

The Good Shepherd, Introduction (John 10:1–19)

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Introduction

1. The Good Shepherd passages of John 10 are actually a continuation of the events surrounding the healing of the blind man (Chapter 9). I offer four proofs.
 - a. “*Them*” in verse 6 can refer only to the Pharisees referenced in 9:40.
 - b. Some in Jesus’ audience responded to those who charged Him with being demon possessed by asking, “*Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?*” (v. 21). This also makes it clear that the setting was Jesus’ response closing Chapter 9.
 - c. No clear break is in the change of chapters. The issue, consistent with John’s purpose, was to expose the false leaders (shepherds) of Israel. They had asked “*Are we also blind?*” (9:40). Jesus responded, “*You say, ‘We see, your guilt remains*” (9:41; Jeremiah 23:1–4).
 - d. Chapter 10 demonstrates the proof of their *guilt* (9:41)—their failing to shepherd properly the Lord’s flock. Rather, they showed themselves to be thieves and robbers (10:1). On the other hand, the sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd but ignore the voice of strangers.
2. John also continues to demonstrate that Jesus is the fulfillment of every OT type and figure. Indeed, the central theme in the whole biblical text is the fulfillment of every prophetic hope of Israel that are all fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ and the believing remnant (Ephesians 1:9, 10).

I. Jesus Fulfills OT Types

1. Jesus is the *true temple* of God. John’s Gospel sets forth this truth in the introduction (John 1:14).
 - a. God’s plan to dwell with His people is fulfilled by Jesus’ coming in the flesh. The physical tabernacle/temple finds its perfect expression in Jesus Christ. Sadly, however, the physical temple was abused and neglected by both people and priest, as Malachi clearly testifies. Ezekiel prophesied that the time would come that His glory would leave the temple (Ezekiel 11:23). Jesus fulfilled this prophecy in His final week on earth (Matthew 23:38). The temple was *ichabod* because the glory had departed.

The temple of God would no longer be located in a place but in a Person (John 4:21, 23). Paul clearly teaches that the church of the living Christ, being the pillar and ground of the truth, is now the temple of God (2 Corinthians 6:16).
 - b. God’s plan to reveal His *glory* is fulfilled through His coming: “*We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.*” The *shekinah* of God was a visible manifestation of God’s glory, demonstrating God’s presence to the people. Now the *shekinah* of God dwells permanently and powerfully in us through the Spirit of God (Ephesians 2:19–22; 2 Corinthians 4:6)
2. Jesus fulfills all the feasts (John 7 and 8) and is the true Sabbath of God. Again, the true Sabbath is not a day but the person of Christ (Matthew 11:25–30).

3. Jesus fulfills the nation of Israel, the vine God took from Egypt and planted in Canaan to bear fruit to His glory (Psalm 80:8–11). Jesus also explained this in the parable of the wicked tenants (Matthew 21:33–46; Luke 20:9–18). In this parable, Jesus informed the Jews about the history of their nation. Then, after citing Psalm 118, Jesus informed them, *“Therefore, I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you [old-covenant Israel] and given to a people producing its fruits [the new-covenant church]”* (Matthew 21:43). John develops this theme in Chapter 15, showing Jesus as the *true Vine* over against the failed vine of Israel.

II. Jesus, the Good Shepherd

1. The failure of Israel’s shepherds is exposed in the life of the blind man healed by Jesus in Chapter 9.
 - a. The man’s neighbors debated his healing, and when they learned that Jesus healed him, they brought him to the authorities because the healing took place on the Sabbath day (v. 14).
 - b. The Pharisees concluded that Jesus could not have been from God, for He broke the Sabbath to heal (v. 16). Nevertheless, the restored sight of the blind man provided a real problem: *“How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?”* But rather than believing Jesus, the Pharisees just bore down on the man born blind.
 - c. In their hatred of Jesus, they also rejected the man after a brutal interrogation, expelling him from the synagogue. The failed shepherds cast out a sheep under their care; however, the Good Shepherd found him and saved him, securing his eternal welfare.
 - d. At this point, He uttered His judgment on these leaders: *“For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who [think they] see may become blind”* (v. 39).
2. The failed shepherds were forewarned in the prophets of the OT (Ezekiel 34:1–4; Zechariah 10:3, 4; Isaiah 56:9–12; Jeremiah 50:6, 7).
3. God promised that He would correct the problem of the failed shepherds. Thus, Jesus declared, *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep”* (John 10:11). God promised, *“And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding”* (Jeremiah 3:15, 16; Ezekiel 34:15, 16, 23, 24).
“He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young” (Isaiah 40:11).