

# **“I Am the Door”**

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

- A. Sheep herding in the first century was not like it is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - 1. Not farms with thousands of sheep, using dogs and motorbikes to round them up to be put on semi-trailers taking them off to slaughterhouses.
  - 2. Shepherd tended between 20 to a 100 sheep. He spent his days walking around with them making sure they were safe, well fed and watered. He knew each sheep by name and he prized them mainly for their wool and milk.

## **I. GOD IS THE PERFECT SHEPHERD**

- A. Psalm 80:1; Isa. 40:11
- B. Ez. 34:23 - He promised to send them a shepherd like Himself
- C. The sheepfold is a haven where the sheep sleep at night. Usually shepherds would bring the flocks back to the village as the sun began to set and pen them often with other flocks. If they had taken the sheep far away they would gather them in a cave or closed gully, or if these were not available make a pen for them out of brush, vines, and thorns. The aim was to protect the sheep throughout the night. Often, enclosures would be built by shepherds working together, and they would be repaired and reused year after year.
  - 1. If the sheepfold was in the village it would usually have a strong gate or door. Through this door the shepherd would enter in the morning to call out his sheep. Thieves would climb in some other way. If the sheepfold were in the countryside, the shepherd himself would sleep across the entrance as a human door. These two kinds of sheepfold and entrances to them are envisaged in this allegory.
  - 2. For Jesus to say that He was the Shepherd and the Door meant that He was the Shepherd who lay down across the opening of the sheepfold, using His body to protect the lives of the sheep.
- D. My sheep hear my voice... the relationship of the sheep and the shepherd is as close as that of a boy and his dog. The dog knows the boy and responds to his voice when he calls. A stranger cannot call the dog like the boy can.
  - 1. Thieves and robbers... In the first century the shepherd had to be constantly on the watch for those who would steal his sheep. Often this was done by getting into the sheepfold at night by some other way than the guarded door. Such thieves, Jesus says, come only to ‘steal and kill and destroy’ (v. 10). The welfare of the sheep is of no interest to them.
  - 2. Who are the thieves Jesus is allegorically alluding to? They are the self-serving Jewish leaders who are supposed to be good shepherds of God’s people Israel but are good only to themselves. Today the thieves are any who would steal sheep to enrich themselves.

3. They are:
  - a. The militant atheists of our day destroying the faith of our young people in the entertainment and social media and in the education establishment
  - b. The false teachers who suggest we can save ourselves by one means or another apart from Christ and His church
  - c. The leaders who draw the congregation's affection away from Christ to themselves or who preach the prosperity gospel.
4. There is only one Good Shepherd Whose voice we should heed
- E. My sheep enter and leave by Me - John 10:7, 9
  1. When the shepherd lay across the entrance no one could enter or leave without passing over him. He was the door to the sheepfold. He saves the sheep by protecting them from those who would come in to harm; He protects them by taking them out to feed. The fold represents safety; the shepherd door represents access to safety
  2. John 10:9-10 - Jesus explains that in His role as the shepherd door, He represents access to salvation. He is the entrance to eternal life, He feeds us, He protects us, and He gives us life in all its fullness.
- F. Rev. 3:7-8 - What is the door?
  1. It is a movable, usually solid, barrier for opening and closing an entranceway. A door represents either access or denial, depending on whether it is open or closed.
  2. Doors figure prominently in the Bible. The word "door" appears in the Bible, in one form or the other, 263 times. While the word "door" in the Bible is used to speak of a literal door, there are many places where "doors" are used symbolically.

## II. WE ARE THE SHEEP

- A. We are compared to sheep.
  1. Sheep are defenseless, slow, not very smart animals. In comparison to God, we are like sheep. This is not insulting; it emphasizes how much wiser the shepherd is to the sheep
  2. Sheep were valuable to their shepherds who would fight for their sheep
    - a. Psalm 79:13
  3. Sheep were targets of thieves, because they represented money. Predators like wolves and lions would try to kill them for food.
    - a. Acts 20:29-30; 1Peter 5:8
- B. God's Word has been given to create a sheepfold; it creates as secure place for those who hear - Matt. 7:24-27
  1. Jesus is the gate to the sheepfold - John 14:6
  2. Jesus will judge the shepherds who do not care for the flock as well as He does
  3. He directs them, and He will bless the sheep who suffered from their leadership - 1Peter 5:2-4; Ez. 34:7-16