

JOHN

Chapter 10

I Am the Good Shepherd

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” 6 This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. 7 So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” 19 There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. 20 Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” 21 Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

10:1–30 Should be understood in light of the OT (and ancient Near Eastern) concept of “shepherd,” symbolizing a royal caretaker of God’s people. God himself was called the “Shepherd of Israel” (Ps 80:1; cf. Ps 23:1; Isa 40:10–11; Eze 34:11–16), and he had given great responsibility to the leaders (“shepherds”) of Israel, which they failed to respect. God denounced these false shepherds (see Isa 56:9–12; Eze 34) and promised to provide the true Shepherd, the Messiah, to care for the sheep (Eze 34:23). (CSB)

10:1-10 In ch 9 a blind man receives both physical and spiritual sight: “Lord, I believe.” Proof that he heard the Good News and believed it is seen in his response: “He worshiped [Jesus]” (v 38). Instead of acknowledging this (double) miracle, the Pharisees, the Bible scholars and spiritual leaders of the day, show themselves to be the ones truly “blind” (cf. Mt 23:16). They epitomize the description of the false “shepherds of Israel” described by Ezekiel (ch 34) who “do not take care of the flock” (v 3). Ezekiel excoriates them because they “have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost”; they “have ruled them harshly and brutally” (v 4; also Jer 23:1–2; 50:6; Is 56:10–11. For the Pharisees’ “shepherding” of the blind man, see Jn 9:28, 34!). But the Lord makes a promise: “I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them . . . and be their shepherd” (v 23). Given this OT background, Jesus’ introduction of new

language relating to sheep and shepherds is not surprising. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

Jesus' opening words, "Truly, truly," bind this text to ch 9 (the man born blind), where the Pharisees, self-proclaimed teachers of Israel, indignantly ask, "Are we also blind?" (9:40). Jesus responds, "Now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains" (9:41). Our text proves not only how truly Jesus had spoken, but also the power of his Gospel voice: The formerly blind man (and all whom the Spirit calls) hears and follows him to abundant life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

This text makes its students feel like participants, not spectators, in its drama as they struggle to follow Jesus' meaning. His sheep know the shepherd's voice, but his "figure of speech" (v 6) defies an over-confident approach to it. His imagery shifts, or allows for multiple applications. When are his words part of the image? When do they refer to the situation at hand? Which element of the figure depicts Christ? Is he the Door? Or is he the one who, by using the door, proves himself to be the Shepherd? He is both, leaving room for application, concerning both the true Shepherd and the undershepherds of his flock. Neither emphasis, Christ as Shepherd (primarily in vv 1–5) or Christ as Door (primarily vv 7–10), completely excludes the other. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

The Lord has come so that those who are blind may see, and those who see may be blind. He had just opened the eyes of the man born blind. That man can see and now believes. Yet the Pharisees, who believe themselves to have perfect vision, are completely blind. Ironically, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains" (Jn 9:41). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

10:1-2 *Amēn amēn legō humin*. Before all the door, sheep, and robber-talk, there is the attention-grabbing "Amen, amen, I say to you all" from Jesus. The objects of the *humin* are the Pharisees from 9:41, who think themselves to be able to see. Jesus is speaking the truth—double-amen truth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

ho eiserchomenos ("The Coming-in one") and the prepositional phrase *dia tēs thuras* ("through the door") are repeated for emphasis and provide contrast between the shepherd and the thief and robber. The thief and robber do not come through the door. They "climb over at another place" (*anabainōn allachothēn*). "The One coming" who comes through the door is the Shepherd of the sheep (*poimēn*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

10:1 *you* - This included the Pharisees (9:40) and others who were attending Jesus' teaching. (TLSB)

truly, truly I say to you – *aman aman lego hmin* – This double statement is found only in John (25 times). It is like a special heads-up. It says: "Pay attention to what I am about to say because it is very important." Isaiah 55 opens with a similar call to attention as to what is about to be said. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

The familiar words "Verily, verily" (KTV) "Truly, truly" (RSV), "I tell you the truth" (NIV), *amēn amēn legō humin* (as in 5:19, 24, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; etc.) affirm that what follows is of the highest importance. They also link our text with the preceding chapter, with its contrast between the Pharisees who are blind (9:39–41) and the blind man who sees (9:36–38), and between the rulers of the Jews who persecuted the blind man (9:22, 24), and Jesus, who

healed him. Thus chapters 9 and 10 are closely related. Jesus is speaking to a mixed group: some Pharisees (9:40); the Jews (10:19); as well as to his disciples (9:2) and the healed blind man (9:35). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

“Truly, truly, I say to you” (also v 7). A solemn formula (twenty-five times in John) marking what follows as important, and binding this text to ch 9, the man born blind. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Our text is also closely linked with the following chapter. Jesus had said, “I tell you the truth [the familiar words], a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live” (5:25). In John 10, our theme is hearing the shepherd’s voice, which leads the sheep to life (v 10). In John 11, we see a vivid example of this very promise fulfilled as the voice of Jesus calls, “Lazarus, come out!” (v 43). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus begins with his solemn *amēn amēn legō humin*, “I tell you the truth.” The double *amēn* is found only in John (25 times). It is like a pointer: “Pay attention. What I’m about to say is critical and important.” *tēn aulēn tōn probatōn*, “pen,” literally, “courtyard for sheep,” was a walled enclosure, open to the sky, often adjacent to a house, where sheep were kept at night. It was high enough to dissuade the sheep from jumping over and (most) intruders (or predators) from climbing in. Such would be *kleptēs*, “thieves,” and *lēstēs*, “robbers.” The former steal by means of deception (e.g., Judas; Jn 12:6; cf. Mt 24:43), the latter by violence and force (e.g., Barabbas; Jn 18:40; cf Lk 10:30). A single entrance (“gate”) controlled access. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

sheepfold. A court surrounded by walls but open to the sky, and with only one entrance. The walls kept the sheep from wandering and protected them from wild animals. (CSB)

Walled enclosure for keeping sheep safe at night. (TLSB)

Note from Numbers 32:16 says: “Rock walls formed a large pen, where sheep and shepherds were safe from nighttime predators. Caves were also used for this purpose.” (TLSB)

The word for “pen” is *aulan* and means a courtyard for sheep. This was a walled enclosure, open to the sky, often adjacent to a house, where sheep were kept at night. It was high enough to discourage the sheep from jumping out and keep most intruders and predators from climbing in. It had a single entrance. You might say it was a “gated community. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Gate serves both as entrance way to the house and as a night enclosure for the family’s sheep. Admission both to the sheep area and to the house is by way of a door in the wall, watched over by someone so designated (*thurōros*, literally “doorkeeper,” v 3). The thief or robber, who climbs over the wall (*anabainōn*, v 1, literally “ascend, go up”) or seeks entrance through some opening other than the door, may be interested not only in stealing sheep but also in pillaging the contents of the house and even killing its occupants (v 10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

thief and robber – *kleptas* and *lastas*. The first uses deception and the second uses sheer might. Each of their actions betrays them for what they are. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

kleptēs . . . lēistēs, “a thief . . . a robber.” The one takes by deception, the other by force; neither is up to any good. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

10:2 *but he* – Notice that the shepherd does not come from within the house; he comes from outside, but not as an intruder, since he is the owner of the sheep (v 3; cf. 1:3, “through him all things were made,” and 1:11, “he came to that which was his own,” *ta idia*, the same words as in 10:3). The shepherd’s rugged life is spent outdoors with the sheep, rather than in the luxury of the home. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

THE SHEPHERD - *poimēn*, the shepherd. It lacks the article, but as a definite predicate preceding its verb, the article is to be supplied. See Jn 1:1, *kai theos ēn ho logos*, “and the Word was [the, not a] God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

10:3-4 The emphasis is on the Shepherd. For “that one” (*toutoi*), the doorkeeper (*ho thurōros*), opens (*anoigei*) the door. The sheep hear (*akouei*) his voice. He calls out (*phonei*) for his own sheep, and he leads (*exagei*) them out. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

ekballō was used twice in ch 9 to describe what happened to the man born blind. He was cast out (*exebalon*) of the synagogue by the Pharisees. But here, the Pharisees are the thieves and robbers kicking God’s sheep out of his pen for their own selfish reasons. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

The sheep are *ta idia* (his own). The Lord is emphatic about this. There is no doubt that he’s going to bring them out, for he promises to do it! It’s not a conditional, *if* he will bring them out. It’s *when* or *whenever* (*hotan*) he drives them out (*ekbalēi*). He goes before them, and the sheep follow (*akolouthēi*) They know (*oidasin*) his voice. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

10:3 *gatekeeper*. Apparently in charge of a large fold, where several flocks were kept. (CSB)

This was a watchman who guarded the entrance to the sheep pen. (TLSB)

Thuroros mean porter, the gatekeeper. It means that the shepherd does not enter clandestinely, secretly or violently.

his voice. The sheep recognized the voice of their own shepherd and responded only to him. (CSB)

LHM – 6/10/16

It was around 1985 when a friend of mine was backpacking through the country of Jordan.

It was late afternoon or early evening, when he stopped and watched three shepherds who were watering their flocks at a common well. As the flocks had mixed together, my friend wondered how the shepherds would separate them.

Eventually, one of the shepherds stood up and called out, "Menah!" -- Arabic for "Follow me!"

Unbelievably, 30 sheep immediately walked out of the super-flock and began to follow their shepherd up the hill. The second shepherd shouted, "Menah!" and his flock followed after him. As for the other sheep, they acted as if nothing had happened.

When the third shepherd stood up, my friend asked, "Would your sheep follow me if I called them?" The man shook his head and invited my friend to try.

My friend called out, "Menah! Menah!" The sheep looked at him as if he had lost his mind. "Will they always follow you?" my friend asked.

The shepherd said, "Always. Except when a sheep is sick; then the creature follows any one."

Today, Jesus -- our Shepherd, our Savior -- is calling, "Menah!" -- "Come!"

In this verse the focus is on God's sheep; the others who "do not hear . . . do not belong to God" (8:47). The shepherd calls his own by name. Near Eastern shepherds often have a distinct call for each one of their sheep. "Early one morning I saw an extraordinary sight not far from Bethlehem. Two shepherds had evidently spent the night with their flocks in a cave. The sheep were all mixed together and the time had come for the shepherds to go in different directions. One of the shepherds stood some distance from the sheep and began to call. First one, then another, then four or five animals ran towards him; and so on until he had counted his whole flock" (H. V. Morton, *In the Steps of the Master* [London, 1935] quoted in L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971] p. 502 n. 17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

"the sheep hear his voice." When called out to pasture in the early morning darkness, sheep know the shepherd through their ears, not their eyes. Jesus' sheep "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7), a faith that comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:17). "His own" (also v 4) stresses the ownership of the shepherd. "By name" stresses the individual love the shepherd has for each of his sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

his own sheep. The shepherd did not call sheep randomly, but only those that belonged to him. (CSB)

Here the subject ("sheep") is neuter plural, while the verb is singular. This emphasizes the collective nature of the sheep. *akouei* is more than "hear"; it means "listen with attention and discernment" followed by action. The picture is of a shepherd coming to the sheep pen in the morning to take his own (*idia*) sheep (there could be more than one flock) out for pasture. Like God (Is 43:1), the shepherd has a personal concern for each sheep and calls them each *kat' onoma*, "by name." His voice is distinguishable from other voices, and the shepherd might have a "pet name" for each sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

My father and our cows.

idia. There might be more than one group of sheep in the pen. These are the responsibility of this shepherd.

By name – onoma. His voice is distinguishable from other voices and the shepherd might have a pet name for each sheep. It points to a mutual relationship of trust and stresses the willing obedience of the sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Isaiah 40:26, “Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”

Isaiah 49:16, “See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.”

leads them out – Sheep would usually recognize the voice of their shepherd and respond to his call. Shepherds in the Near East typically lead their flocks rather than drive them from behind; they draw the sheep by their word. (TLSB)

10:4 *brought out all* – No sheep is left behind. *ekbalēi*, “put out” or “cast out.” This sounds surprisingly forceful. Do the sheep balk at following? This works against other images within the text but shows the shepherd’s commitment to do what’s needed. It is also strangely reminiscent of 9:34, where the blind man was “cast out” by false shepherds, as though their “casting out” is at the same time the “bringing out” of the Good Shepherd. *oidasin*, “they know.” Contrast with the Pharisees who *ouk egnōsan*, “did not understand.” They do not know the shepherd’s voice and do not follow (v 6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

all his own. As sheep follow their shepherd, so those drawn to Jesus by the Father follow Him (cf 6:44). (TLSB)

he goes before. The Palestinian shepherd led his sheep (he did not drive them), and the sheep followed because they knew his voice. (CSB)

He leads and not drives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Eastern shepherds, unlike their western counterparts, lead rather than drive their sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

The word *ekballō*, “brought out,” serves as a synonym of *exagō*, “leads . . . out,” in v 3. Any suggestion of rejection or violence that the word in v 4 might otherwise have is excluded by the context, in notable contrast to 9:34, where the same word describes what the Pharisees did to one of the “sheep”: “They threw him out.” At the same time this word choice does draw our attention to the helplessness of the sheep and their dependence upon the action of the shepherd (cf. 12:32 and Luther’s explanation of the Third Article: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength. “). Hearing and following go together, both of them in response to hearing and knowing the shepherd’s voice—the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Exodus 13:21-22, “²¹ By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. ²² Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.”

10:5-6 The stranger (*allogēnōs*) is not one of his own. The verbs that the sheep do for the shepherd, they will not do for the stranger. They will not follow (*akolouthēsousin*) him. Instead, they flee

because they do not know (*oidasin*) the voice of the stranger. It should be no surprise that the Pharisees didn't understand this proverb (*paroimian*); they aren't his sheep! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

John is emphatic. Jesus spoke. They didn't understand it. So he speaks again. The Lord repeats the *Amēn amēn legō humin* a second time and doubles down with *egō eimi hē thura tōn probatōn*. You don't get more emphatic in Greek than *egō eimi!* (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

This is the twelfth *egō eimi* in John's Gospel at this point. The Lord will use this expression twice just in our reading for Good Shepherd Sunday. The simple translation to English is "I am." But it would be very difficult not to believe that the Lord was making reference to the "I AM" of Exodus 3. The "I AM" is none other than the Lord God Himself! The Lord truly is my shepherd (Psalm 23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Whether this *egō eimi* is simple emphasis or a Yahweh reference can't be fully addressed here. It is enough simply to take note that the Lord lays down all his cards with a super-emphatic "I am" *hē thura tōn probatōn* (the door of the sheep). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

10:5 *will flee from him* – This is a very strong contrast to willingly follow.

Voice of strangers – The setting is away from the pen and out in the open. This would be a great place for thieves and robbers to make their move. – The sheep will not follow strangers; instead they will flee from them because they do not know their voice. This contrasts with us today who in the flesh, always need the Lord's warning to beware of false prophets (Mt 7:15). But it is also a picture of how by grace the Holy Spirit keeps Christ's people with Him in the one true faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 2)

True sheep definitely (double negative) do not "follow" a stranger's voice. Cf 18:37. "Recognize" is the same verb as "know" in v 4. The setting is away from the sheep pen where a "stranger" ("thief") tries to entice the sheep away. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

ou mē, "in no way." A double negative strongly denying the possibility. *ou mē akolouthēsousin, alla pheuxontai*, "They will not follow, but they will flee." These future tenses are also volitive: What the sheep are (not) *going* to do is also what they are (not) *willing* to do. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

10:6 *figure of speech used with them* – *paroimia*, "figure of speech," like OT concept of *mashal*, is a broader term than the more familiar Synoptic word *parabolē*, "parable." Unlike many of the Synoptic parables of Jesus, this does not include an extended story. The Pharisees do not "understand," proving themselves (again) to be "blind" (9:40–41). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

paroimian, a "dark saying," whose meaning is hidden without the key, but which, for that reason, continues to haunt. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Vv 1–5 are referred to in v 6 as a *paroimia*, i.e., a "figure of speech" (NIV), a "figure" (RSV), or a "parable" (KJV, TEV). Its literary form is similar to Jesus' parables. There is one central message—the sheep follow the shepherd's voice—but there are also related sub-points: other leaders are robbers, whose voices the sheep do not follow; the shepherd alone leads the sheep to

good pasture and life; the doorkeeper opens for the shepherd alone. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

As he did in the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Mt 21:33–46), Jesus uses a set of images so familiar to his hearers that it seems incredible that they missed its application to them (v 6). Here is the picture of sheep and shepherds. In the OT, Israel was often portrayed as God’s flock (Pss 23; 74:1; 78:52, 71; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Is 40:11; Jer 23:1–4; Ezekiel 34). Though they sometimes had false shepherds that abused and tyrannized them (Jer 10:21; 12:10; Ezek 34:1–10; Zech 11:3–9, 15–17), they would be saved by the Lord through David’s Righteous Branch, the new David who would shepherd them (Jer 23:1–8; Ezek 34:23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The subject, then, is one found throughout Scripture. It contains a word of Law: God’s voice alone is to be heard and followed by his flock, with woe to shepherds who would mistreat or lead in other directions, and to sheep who would follow other voices. It also contains the Good News: God’s voice leads his sheep to life and salvation, and blessed are those under-shepherds who guide so that there is no distinction between their voice and that of the Good Shepherd. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The setting is a dwelling or house with a wall-enclosed courtyard (*aulē*, “sheep pen,” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The Greek is “*paromimia*” which means “veiled saying” (in NT only here and 16:25, 29; 2 Pt. 2:22). A concrete image used to convey a spiritual truth. As with parables, the meaning is not always obvious to outsiders (cf. Mt. 13:13-16). (TLSB)

10:7 *Jesus said again* – Jesus saw that the Jews failed to understand, so He started again with a slightly different twist and a more direct application. (PBC)

palin, “again.” These sheep still have not heard his voice, but he will try again. This both calls to repentance and illustrates the truth of Jesus’ judgment (9:39), that “those who see may become blind.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

amēn amēn (see v 1). Jesus builds and expands upon his imagery, which involves some overlap (the “shepherd” of the sheep is also the “gate/door” for the sheep). *Egō eimi hē thura* is one of seven “I AM” statements found in John. Most commentators see a connection to the name of Yahweh, as he revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3:14). There is stress on the “I AM” (and no other). Some commentators mention the intriguing example of shepherds who themselves lie in the entrance to the sheep pen, keeping sheep in and intruders out. In essence they become the gate/door. Enticing as it is homiletically, it may not harmonize with the picture given in v 3. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

I am. – This is first of seven “I Am” statements found in John. Many would say that there is a close connection to the way God identified himself to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3:14). (CSB)

I am the door – Jesus was the way to reach the sheep and the way for the sheep to come for nourishment. (PBC)

While vv 1–6 set forth the parable, in vv 7–18 Jesus explains it and applies it to himself. Aware of the incomprehension of his hearers, Jesus expands on the image to help them know who he is and what he has come for. He is the door, the only way to the Father (cf. 14:6; perhaps the doorkeeper in v 3 of our text represents the Father). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

egō eimi (also in v 9), the emphatic “I am” with divine overtones. “The door,” one of seven “I am” images of Jesus in John (see 6:35; 8:12; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Jesus compared Himself to the gate that controlled access to the safety of the sheep pen. He alone provides access to eternal life. (TLSB)

10:8 *All ... before me.* “False shepherds” like the Pharisees and the chief priests, not the true OT prophets. (CSB)

Religious leaders of Jesus’ day, much like leadership in the past, cared far more for their own profit and welfare than for God’s sheep (cf Ezk 34). (TLSB)

“All who ever came before me” includes the Pharisees, Sadducees, temple authorities, and any unfaithful shepherds/leaders up to that *very moment* (the verb *eisin* is actually *present*, not past). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

This verse has caused some perplexity because of Jesus’ sweeping indictment against “all who came before me,” but it need not do so. Jesus speaks here of all those who from the beginning have followed the devil in seeking to be what only God and his Christ are: the Shepherd and the Door of the sheep. They are robbers and thieves. Certainly this does not include the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets, who in faith testified and still testify of him through the Scriptures (5:39). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

pantes hosoi ēlthon, “all who came” (“before me” is omitted in some early manuscripts). This is strangely inclusive. If understood in terms of history, “all” cannot include faithful prophets. If part of the imagery, “all” need not be identified; enough to know they are false and dangerous. This second understanding agrees with *eisin* (present tense): “all who came . . . are [not were].” But this makes Jesus the Shepherd in an image where he is already the Door. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

BDAG translates *pantes hosoi* as “all who.” The Lord is the Door. *pantes hosoi* came through other means were thieves and robbers. So the thieves and robbers go over the gate and not through the Door, which is Christ. The Pharisees, the bad shepherds of God’s people, are thieves and robbers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

NA28 includes the *pro emou* (before me) but there is substantial evidence for the shorter reading. It was included because there seemed to be significant copyist attempts to soften the “all who came were thieves and robbers.” This is seen in the moving of the *pro emou* before and after the *ēlthon*, and the deletion of the *pantes* in some manuscripts. We should simply stay away from making too much of this homiletically, focusing on the Shepherd saving the sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Many “strangers” came prior to Jesus, trying to reach His sheep. False prophets and false christs, thieves and robbers came. They did not come by way of Jesus. They did not find Christ Jesus in the Scriptures and point Him out to others as they way of salvation. Therefore, they did not reach God’s sheep would not listen to the thieves and robbers. (PBC)

10:9 *the door*. The one way into salvation. Inside there is safety, and one is able to go out and find pasture, i.e., the supply of all needs. – There are great blessing to those who believe in Jesus as their Savior. They are protected from danger, they have a freedom only God’s children could have and they have support for all aspects of their lives. (CSB)

di emou is emphasized by its position in the sentence. It is not clear whether the “whoever” refers to sheep or to (under)shepherds. “Whoever” is masculine, while “sheep” would be neuter. Sheep “come in and go out” to pasture, but the same expression is used of shepherds (cf. Num 27:17) or people in general (Acts 1:21). If it is (under)shepherds, like “pastors,” in mind, the sense would be “Those who are true shepherds must themselves first come through the one and only Door” (cf. 1 Tim 4:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

Anyone who comes through the gate, that is, who believes in Jesus, will be saved. He or she will come and go and be nourished. (PBC)

Cf. Pss 23; 121:7–8; Lk 13:24; Mt 7:13–14. Paradoxically, it is those who enter by the narrow Door who find “plenty of room,” and whose lives are not cramped by the confines of sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

eiselthēi (“comes in”) and *heurēsei* (“will find”) may be active verbs; however, those entering the sheep pen don’t do those verbs by their own reason or strength but only *di’ emou* (“through me”). Those entering by means of the Door (Christ) will be saved (*sōthēsetai*—future, passive). They will come out and come in and find pasture, all through “the Door” to the sheep pen. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

10:10 *thief*. His interest is in himself. Christ’s interest is in his sheep, whom he enables to have life to the full. (CSB)

comes to steal and kill – *thon* – To sacrifice for the purpose of food.

Thieves and robbers come only to steal, to take life, to destroy. But the Shepherd of the sheep came to lay down his life for the sheep (v 11); to give his life as a ransom for them (Mk 10:45); to give them full, abundant, and eternal life (Jn 20:31). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

thuō means “sacrifice,” as well as “kill” (for food). Perhaps Jesus uses the less expected word because he is taking a swipe at the priestly authorities. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

The thieves and robbers come to steal, kill, and destroy. The effect of false teaching is disastrous. The path of the Pharisees falls off the rocky cliff. But Jesus came so that the sheep might have life and have it to the full. (PBC)

The thief comes for himself. The double negative is used for emphasis: “The thief comes not (*ouk*) except (*ei mē*) so that to steal, slaughter, and destroy.” The only reason the thief comes is to

steal the sheep, butcher them, and destroy them. He comes in the present tense. The Shepherd has come (*ēlthon*, aorist) with double *echōsin*. He comes so that they, his sheep who hear his voice, might have life and have that life *perisson* (TDNT: “over abundantly”). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

I came – ouk erchetai ei mē, “he does not come except to.” A strong negation. He comes for no other purpose. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

egō ēlthon, “I came” (aorist)—into history, and from heaven—an accomplished reality. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

life and have it abundantly – This is the best kind of life: life lived in security and freedom, life with a purpose and goal, life with a capital “L.” – Life is an important word in John (used 36 times; but only 14 times in the Synoptics). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Everlasting life through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. 20:31), not through material goods or worldly success. (TLSB)

Someone has said that Jesus gives us life without the big “if” in the middle. With Jesus life takes on meaning and has an eternal future. He gives life that delivers joy, rest content and blossoms in glory. We believe, and we receive that life from Jesus. (PBC)

sōthēsetai, “will be saved.” Again, how one translates affects (and is affected by) how one understands the elements of this figure. Salvation is a prominent theme in John, but Lenski translates “shall be safe,” that is, by using the door, the undershepherd proves himself true, and so has no worry (as would a thief) of being caught or punished (R. C. H. Lenski, *St. John’s Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961], 716). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

10:11-18 Beginning in ch 7 and continuing through 10:21, we see what Jesus said and did in Jerusalem during the Festival of Tabernacles (Booths) occurring in the month of October. This is taking place a mere six months before his crucifixion and death. Jesus in 10:7 calls himself the “gate for the sheep.” He is the “gate,” and anyone who enters otherwise is a thief. Here we again see the growing tension between Jesus and the religious leaders, because they are the “thieves and bandits” who by their crafty ways have come to “steal and kill and destroy” God’s people (cf 10:8–10). These leaders bring death; Jesus brings life and even more abundant life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

In the immediate context (John 9), Jesus heals a man who was blind from birth. The Pharisees, in typical fashion, reject this man (v 34) and the One who healed him (v 28). Finding the rejected man, Jesus asks, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” (v 35). This man, healed of his blindness, confesses, “Lord, I believe” (v 38). Some of the Pharisees, having heard this conversation between Jesus and the man who was blind from birth, ask, “Are we also blind?” (v 40). To which Jesus replies, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains” (v 41). The Pharisees are in the dark, they are blind, they are sinners, but they will not confess their blindness (sin). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

This is the context that leads into two of the great I AM statements from Jesus. In the verses leading up to our text, he declares, “I am the door of the sheep” (Jn 10:7). Then, in our text, he declares, “I am the good shepherd” (v 11). The Pharisees who reject Jesus will not enter into the sheepfold through the door (Jesus). Instead, they seek to “[climb] in by another way” (v 1). Such

self-righteousness shows them to be thieves and robbers of God's grace, which is revealed and given to us in Christ Jesus. The sheep of God's flock, on the other hand, hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and follow him (v 3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

John 7:1-10:21 is devoted to what Jesus said and did in Jerusalem on the occasion of the Festival of Tabernacles (or Booths) in Jerusalem in the month of October, just six months before His crucifixion and death. The growing tension between Him and the Jewish authorities is reaching a climax. In John 9, we have the account of the healing of the blind man, a remarkable miracle which also serves as parable to show the Pharisees their obstinate spiritual blindness. The audience on the occasion of our text is Jesus' disciples, the formerly blind beggar, the Pharisees, and other Jews. The Pharisees are spiritually blind. In this parable, verses 11-18, Jesus offers both stern warning and sweet comfort. (Buls)

We rightly think of this text as a very comforting one. But it is amazing that very often such comforting texts of the Gospel are found in a context of danger, hostility and anger toward Jesus. Most of the great "I AM" passages are found in such a context of hostility, apathy or danger. That's life. We live in a world which is apathetic and hostile toward the Lord Jesus and His comforting Gospel. And that's the reason why we must preach and teach this Gospel ever more assiduously. (Buls)

The 26th edition of Nestle/Aland Greek text divides our text into three major paragraphs: verses 11-13; 14-16; and, 17-18. Perhaps a simpler division would be a two-fold one: verses 11-13, Jesus' relationship to His sheep; verses 14-18, Jesus' relationship to both His Father and His sheep. Central to both divisions is the fact that Jesus lays down His life for the sheep. But in the second part the act of laying down His life for the sheep is presented more fully, both in Jesus' relationship to the Father and in the result for the sheep. (Buls)

Reformed theology uses this text for proof of a limited atonement. (Buls)

Hendriksen: It is for the sheep, *only* for the sheep, that the good shepherd lays down his life. The design of the atonement is definitely restricted. (Buls)

But that cannot be supported by Scripture.

Bengel: It cannot be inferred from this that He did not die also for the rest of mankind. (Buls)

Lenski: When saying that he lays down his life 'for the sheep' the sacrifice of Jesus, which is for the world and all men, is viewed with reference to its actual final result, which appears in the saved. This view is taken repeatedly in the Scriptures and never furnishes the least ground for the idea of a limited atonement. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The first feature which distinguishes Him as the true Shepherd of souls is that He gives His life, His own soul, as a ransom, as the one complete sacrifice, for the guilt of all sinners, who have earned eternal damnation. He becomes their Substitute. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: From these words a person sees that in this entire pericope Jesus is speaking of the elect children of God. . . The fact that Christ lays down His life for these sheep does not exclude His propitiation for the sins of the whole world. (Buls)

10:11 *I am*. Note emphatic "I am" both here and in verse 14. Subject and predicate are interchangeable. In all the "I AM" statements in John, all other possibilities are eliminated. He is unique. First Jesus stated *Who He is*. (Buls)

2 Timothy 2:13, "if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself."

This is one of the seven "I AM's" in the Scriptures: (1) Bread of Life (John 6:35), (2) Light (John 8:12 & 9:5), (3) Gate (John 10:7,9), (4) Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14), (5) Resurrection and Life (John 11:25), (6) Way, Truth and Life (John 14:6), (7) Vine (John 15:1,5).

The text begins with Jesus describing his relationship to his people. No longer does he describe himself as a "gate," but now he is their "Good Shepherd" and as such he does what a "good" shepherd ought to do . . . he lays down his life for his sheep. The text begins with the great *egō eimi*, "I AM." The article in the phrase *oJ poimh;n oJ kalov*, "the good shepherd," indicates that this isn't your average "good shepherd" but that he is *the* Good Shepherd. Why? He "lays down his life for the sheep." No other "shepherd" in any religion does such a thing. Notice Jesus lays down his life *uJpevr*, "on behalf of or in place of," *tw'n probavtwn*, "the sheep." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

A shepherd was someone who made a living looking after sheep. He led his sheep to pasture and water. He looked after them and protected them from danger. When a sheep was lost, the shepherd went out to search for it. At night, he brought the sheep home, checking to see they were all there by counting them as they passed under his shepherd's rod or staff. (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

Good Shepherd – *kalos* - good, that is, valuable or virtuous, good, or worthy. This indicates that this much better than the average "good shepherd." (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 2)

egō eimi ho poimēn ho kalos, "I am the good shepherd." Jesus leaves no doubt that he alone is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep and gathers them into the sheepfold. The adjective *good* is emphasized by the repetition of the article. What Jesus means when he says that he is the *Good Shepherd* will be fleshed out for us in the rest of our text. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

The "good" is made emphatic twice by the repetition of the article. The word "good" is carefully explained, verses 11-18. It means "excellent." The word "good," like the word "love," is a martyr among men because its meaning is often meaningless. (Buls)

Jesus uses "good" in its very highest sense. Forms of "life" are found five times in this pericope. It is in the present tense. (Buls)

Luther: "In this single little word "shepherd" there are gathered in one almost all the good and comforting things that we praise in God" (AE 12:152). (TLSB)

The shepherd had to feed as well as protect the flock. That meant he had to travel some distance, especially in the hot summer. Each night he counted the sheep into an open fold and himself lay across the opening so become the "door of the sheep." He had to watch for wild animals (lions in the OT). The title sums up so much: the close, personal relationship between himself and each of the sheep; the absolute security we have in him; his leadership and guidance; his constant company' his unflinching care; and his sacrificial love.

The whole life of a shepherd must be completely given over to meet the wants of the dependent, needy, hungry, foolish creatures that have been made his responsibility. Jesus held nothing back or looked out not for his own interests.

Jesus is the “good” – “beautiful,” ‘noble,” “excellent” – shepherd. This shepherd excels in every respect beyond any other shepherd. He is unique. (PBC)

lays down his life. A Palestinian shepherd might risk danger for his sheep (see Ge 31:39; 1Sa 17:34–37), but he expected to come through alive. Jesus said that the good shepherd will die for his sheep. (CSB)

Bengel: The whole life of Christ is a going to death. (Buls)

"For" found again in verse 15, means "in the stead of," the vicarious use. He takes their place. The prophets foretold Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Read Isaiah 40:11 and Ezekiel 34:11-26. Psalm 23, in its entirety, immediately comes to mind. Hebrews 13:20 is a parallel passage. Read. Isaiah 53:6 where our desperate need but also the vicarious atonement is clearly portrayed. And although Isaiah 53 does not speak of a Shepherd, verse 10 pictures His death for us. "He will see His offspring" clearly teaches what John 10:16 says. And "the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand" reminds one of verses 17-18. (Buls)

Jesus did not risk His life for the sheep merely to set a noble example; He gave His life as an atoning sacrifice for them. (TLSB)

tithēsīn huper tōn probatōn, “[he] lays down . . . for the sheep.” Five times Jesus says that he lays down his life (vv 11, 15, 17, and twice in 18). The preposition *for* is to be understood vicariously. Jesus lays down his life *in place of* or *on behalf of* the sheep. Jesus lays down his life upon the altar of the cross, as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. See also Heb 13:20 and Isaiah 53. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

A good shepherd set himself between the flock and potential problems. Danger of any kind can only reach them over his dead body. If it is necessary, he will die to save them. This Christ did for us.

Using the figure of the shepherd, Jesus prophesies His death at Calvary, which was just months away. Three times in this account He mentions laying down His life on behalf of and in place of His sheep. He explains a little more about what He means each time. The figure fully merges with the reality by the third time. (PBC)

The whole life of a shepherd must be completely sacrificed to meet the wants of the dependent, needy, hungry, foolish creatures that have been put into his keeping. Jesus held nothing back or looked out for His own interests. (IB)

John 15:13, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

Sermon illustration – commitment – The mother of the family was celebrating a birth and the rest of the family was treating her to a party. When the time for the presentation of the gifts arrived, she was instructed to sit in her favorite living room chair. One by one, the father and the two older children came in from the kitchen bearing their gifts on a tray, solemnly presenting them to

her as to royalty. The smallest girl, really to little to have had much of a role in the gift selection, had been left out of these joyous plans. But watching the process, she rose to the occasion. For when the others thought the party was over, she appeared from the kitchen bearing an empty tray. Approaching her mother she placed the tray on the floor, stepped upon it herself, and with a childish wiggle of joy said, "Mommy, I give you ME!"

Sermon illustration – commitment – Overheard as a man was leaving his companion at the entrance to the IRS office: "As your tax consultant, I said in case of an audit I would accompany you to the IRS. I said nothing about going in.

10:12-13 The Good Shepherd sacrifices his life for those who are his. For the Good Shepherd bought his sheep at a price. Clearly Jesus is referring to the devil, and all that he brings, as the wolf. The hired hand can be seen as a false pastor who poses as a true pastor. The second the wolf comes, this false pastor flees. This hired hand, along with the wolf, is to blame for the scattering of the sheep. The true and faithful pastor resembles the Good Shepherd in that he loves and cares for the flock even when the wolf comes. Just as the Father sent Jesus to be the Good Shepherd, so too does Jesus send all true pastors as "under-shepherds" (*Lenski*, 728). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

10:12 *wolf* – Devil.

hired hand. He is interested in wages, not sheep. In time of danger he runs away because of what he is (v. 13) and abandons the flock to predators. (CSB)

Shepherding was often dangerous work. Wild animals of every kind could attack at any time. It was the shepherd's job to protect the sheep from these animals even at the expense of his own life. Those who did not own the sheep but only did to earn some money might well run away during that time. (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

The versions and commentaries offer a variety of punctuation for verses 12-15. Rather than discuss all of that here, a translation is offered. Note the utter difference and contrast between the "hired hand" and "the good shepherd." Emphasized words are an attempt to give the proper nuance to the word translated "and so, namely, and:" (Buls)

The hired person, *namely* one who is not a shepherd, of whom the sheep are not his very own, if (or when) he sees the wolf coming, he *both* abandons the sheep *and* flees, -- *and so* the wolf seizes them and scatters (them) -- because he is a hired person, *namely*, he cares nothing about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, *first*, I know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, *and secondly*, I lay down my life in the stead of the sheep. (Buls)

In summary, the contrast is as follows: The hired person is not a shepherd, does not own the sheep, sacrifices the sheep in self-interest, and cares nothing about the sheep. Jesus is here describing false teachers and false messiahs of all ages, especially the Pharisees who were listening to Him. By way of contrast, Jesus is the Excellent Shepherd, Who owns the sheep, Who knows His sheep as intimately as the Father knows the Son and vice versa, and, basic to all, He sacrifices Himself in the interest of the sheep. (Buls)

ho misthōtos, "the hired hand." The hired hand is paid to do a job. The Good Shepherd is not. Take note of the other contradictions between the hired hand and the Good Shepherd in vv 12–13. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

This includes Israel's leaders who were motivated more by self-interest than care for the sheep. (TLSB)

Could be a false pastor who is only in it for the glory, honor or money.

Ordinarily shepherds protect sheep, but they do not die for their sheep. The Good Shepherd is extraordinary. In contrast, the hired hand won't take any risk. When trouble comes, he disappears. (PBC)

leaves – theōrei ton lukon . . . aphiēsin . . . pheugei, “[he] sees the wolf . . . [he] leaves . . . [he] flees.” The hired man is not blind. He sees the wolf and knows the danger. Once again, the contrast with the Good Shepherd is seen, for the hired man leaves the sheep and flees in order to save his own life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

"Sees, abandons, runs." These three verbs are axiomatic of the self-server. "Sees" is more than mere seeing. It means he consciously views, is fully aware of the great danger. Its object is "the wolf," an apt metaphor for the devil. He is constantly approaching. The object "abandons" is "the sheep," denoting lack of principle and courage. The hireling "flees." He is a coward. (Buls)

wolf snatches and scatters – ho lukos harpazei . . . skorpizei, “the wolf snatches . . . scatters.” Left to themselves, the sheep are at the mercy of the wolf. Once again, these words are set in contradiction to the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

The devil seizes and scatters. By way of contrast, Jesus gathers and leads, verse 16. The word "pastor" is the Latin word for "shepherd," Woe to the pastor who proves to be a hireling!! See Matthew 7:15 and Acts 20:29-30. (Buls)

Lenski: Due to the portrait here drawn by Jesus the term 'hireling' has come to stand for a base type of character, one that is venal, mercenary, utterly selfish. (Buls)

Here Jesus identifies Satan and all his agents. They are so rampant in the world today in the cults, the sects and those organizations which plainly do church work only for earthly gain. And membership in the LC-MS does not make us immune to all of this. (Buls)

10:13 *because - hoti*, “because.” The hired man flees *because* the sheep are of no concern to him. He cares only for the well-being of his own life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Jesus is not speaking of a person who forthrightly tells another: "I don't care about you." He is speaking of a person who *poses* as one who cares but in actuality does not. Compare John 12:6. Under the guise of suggesting that the money be given to the poor, Judas was actually a thief. (Buls)

10:14-15 The close relationship of the Good Shepherd and His sheep finds a direct comparison with the intimate relationship between God the Father and God the Son. (TLSB)

10:14 *I am the Good Shepherd* - Just in case you didn't get it the first time, Jesus again emphasizes *ejgwv eijmi oJ poimh;n oJ kalov*, “I AM the Good Shepherd.” This is coming on the

heels of v 13 in which Jesus says, “a hired hand . . . cares nothing for the sheep.” Jesus contrasts the action of the hired hand with himself. The hired hand runs; the Good Shepherd stays and even dies for the sheep (only to rise again three days later). The Shepherd knows the sheep and the sheep know him because they were purchased at a price. The sheep are not their own, but belong to the Good Shepherd. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The first six words are repeated from verse 14. And it's the third time that we find the expression "I am the good shepherd." (Buls)

Bengel: Always the beginning of every good thing originates with God and Christ. (Buls)

That is an astounding statement but it is true. The word "good" is now explained by two verbs: "know" and "is known." "Know" and "known" occur four times in 14-15. The Good Shepherd both knows and is known. Lenski quotes the Lutheran dogmaticians who define "know" as *noscere cum affectu et effectu*, "to know with love and appropriation as one's very own and to reveal that loving ownership by all the corresponding actions." Compare 2 Timothy 2:19 and Matthew 7:23 where, by contrast, the meaning comes out. (Buls)

The love of the Savior for the sheep is a reflection of the relation existing between the Father and the incarnate Christ. Note that in both verses 14 and 15 the *mutuality* of knowing is stressed: The Shepherd and the sheep *mutually*; the Father and the Shepherd *mutually*. (Buls)

egō eimi ho poimēn ho kalos, “I am the good shepherd.” The repetition of this phrase clearly distinguishes the work of the Good Shepherd from the hired hand. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

I know my own. A deep mutual knowledge, like that of the Father and the Son. (CSB)

ginōskō, “I know.” This word appears four times in these verses. Jesus knows his sheep and they know him, “just as,” *kathōs*, the Father knows the Son and the Son knows the Father. The relationship of the sheep to the Good Shepherd is equated with the relationship of the Father to the Son. This strikes a note of absolute certainty that is heard throughout the text. It is certain that the wolf will come, and we know what he will seek to do. It is certain what the hired man will do when he sees the wolf. And it is certain what the Good Shepherd will do. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

A good shepherd has intimate knowledge of each of his flock. He knows them at a glance, their characteristics and idiosyncrasies.

My own know me – A good shepherd opens himself up to his sheep so that they trust coming to him at any time or in any circumstance. He also teaches them about who he is and what they can expect.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, does not lose His sheep. He knows us, and He has led us to know the Father and Him. This knowledge surpasses just recognizing each other; even the devil recognizes Jesus. This knowledge binds one to the other in love. (PBC)

10:15 *just as the Father knows and I know the Father* – This was the highest of all relationships. They were of one mind. They were not only “like one” but were “one.”

"Just as" means *exactly as*.

Bengel: Often the relation of believers towards Christ is derived from the peculiar relation of Christ towards the Father. Compare 14:20; 15:10; 17:8.21; Matthew 11:27; Luke 22:29; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:28; Revelation 3:21. (Buls)

All of these passages should be read at this point. It is breath-taking to realize that the relationship between Christ and me is as close as that which pertains between Christ and the Father. (Buls)

The final "and" in verse 15 gives the second and basic reason why Jesus calls Himself The Good Shepherd, repeated from verse 11. The Father's love for and relationship to His Son saw the latter through much suffering and death. Likewise, the Son's love for and relationship to me sees me through much suffering and death. (Buls)

Lenski notes that in verses 11-15 the wolf is mentioned twice, flanked by two observations concerning the hireling, flanked by two observations concerning the Good Shepherd. That can hardly be an accident. In our text all is utter certainty: the certainty of the coming, nature and activity of the wolf, the devil; the certainty of the character and activity of the hireling; and, the certainty, character and activity of the Good Shepherd. (Buls)

"just as the Father knows me and I know the Father." The Good Shepherd knows the sheep and they know him just as the Father knows the Good Shepherd and the Good Shepherd knows the Father. The relationship between the Good Shepherd and the sheep is a reflection of the love-relationship between the Father and the Son (*Lenski*, 736). This should help in grasping the gravity of the crucifixion as the Father turned his back on his beloved Son so that our sins could be atoned. The Father would do anything, even forsake his beloved Son, just to win us back from the grip of the devil. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Matthew 11:27, "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

I lay down my life. See v. 11; the fact of central importance. (CSB)

10:16 *other sheep*. These already belonged to Christ, though they had not yet been brought to him. (CSB)

Gentiles, people not descended from Abraham and not part of Israel, who would be integrated into the one flock. Cf Rm 11:17–18. Hus: "Other sheep he had by virtue of predestination, which are not of this fold and of his church according to present righteousness, which sheep of his grace he brought to life" (*The Church*, p 25). (TLSB)

"And," in Greek but not translated, means "furthermore." The verb "must" of this verse is as certain as the "must" in verse 18. "This sheep pen" is an adjectival phrase, denoting the Old Testament Covenant believers. In His omniscience Jesus foresees a much larger group, which includes the Gentile believers, you and me. "I must bring" in the sense that it is God's foreordained will in Christ. "Bring" as opposed to the seizing and scattering by Satan, verse 12. How does Jesus "bring" them? By His suffering and death. This is the cause of their hearing His voice. This is the cause of their being only one flock, one Shepherd. See Ezekiel 34:23; Zechariah

14:8.9. Jesus is speaking about the *Una Sancta*, the Communion of Saints, the invisible Church. This verse is both a prophecy and a promise. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: There shall therefore be one fold, one invisible church, one living communion with the one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, as Head and Overseer. Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11; Ephesians 2:11ff. (Buls)

And it is remarkable that He mentions the one flock before He mentions the one Shepherd. The *one* flock and the *one* Shepherd stand or fall together, but they are individualized. We have no assurance that individual denominations will continue to the end of time. But we do have Jesus' assurance that there "will be one flock." (Buls)

In our darker moments we must comfort ourselves with the great *ones*, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one flock, one Shepherd. Furthermore, from this text we know that this "one" is not confined by ethnic, linguistic, cultural or racial limitations. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for all nations. The Gospel is to be preached to all nations. In heaven all nations, all tribes, all peoples will be represented. (Buls)

Except for what is said about the hireling and the wolf in verses 12-13, this whole pericope is purest Gospel. (Buls)

alla probata echō, "I have other sheep." This is a reference to all who have not yet heard the voice of the Good Shepherd, and especially a reference to the Gentile believers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Samaritans and Gentile Christians.

It is generally understood that *a[lla provbata*, "other sheep" is referring to the Gentile Christians and *th'" aujlh'" tauvth*", "this fold," refers to the Jewish Christians. God's plan of salvation included both Jews and Gentiles. Notice that Jesus *ajgagei'n*, "brings" or "leads," the sheep. They don't come to him. He comes to them. Notice that the sheep become part of the fold by hearing the Word. "And there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (cf Eph 4:5–6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

not of this fold. Those outside Judaism. Here is a glimpse of the future worldwide scope of the church. (CSB)

bring them also – They don't find him, he finds them. Today we are a part of that bringing process.

dei, "it is necessary." This denotes a divine mandate. The willingness of Jesus to lay down his life in order that his sheep might be gathered into his sheepfold is beautifully expressed in Paul Gerhardt's Lenten hymn "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

1 Timothy 2:3-4, "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

This He did and continues to do by the power of His gospel in the Word and Sacraments. His sheep everywhere hear His voice, His Word, and become one flock under the one Shepherd. (PBC)

listen to my voice – tēs phōnēs mou, “my voice.” The living voice of Christ is the means by which the sheep are gathered into one flock. “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

one flock. All God’s people have the same Shepherd (see 17:20–23). (CSB)

The one flock is the holy Christian church, the sum total of all believers, which we will see in all its unity when it enters heaven with the Good Shepherd. For now it is invisible to us, because true faith lies in the hearts of people. (PBC)

10:17–18 That Christ would die for his people runs through this section of John’s Gospel. Both the love and the plan of the Father are involved, as well as the authority he gave to the Son. Christ obediently chose to die; otherwise, no one would have had the power to kill him.

Jesus is determined to accomplish the task that was set for him. He knows what it involves. *ejgw; tivqhmi aujth;n ajpΔ ejmoutou*, “I lay it down of my own accord.” This indicates the willingness of Jesus to do his task. This is done of his own free will. Jesus has the authority to lay down his life and to take it up again. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

10:17 *my Father loves me – dia touto*, “on account of this.” The Father loves the Son because, *hoti*, he lays down his life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

"The reason" does not point backwards, but rather forwards to the causal "is that" clause. Jesus was sure of the Father's love, even in death. (Buls)

Bengel: The love of the Father is to be kept in sight, in the passion of Christ, not only towards us, but also towards Christ. (Buls)

Of course, the Father loves His Son irrespective of His atoning work. But, as Lenski says: "The Father's whole heart goes out to his Son as he lays his life down in the sacrifice of death." This does not contradict the fact that God forsook His Son on the cross, Matthew 27:46. The Father's great love for His Son caused the Father to forsake His Son because of our God-forsakenness. (Buls)

lay it down my life that I may take it up again – If He would have died and not risen His shepherd functions would have ceased. In retaking His life, He is able to continue perfectly the shepherding of His people. (PC)

For the third time in this pericope Jesus says "lay down my life" but this time He adds emphatic "I Myself." He did it willingly. No one compelled Him to do it. The "lay down" clause is closely bound to the "take it up." He died willingly for the purpose of rising spontaneously. Meditate on that thought. In the person of Christ, God died willingly and man rose again spontaneously, the greatest marvel and miracle in the Scriptures. (Buls)

Note again that "lay down" is in the present tense. Of His own free will Jesus gave Himself into the hands of sinful men to die. John 18:4-11; 19:28-30; Matthew 26:52-54; Luke 23:46. Many times His enemies wanted to kill Him but did not allow it until His hour came. And even then He knew exactly what would happen before they knew it. The Jews availed themselves of the power

of Rome, a mighty Empire, to keep Him in the grave. But they could not. On this willingness of Jesus read Hebrews 10:1-14. (Buls)

Verse 9 stresses the will of the Father. Verse 10 stresses the will of Jesus which was consonant with that of the Father. The animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, performed again and again, were done contrary to the will of the animals which obviously resisted death. But the sacrifice of Jesus, happening only once, was performed willingly to bring us to God's intended goal, verse 14. (Buls)

10:18 *authority* – *exousia* - force, capacity, competency, power, right, strength. – Same word as in Matthew 28:18. It means to have an ability to the extent that there are no hindrances in the way of accomplishing the task that needs to be done.

exousian, “authority.” This is the authority that the Father has given to his Son. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Jesus went to the cross voluntarily. His obedience to the Father and His love for the sheep moved Him to lay down His life. (TLSB)

The antecedent of "no one" is not the Father, but hostile powers: the devil, his agents, the world, sin, death. Jesus was surrounded by enemies, both physical and spiritual, while He was on the cross. None of them took His life from Him. The negative here, is very strong: "quite to the contrary." (Buls)

Another emphatic "I Myself." For the fourth time we have "myself." The words denote manner, how He laid down His life, spontaneously. In the next sentence we have "I lay" and "I take" which denotes the right, authority, power given to Him by the Father. Pilate claimed this "authority" for himself, John 19:10, but Jesus corrected him by saying that Pilate had this "authority" only to the extent that it was given to him from God Himself. Jesus had the inherent "authority" to ask the Father to extricate Himself from trouble and death, Matthew 26:53, but "how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled as to the fact that this was necessary to happen?" (Buls)

Jesus foretold His death and resurrection not only to His disciples but also to His enemies who were standing right in front of Him. Compare verses 19-21. Jesus closes by saying: "this injunction I have received from My Father," the injunction to die willingly and to rise spontaneously. Compare Hebrews 10:1-14 again. (Buls)

Verses 17-18 explain each other and refer specifically and only to Christ. His enemies denied all the statements. They denied that the Father loved Him. They denied that He had right and authority. They denied that the Father had commanded Him to do and act as He did. (Buls)

The third stanza of Paul Gerhardt's great Lenten hymn comes to mind here:

Yea, Father, yea, most willingly I'll bear what Thou commandest;
My will conforms to Thy decree, I do what Thou demandest.
O wondrous Love, what hast Thou done!
The Father offers up His Son! The Son, content, descendeth!

O Love, how strong Thou art to save!
Thou biddest Him within the grave Whose word the mountains rendeth. (Buls)

Note the absence of particles and conjunctions at the beginning of sentences in this text. Normally each sentence begins with a particle or conjunction. This does not indicate that here we have poor Greek. There is no such thing as poor Greek in the Scriptures. But it does denote the intensity with which Jesus spoke to His enemies, not because He hated them but because He loved them. He was offering Himself to them. But note their reaction in verses 19-21. His plain words cause a second *division*. On the first compare John 7:43.

Several quotes from the Book of Concord are in place here: (Buls)

In the *Smalcald Articles*, XII, Luther says: We do not concede to the papists that they are the church, for they are not. Nor shall we pay any attention to what they command or forbid in the name of the church, for, thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd. (BULs)

F.C., S.D., Article XI: Thus the entire holy Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, directs all men to Christ as to the book of life in whom they are to seek the Father's eternal election. For the Father has decreed from eternity that whomever he would save he would save through Christ, as Christ himself says, 'No one comes to the Father but by me' (John 14:6), and 'I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved' (John 10:9). (Buls)

In other words, if anyone wants to determine whether or not he is among the elect he should simply read John 10:1-18 and apply to himself what Christ did for him.(Buls)

F.C., S.D.: In order to preserve the pure doctrine and to maintain a thorough, lasting, and God-pleasing concord within the church, it is essential not only to present the true and wholesome doctrine correctly, but also to accuse the adversaries who teach otherwise (1 Timothy 3 :9; Titus 1 :9; 2 Timothy 2:24; 3: 16). 'Faithful shepherds,' as Luther states, 'must both pasture or feed the lambs and guard against wolves so that they will flee from strange voices and separate the precious from the vile.' (John 10:12-16; Jeremiah 15:19). (Buls)

No mention is made of the Holy Spirit in these verses. But the Holy Spirit pervades this text. He who believes what Jesus says in these verses, is spiritual and has the Holy Spirit. There is no higher spirituality among men than to believe the Gospel. Anyone who claims that he has a higher spirituality from the Holy Spirit, sealed by a special gift of tongues (or its equivalent), quite apart from the will of the Father and the sacrifice of the Son, is self-deluded and a great detriment to the church. Such a person is an hireling, a self-server, who detracts attention from the Gospel, the only hope for sinful mortals. (Buls)

“No one,” Jesus stressed, took His life from Him. His was a true sacrifice out of His boundless love. He had the authority and the power (note here another claim of divinity by Jesus) and the directive from His heavenly Father to give the sacrifice and show the proof. He was determined to die and rise again. (PBC)

Isaiah 40:12, “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?”

John 19:11, “Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

10:19 *division*. See 7:43; 9:16. (CSB)

10:1–21 Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd to describe His intimate relationship with His followers and the love that moved Him to lay down His life for them. Sheep who ignore the Good Shepherd’s voice (His Word) have only themselves to blame and will fall prey to Satan. Unlike human love motivated by self-interest, Christ’s love for His own moved Him to voluntarily endure even death on a cross for our sake (Php 2:8). • My dear Shepherd, watch over me that I may never stray from You. Amen. (TLSB)

I and the Father Are One

22 At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, **23** and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. **24** So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” **25** Jesus answered them, “**I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.**” **31** The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. **32** Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” **33** The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.” **34** Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? **35** If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— **36** do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? **37** If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; **38** but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” **39** Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. **40** He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. **41** And many came to him. And they said, “John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.” **42** And many believed in him there.

10:22-30 The larger context begins in chapter 9 with the healing of the blind man, as Jesus reveals himself as the Son of Man. In chapter 10 Jesus identifies himself as the true and good shepherd (10:1–18). Jesus spoke the language of double talk: both by his miracle that restored sight and by his teaching, he gave insight as to who he was—the Son of Man. The Jews are divided as to his authenticity; some say he is demon-possessed; others know demons do not open the eyes of blind people (vv 19–21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Jesus has been declared by some Jews to be demon-possessed and raving mad. Why? He has opened the eyes of the blind. He has talked openly about his unity with the heavenly Father and his mission as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. Although Jesus is still in Jerusalem, there is a lapse in time between vv 21 and 22 of approximately two months (Feast of Tabernacles [7:2] to the Feast of Dedication); however, there is no break in thought from the first half of ch 10 to 10:22. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

10:22-24 The setting of our text is Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication—an eight-day feast also known as the Festival of Lights. It commemorated the great Jewish victory under the Maccabees and the rededication of the desecrated temple on Kislev 25,164 B. C. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

It is winter—December. Jesus is at the Jerusalem temple, walking in Solomon’s Colonnade (cf. Acts 3:11; 5:12). The Jews gather around him. They have a burning question on their minds: “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly” (v 24, as if he had not already done so!). Our text is his plain, clear answer. The problem was not that Jesus had failed to demonstrate he was the Messiah, but that he was not the type of Christ they were expecting and wanting. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

10:22 *Feast of Dedication.* The commemoration of the dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in December, 165 B.C., after it had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes. This was the last great deliverance the Jews had experienced. (CSB)

Also called Feast of Lights or Hanukkah. Celebrated the rededication of the temple in 164 BC, following its desecration by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The festival was joyous and included recitation of Ps 30. (TLSB)

John puts our text on the calendar by mentioning the Feast of Dedication (Jewish Festival of Hanukkah), in mid-December. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

The annual celebration lasted eight days beginning the 25th of Chisleu (about the middle of December) and was observed throughout the country, a special feature consisting in illuminating the houses from which fact the festival was called “the Lights.” When John adds to the mention of the festival the phrase “in Jerusalem” to designate the place, this would be superfluous if Jesus had spent the intervening two months (7:2, end of October to the end of December) in the city. He left shortly after the October celebration and had now returned. This is substantiated by what is now reported. The new situation and the new testimony Jesus utters connect directly with the last that He spoke before leaving the city (19:1, etc. in regard to His sheep). Where He broke off two months ago there He now begins. The situation highly strained during the last visit (chapters 7-10:21), now reaches its climax (10:39), the Passover in the spring, when He will enter upon His passion and His death. (Lenski)

It was winter. A description for those unfamiliar with the Jewish calendar. – This is the Jewish Festival of Hanukah in mid-December. (CSB)

The remark that it was winter is not intended to inform us about the season of the year but to explain the next statement that Jesus was walking in a sheltered place in the Temple. (Lenski)

10:23-24 Perhaps Jesus is alone as he walks Solomon’s colonnade, perhaps the disciples are with him, but the Jews surround him determined to get an answer to their question. J. B. Phillips says, “They closed in on him” (*The New Testament in Modern English* [New York: Macmillan, 1958] 211). There seems to be frustration here from those who are blinded by their own unbelief: “If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Opponents declared Jesus a demon or a madman. He declared himself the Messiah. Logically, those are the only two choices, although a third is added today—that of great Teacher. That declaration makes no sense if one reads Scripture. Either Jesus is the

Messiah or he is a madman. To claim to be the Messiah without really being the Messiah would hardly qualify one as a great Teacher. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

10:23 *Solomon's Colonnade.* See Ac 3:11; 5:12. It was a roofed structure—somewhat similar to a Greek stoa—commonly but erroneously thought to date back to Solomon's time. (CSB)

Sheltered area on the east side of the temple, with a roof supported by columns that provided some protection from the weather. Popular place for rabbis and their disciples to gather. (TLSB)

This covered colonnade offered some protection from the weather on that wintry day. Josephus says that this portico was the only part of the old Temple of Solomon left standing after the destruction wrought by Nebuchadnezzar, and was thus named “the porch of Solomon.” (Lenski)

10:24-25 In a common move made by the author of the Gospel, the Jews represent opposition to Jesus' words (10:19) and works (v 25). The request of the Jews for a plain word from Jesus regarding his identity as the Christ is met by a strong word from Jesus, which convicts them of their unbelief (vv 24–25). They have already heard Jesus' plain words (“I told you,” v 25) but have attributed them to demon oppression or insanity (10:20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

10:24 *gathered around him* – By concerted action they surround and enclose Him, meaning that he shall not again get away. No friendly multitude is at hand to support Him and to stay their hand. Jesus is suddenly face to face with His bitter enemies, who are now bound to force the issue. The matter is charged with the gravest potentialities. (Lenski)

keep us in suspense – The question charges Jesus with keeping the Jews on tenterhooks by not coming out fairly and squarely on the main question. What that question is their demand states, “If thou art the Christ etc. ‘tell us plainly’ (“with openness”) means: then we shall know how o act.” The implication is by no means that these Jews would believe if Jesus would say in so many words, “I am the Christ.” Nor is the idea this that the Jews would use such a plain statement as a political charge on which to bring Jesus to trial. Still less may we assume that the Jews are seeking to ease their own consciences in regard to their treatment of Jesus by casting the blame on Him for not speaking out plainly. They are long past such scruples. The suspense to which these Jews object is that of thrusting the fact of His Messiahship into their consciences in such a way as to cause divisions in their own ranks (9:16; 10:19) yet without giving them the chance they are determined to have to bring to book for His claim. They mean that this is now to end; they are determined to end it right here and now. (Lenski)

the Christ. This was the critical question, but it was not easy to answer because of the different ideas of Messiahship then in vogue. (CSB)

10:25 *I told you.* Jesus had not specifically affirmed his Messiahship except to the Samaritan woman (4:26). He may have meant here that the general thrust of his teaching made his claim clear or that such statements as that in 8:58 were sufficient. Or he may have been referring to the evidence of his whole manner of life (including the miracles)—all he had done in the Father's name. (CSB)

Not an explicit statement, but His deeds (the signs) and His teaching spoke a clear and unequivocal yes. (TLSB)

It was no secret who Jesus was. He had told them before. In Jn 4:26 Jesus said plainly to the Samaritan woman that he was the Messiah. In Jn 5:18 the Jews were about to do him in for “making himself equal with God.” In Jn 8:58 Jesus speaks the truth plainly, identifying himself as being from eternity: “‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I am!’” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Jesus indicates to them not only by words but also by deeds who he is: “The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me.” This is what we mean by double talk: both his words and his deeds proclaim him as Messiah. It takes more than words; false Christs tell people who they think they are, but their deeds fall short of verification. In contrast, the works of Jesus substantiate his words. By this model Jesus establishes for us the importance of our words supporting our works, and of our works supporting our words. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

erga is translated in the NIV as “miracles.” Perhaps “works” is a better translation. Miracles would certainly be included in works but not limited to what one normally connects with the word *miracle*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

you do not believe – The trouble lies not, even in the least, with Jesus but with these Jews. After all His telling,, including the present word, they do not believe (durative present). All His telling is in vain – in vain through fault of theirs; is so even now. (Lenski)

“You do not believe” places the blame for unbelief—on the individual. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

the works – *erga* – These included other works besides just miracles. His deeds had spoken for him.

In my Father’s name – This reference to His father again tells these Jews that Jesus is the Christ. Once more He asserts His mission for the Father, the mission which makes Him the Christ. (Lenski)

10:26-27 In addition to listening to Jesus’ words, the Jews have seen his works but do not believe (vv 25–26). Jesus draws a contrast between those who do not believe because they are not part of his flock (v 26) and the sheep who hear his voice and follow him (v 27). If the Jews represent the unbelieving world in the Gospel, here the sheep represent the believing flock. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

10:26 *you do not believe* – He places the blame where it belongs, squarely on them as individuals. (Lenski)

Ylvisaker: “They believed neither His words nor His works. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

The fault lies not with Jesus; his confirmation is like a two-edged sword, by word and deed. No, the fault lies with their own stubborn unbelief. Convincing evidence has been presented. It is not believed. The problem lies not with the evidence; it rests with the evaders of truth: “but you do not believe.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Sheep that belong to another shepherd will not recognize, follow, obey, or believe this good shepherd. They don’t believe in him because they are not his sheep. The Jews should be asking two questions, not just one. They should not only be asking who he is, “Are you really the

Christ?” They should also be asking, “Who are we? Are we the sheep of this shepherd?” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

10:27 *voice* – The characteristics of his sheep are that they hear the shepherd’s voice and follow him. Luther notes, “This lovely, delightful picture you may, if you wish, see for yourself among sheep. When a stranger calls, whistles, coaxes, ‘Come sheep! Come sheep!’ it runs and flees, and the more you call, the more it runs, as if a wolf were after it, for it knows not the strange voice; but where the shepherd makes himself heard a little, they all run to him, for they know his voice. This is what all true Christians should do, hear no voice but their shepherd’s, Christ, as he himself says” (quoted in R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1943] 753). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

I know them. Jesus reminds them incidentally of the occurrences at the feast of the Tabernacles in the month of October. On that occasion 10:1-21) He had given a description of His true sheep, and had thus – indirectly -- indicated that they did not belong in this category. Lenski: “The sense is ‘Since you are not my sheep you do not believe’ and not ‘Since you are not my sheep you cannot believe.’” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Jesus gives them the answer. Jesus shows them the way. Jesus sets up an open-book test and shows them where to find the answer. What do his sheep do? “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” The voice is crucial. Two shepherds can utter the same words, but the sheep will follow the one and not the other, not only because of the content, but also the tenor and tone of voice. Something spoken harshly will drive the sheep away in fright. The same word spoken in tender care and compassion will cause them to nuzzle up and obediently follow onward. They hear! They know! They follow! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Note the singular and the plural. There is only one shepherd; there are many sheep. There is only one who calls; there are many who respond and follow. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

they follow. I call, they come; I choose the path, they trust and come after; I lead, they are safe in my care; I command in love, they respond in obedience and love. If this at times means the cross, they do not waver. (Lenski)

10:28-30 The sheep are a gift from the Father, who is the source of all gifts (“My Father, who has given them to me,” v 29). The Good Shepherd (Jesus), who “lays down his life for the sheep” (10:11), gives them the blessing of eternal life (10:10b: “life . . . abundantly”). There is another blessing that comes from the sheep’s association with their Good Shepherd: “No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (v 29). Such benefit can be described as protection from the wolf that snatches (10:12) those who do not know the Good Shepherd (10:14) or listen to his voice (v 27). If wolf language refers primarily to false prophets, Jesus is drawing a contrast between listening to the words of the false prophets (cf. 10:5, “strangers”), which results in one’s death, and listening to the words of the Good Shepherd, which brings abundant or eternal life. This line of thought can also be extended to include a contrast between the works of false prophets, which point away from life in the Son, and the works of the Son, which reveal both the Father’s will to care for the sheep (v 29) and his oneness with the Father (v 30) or his being in the Father (vv 37–38). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Reflecting on John 10, the Lutheran Confessions speak of the Father’s protection of the sheep in the language of election. No greater comfort can be given to “troubled, afflicted people” than the

assurance that “salvation is in God’s gracious election, which He has revealed to us in Christ, out of whose hand no person shall snatch us” (FC SD XI 90). Christians “must seek eternal election in Christ and His Holy Gospel” (FC SD XI 89), for God has called and saved his sheep through his Word (FC SD XI 29–30). Because “through the devil’s and the world’s craft and might [salvation] could be snatched and taken from us,” God has guaranteed our salvation by placing it “for safekeeping in the almighty hand of our Savior, Jesus Christ, from which no one can snatch us” (FC SC XI 46). The confessional teaching on election corresponds to John’s portrayal of the Good Shepherd’s identity as one who “calls his own sheep by name” (10:3) so that they might “be saved” (10:9). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

10:28 *eternal life*. Christ’s gift. (CSB)

A uniqueness of this Shepherd is that he not only lays down his life for the sheep but also gives life to his sheep out of grace. To perish is more than temporal death. It is eternal. No enemy can snatch us from the Shepherd’s grasp, but we ourselves can turn from him and reject his gift of grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

This is the very principle of life which flows from God, is grounded in God, joins to God, and leads to God. No earthly shepherd is able to give life to his sheep. This reveals all the richness, greatness, and attractiveness of our Good Shepherd. The incomparable Giver stood there before the Jews and was actually offering them His divine gift of grace. But they would have none of His greatness and riches. (Lenski)

never perish. The Greek construction here is a strong denial that the sheep will ever perish. The sheep’s security is in the power of the shepherd, who will let no one take them from him. (CSB)

To perish is to be separated from God, life and blessedness forever. (Lenski)

Hus: “Because Christ and his Father are one with Holy Spirit – who is Christ’s gift, by whom the church is knit together with him – therefore, no one is able to pluck his sheep out of his hand” (The Church, p. 34). “Presdestination, or God’s eternal election, covers only the godly, beloved children of God. It is a cause of their salvation, which He also provides. He plans what belongs to it as well. Our salvation is founded so firmly on it that the gates of hell cannot overcome it” (FC Ep XI 5). “God’s eternal election does not just foresee and foreknow the salvation of the elect. From God’s gracious will and pleasure in Christ Jesus, election is a cause that gains, works, helps, and promotes our salvation and what belongs to it” (FC SD XI 8). (TLSB)

If there is one thing sheep need it is security. They need to be protected. They are unaware of imminent danger. They are passive to the problems around them. They are focused on food. They are oblivious to the dangers that stalk them. How much danger to our soul’s welfare is out there of which we are unaware? How many times have we walked into dangerous situations, ignorant of their eternal dimensions? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

There is a basic theological gem here. “I give them eternal life.” How could he be any clearer? Eternal life is given to us as a gift. Eternal life comes from the great “I,” the one who stands alone, the one who alone is big enough to make such an offer to the world, the one who alone is able to deliver on his word. Eternal life is his to give. It is more than protection in life. It involves provisions for eternal life. It is his to give; it is ours to believe and receive by faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

The second basic implication in this verse is solid assurance that the “warranty” of eternal life will not expire: “they shall never perish.” Death has been destroyed. The soul will not perish. The resurrected body will not perish. They have both entered into “never-never land”: they will never perish. To perish is to experience life without God, this is hell. It is life separated from God with all the implications of a life that fails to meet our multiple needs. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

The truth is supported and expanded by the next thought: “No one can snatch them out of my hand.” In the first phrase the sheep are held in the hand of the Shepherd; in the second reference they are in the Father’s hand. There is no greater security! Our spiritual proximity to God does not depend on the hold we have on God, but on the hold God has on us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Perhaps you have read the anonymous story entitled “Footprints.” “One night a man dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For many scenes, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonged to him, and the other to the Lord. But he saw that many other times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. Those were the lowest and saddest times in his life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

He questioned, ‘Lord, you said that you’d walk with me all the way. But during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. Why, when I needed you most, did you leave me?’ (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

The Lord replied, ‘My precious child, I never left you. During your times of trial and suffering—when there was only one set of footprints—it was then that I carried you.’” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

10:29 *My Father can.* The Father’s power (“hand”) is greater than that of any enemy, making the sheep completely secure. (CSB)

The Father is “greater than all,” and “all” must be masculine and denote persons, for includes the masculine *tis* in v. 28 and *oideis* in the present verse. While “greater” is broad, here it must refer especially to power: the Father exceeds in power every being arrayed, against the sheep (Stan, demon, spirits, human foes however mighty). (Lenski)

How can we be so sure that we will remain secure in the arms of God? “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.” (Note that the best Greek reading is actually “What my Father has given me *is greater than all*,” with *ho*, “what,” denoting believers, as in Jn 17:24. This highlights the superlative value of the sheep in the shepherd’s eyes.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

10:30 *are* - Plural verb, which presupposes the distinction of persons in the Trinity. (TLSB)

one. The Greek is neuter—“one thing,” not “one person.” The two are one in essence or nature, but they are not identical persons. This great truth is what warrants Jesus’ “I am” declarations. (CSB)

Not merely one in will and work, but one in being or essence (v 38). The Pharisees immediately recognized the nature of Jesus' claim—He declared Himself equal with God (v 33). (TLSB)

The unity of the Trinity is complete; the persons cannot be separated in God's outward works toward the world (*opera ad extra indivisa sunt*, F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1950] 1.415–27). Jesus and the Father are one, one not only in essence, but also in purpose. Jesus has been sent by the Father as the true shepherd who would lay down his life for the sheep. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

10:31 *the Jews...to stone him*. They took Jesus' words as blasphemy, and therefore prepared to carry out the law (Lev 24:16), though without due process. (CSB)

10:32 *great miracles*. Or “good deeds” (as, e.g., in Mt 5:16; 1Ti 5:10, 25; 6:18). Although the reference here includes Jesus' miracles, the underlying Greek words refer to works in general that are fine and noble in character first of all (see note on v. 38). (CSB)

The Jews discerned that Jesus implied personal greatness, but they did not consider His claim true. The history of the Feast of Dedication, which celebrated deliverance and cleansing from idolatrous paganism, would make these those attending especially sensitive to matters of who God is. (TLSB)

10:33 *blasphemy*. The Jewish leaders correctly understood the thrust of Jesus' words, but their preconceptions and unbelief prevented them from accepting his claim as true. (CSB)

Speech that denigrates or defames, in this case, God's holy name. (TLSB)

10:34 *your Law*. In its strictest sense the term meant the Pentateuch, but was often used, as here, of the whole OT. (CSB)

you are gods. The words Jesus quotes from Ps 82:6 refer to the judges (or other leaders or rulers), whose tasks were divinely appointed. (CSB)

perhaps refers to judges in Israel. (TLSB)

10:35–36 If the psalmist can use the word “gods” to describe Israel's leaders, surely it would be appropriate for Jesus to claim to be the Son of God. (TLSB)

10:35 *Scripture cannot be broken*. Jesus testified to the complete authority and reliability of the OT. (CSB)

Scripture's authority cannot be questioned (cf 2Tm 3:16). (TLSB)

There are no myths, no mistakes, no antiquated ideas in it, but it is true and inerrant in all it teaches. Luther's Catechism annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler)

10:36 If there is any sense in which men can be spoken of as “gods” (as Ps 82:6 speaks of human rulers or judges), how much more may the term be used of him whom the Father set apart and sent! (CSB)

10:37 *works of my Father*

. The kind of works of compassion that the Father himself does. (CSB)

10:38 *miracles*. Lit. “works.” The miracles were a part of Jesus’ works. It was Jesus’ quality of life, not people’s inability to explain his marvels, that he primarily spoke of here (see note on v. 32). (CSB)

understand. By faith, not reason. (TLSB)

Father is in Me and I am in the Father. Further explains v 30. (TLSB)

10:39 *they sought to arrest him*. It is not clear if this was to arrest him for trial or to take him out for stoning. *he escaped*. John does not say why they failed, but he often makes it clear that Jesus could not be killed before the appointed time. (CSB)

10:41 *John did no sign*. John the Baptist did no miracles, in contrast to Jesus, who did many (cf. 20:30-31). (TLSB)

10:22–42 In the colonnade of Solomon during the Jewish Feast of Dedication, Jesus declares His oneness with the Father, which the unbelieving crowd understands to be blasphemous and worthy of death. To reject Jesus is to reject God and abandon the hope of everlasting life. Believers can rest secure that they belong to Jesus Christ and will never perish; all of Jesus’ works affirm this truth. • O Lord, “into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things.” Amen. (SC, Morning and Evening Prayers, pp xli–xlii) (TLSB)