

THE DOOR

John 10:9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

The door is an *enduring* and *endearing* picture of Jesus Christ. It immediately calls to mind the great Gospel truth that only through Jesus can a person enter into the promise of eternal life.

1. You might think of the door the children of Israel walked through to leave the bondage of Egypt for their new life. It was stained with the blood of the sacrificed lamb; as a result, the death angel passed-over their homes, sparing them, saving them.
2. You might think of Jesus knocking on the door in Revelation 3:20, promising to come in and have the fellowship of supping with you – if you'll only open your heart to Him.

When Jesus called Himself **the door** in John 10:9, He meant something very different than what you and I first understand. He had in mind, specifically, the door of a **sheepfold**.

Let's read the first five verses and discuss the shepherding customs in first century Israel.

John 10:1 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

John 10:2 "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

John 10:3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

John 10:4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

John 10:5 "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

Each village had a sheepfold. This was a large enclosure made of high stone walls with a single door that would be locked and guarded by a doorkeeper. At night many flocks of sheep would be led by their shepherds back to the village to spend the night together in the

relative safety of the sheepfold. In the morning the doorkeeper would open the door to each shepherd who would call his own sheep with a special call, and they would respond to him and follow him out.

During certain times of the year, shepherds would lead their flocks away from the village to greener pastures where the feeding was better. At night the shepherds kept their sheep in temporary sheepfolds made of brush. This sheepfold away from the village had no gate or door. **The shepherd would himself serve as the door by lying across the opening to insure that no sheep escaped and that no wolf or thief entered.**

It is this field-pen that Jesus is describing by way of illustration.

John 10:6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

Some of your Bibles may have the word "parable." The correct translation is [illustration](#). Interestingly - *there are **no** parables in the Gospel of John.*

Jesus explains His meaning in the remaining verses. In verses seven through ten He is the **door** in comparison and contrast to the Pharisees who were thieves and robbers.

John 10:7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the **door of the sheep.**

Remember: there was only one **door** in the village sheepfold, and no **door** in the sheepfold away from the village. The shepherd served as the **door** to the sheepfold. Jesus is saying that He is **the door** that the doorkeeper would open the village sheepfold to, and He is the door of the sheepfold away from the village.

John 10:8 "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

Who are the **all** that Jesus is referring to? Certainly He doesn't mean the patriarchs and prophets. Abraham was no **thief**; Elijah was no **robber**. He is talking about all those who claimed to be God's under

shepherds but who perverted the way of salvation by exchanging saving faith for self-righteous formalism.

This is verified by the immediate context. A man born blind had sat for thirty years unhelped by the Pharisees. They considered him born into sin and unworthy of God's mercy. After his healing, they cast him out of temple worship. They were no better than thieves and robbers – ripping him off from the knowledge and worship of God.

John 10:9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

John 10:10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Following the Pharisees was a hopeless endeavor. Their rules and regulations were a heavy burden that men could not bear; and they did *nothing* to help you bear them. Religious, self-righteous formalism is a thief that steals, kills, and destroys. Again I would point you back to the man born blind. Under the care of the Pharisees he had been casually excluded from fellowship for thirty years, then cruelly excommunicated from fellowship for having been healed. Their shepherding of this man is typical of their shepherding of the nation. They were no shepherds; they were thieves and robbers.

I want to suggest two things regarding the door of the sheepfold:

1. Jesus is the exclusive **door** to eternal life. We cannot admit any other way to heaven but through Him. Like the Passover door, only those who have applied the blood of the Lamb can be saved.
2. Although exclusive, the **door** is broad; it is broad enough for all to enter, if they will. Jesus said, **if anyone [any man] enters by Me, he will be saved**. This corresponds to the door in Revelation 3:20 – the door Jesus is knocking upon, to gain entrance.

What encouragement do we derive from Jesus as the door of the field-pen? We are His flock of sheep; and we are definitely out in a field-pen! Our time on earth is spent as wanderers, strangers, pilgrims in a hostile wilderness that is not our home. If you understand the situation you are in, you'll be pretty excited to have a

Shepherd Who doubles as the door of our sheepfold – laying down His life to protect us.

He protects us from predators... But He also protects us from our own wandering!

Then there are at least three things we can say about the benefits of being in God's field-pen, with Jesus as the **door**:

1. First, you are **saved**. We talk about being saved from sin – from its penalty, from its power, and from its presence. By entering through Jesus you are immediately saved from sin's penalty. Your sins will never condemn you to eternal death. (Theologians call this justification). Then, too, you can have a life in which you are increasingly delivered from sin's power. (This is called sanctification). Finally, you can look forward to the day when you will be with Jesus, and be delivered once and for all from the very presence of sin. (This is called glorification). This is what Jesus meant when He went on to say, **I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**
2. Second, a benefit of being in God's field-pen, with Jesus on guard as the door, is that you are **safe**. To be able to go in and out is a Jewish way of saying you are secure to travel; there is no danger; the city was at peace. Contrast if there was danger, the city gates would be shut tight, with no one coming or going. The Bible doctrine of security is a big one; a controversial one. But the illustration should simplify it. No sheep can get out of the field-pen with the shepherd Himself as the door!
3. Third, a benefit of being in God's field-pen is that you will be **satisfied**. You'll find pasture. To be assured of good pasture, in a barren land, was wonderful!

Conclusion

Saved... Safe... and Satisfied! All because Jesus laid down His life for you.

As we partake of the elements, think of what it cost Jesus; but also what you gain – salvation, safety, and satisfaction.

