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but **I HONOR MY FATHER,** and ye do **DISHONOR ME.**"

S **REVEAL THE PLACE** that Jesus has in your life, and you will have revealed your relationship to God. Do you **LOVE HIM?** (Matt 22:36-38). Is He **LORD** of your life? (Rom 10:9).

S **IN JOHN 6 THE PHARISEES ASKED:**

C **(John 6:28)**, ". . . 'What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?'"

C **(John 6:29)**, ". . . This is the work of God, that ye **BELIEVE** on him whom he hath sent."

#4. "DOOR"

THE DOOR HAS **TWO** DISTINCT AND LEGITIMATE **APPLICATIONS:**

(1) JESUS ENTERED THROUGH "THE DOOR"

(V. 1-2), "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."

It appears that Jesus was referring to His ordained office of **MESSIAH**. Jesus had walked through the proper "door" to get where He was that day. **Many other people** had claimed to be God's Messiah over the years, **BUT ONLY JESUS** had walked through the proper "door" to get to that position.

(1) JESUS ENTERED THROUGH "THE DOOR"

(2) JESUS WAS THE "DOOR"

(V. 7), "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the **DOOR** of the sheep."

(V. 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."

(V. 10), ". . . I am come that they **MIGHT HAVE LIFE,** and that they might have *it* more abundantly."

S Jesus used the word "door," to illustrate God's ordained way of **SALVATION**. It goes without saying that God's salvation comes through God's One and Only Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

C **(Jn 14:6)**, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: **NO MAN** cometh unto the Father, but by me."

C **(Ac 4:12)**, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

S JESUS WAS **VERY “NARROW”** at this point. HE WAS VERY **“POLITICALLY INCORRECT.”** It is OK to be *narrow* if you are narrow in the right things. If one’s *narrowness* is accurate and truthful, then *narrowness* is A GOOD THING.

C If the **PILOT** of your jet is landing on the airport runway, you want him to be just as narrow as the runway. You do not want a *broad-minded* pilot that takes liberty to land wherever he chooses.

C If you were to have the privilege of being a passenger on a **SPACE SHUTTLE**, you would want the **MATHEMATICIANS** who plotted your course to be quite narrow in their calculations. Their coordinates would determine whether your flight returned to earth. You do not want *broad-minded* mathematicians who believe two plus two equals five plotting your course.

C If a **SURGEON** operates on your eye, you do not want him to be *broad-minded*. You want him to be very careful where he points that laser.

#5. **“PORTER”**

(V. 3), “To him the **PORTER** openeth; and the sheep hear his voice [the Shepherd’s voice]: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.”

S Remember the word “porter” referred to the person who was the **“gate keeper.”** He **watched the gate** when the shepherd was away.

S There are **differences of opinion** as to who the “porter” is. The opinion that is mentioned **most often** is the **HOLY SPIRIT**. Verses from John 16 were previously presented in this message. In

those verses Jesus said that it was necessary for Him to go so that the Holy Spirit could come. He said that when the Holy Spirit came, He would convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Listen to those words:

(Jn 16:7-15), “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ **Of sin, because they believe not on me;** ¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. ¹² I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. ¹⁴ **He shall glorify me:** for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.”

#6. **“THIEVES” and “ROBBERS”**

S Spiritual “thieves” and “robbers” have existed throughout the ages. Anytime people proclaim a way to God other than through Jesus Christ, they are what Jesus called spiritual “thieves” and “robbers.” By **deceit** and **violence** they try to steal the sheep of God. Jesus clearly revealed their ways in the Gospels.

(1) **(Mt 23:15)**, “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.”

(2) In **MARK 12:1-12** Jesus told of a husbandman who leased out his vineyard. When it came time to collect the rent, he sent his servants to collect the payment. The tenants beat the servants and sent them back home without the rent money. The owner eventually sent his son thinking surely they would respect him. Rather than respecting

the son, they took him and killed him and declared the vineyard as their own. THEY WERE **"THIEVES."**

(The final four details are combined in one presentation)

#7-#10. "HEAR," "FOLLOW," "STRANGER," "PASTURE,"
"HIRELING"

#1. Jesus said, "My sheep **HEAR** my voice, . . ." (V. 27). GOD'S TRUE SHEEP **"HEAR"** the voice of the Good Shepherd. They **"hear"** the voice of the Good Shepherd. They know the difference between His voice and the voice of a spiritual "thief" and the "robber." As a result, **God's true sheep "FOLLOW"** the Good Shepherd.

(V. 27), "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and THEY FOLLOW ME:"

God's true sheep know the meaning of the **SONG**, "I CAN HEAR MY SAVIOR CALLING."

#2. When a **"STRANGE"** shepherd appears on the scene, God's true sheep will not follow him because they do not know his voice. (What does that say about those who do follow strange shepherds?)

#3. Because God's true sheep follow the **"GOOD SHEPHERD,"** He leads them to **"GOOD" "PASTURE."**

(V. 9-10), "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find PASTURE. 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."

#4. The "Good Shepherd" will never abandon His sheep when the "wolf" comes. That is what the **"HIRELING"** does. When life becomes difficult for the sheep, the Good Shepherd is faithful to remain on guard protecting and providing for His sheep. If you are following anyone other than Jesus, you are following a "hireling." When the fire of God's judgment comes, the hireling will be defenseless to help.