

Easter IV: John 10:1-10: Jesus is the Door

1. This account is a sequel to Jn. 9:1-41, the text for Lent III. The audience is still His disciples, the formerly blind beggar, the Pharisees, and the other Jews. The Pharisees are spiritually blind. In Jn. 9:40, 41 Jesus tells them that they are spiritually blind. And He will prove it to them in vs. 6. In Jn. 10:1-10 we find both stern warning and great comfort.
2. Note the difference in paragraphing between Nestle 25th and 26th editions. In the 25th, Jn. 10:1-21 is closely bound to the previous chapter. But notice how the 26th edition makes major paragraphs. We prefer the 25th edition here.
3. Vs. 1: Ἀμῆν ἄμῆν, the double asseveration found frequently in this Gospel. λέγω ὑμῖν denotes the divine authority of the God-man. This vs. is clearly an axiom, easily understood. Jesus describes the person who tries to gain entrance into an ἀύλη by wrong methods. The door is the obvious entrance. But this man tries to enter by climbing over the wall. By his action he betrays his character. He is a thief. He works only for self and does so secretly. He is a robber. He is violent and destructive. An ἀύλη was an enclosure in which the sheep were safely kept at night. τῶν προβάτων is adjectival. That's why it is translated "sheep-fold". ἀλλὰ, following a negative, means "quite to the contrary". ἐκεῖνος is demonstrative. AV and NKJV "the same". RSV "that man".
4. Vs. 2: δὲ means "but" and denotes contrast. The difference between this man and that of vs. 1 is that he "enters through the door". Note that ποιμὴν has no article. Jesus is not speaking of Himself yet as the Shepherd. That comes in vss. 11-18, but not here. NASB and LB read "a shepherd". The other eight have "the shepherd". It makes little difference if it is rightly understood. Here τῶν προβάτων is genitive of relationship, the correct relationship. Note that in vs. 1 no relationship between the intruder and sheep was mentioned.
5. Vs. 3: τούτῳ is dative of advantage and its antecedent is "shepherd". ὁ θυρωρὸς is "the porter, the doorman". Bengel mentions that this refers to the Father or to the Holy Ghost but others disagree. It is part of the figure, they say. That's all. In any case it clearly means that the shepherd does not enter clandestinely, secretly or violently as does the man in vs. 1. Now the genitive of relation, vs. 2, is explained. There are two sides to this relationship which are correlative to each other: a) The sheep hear his voice; b) He calls his very own sheep by name and then leads them out of the ἀύλη. This denotes a mutual relationship of trust and stresses the willing obedience of the sheep.
6. Vs. 4: The illustration is continued. Here follows a present general statement. ὅταν means "whenever". It pertains at all times. Here πάντα is added. None are excluded. They all go together. Next we are told that he proceeds in front of them. He is their leader. And they follow him. ὅτι gives the reason. Note how the word φωνή occurs in 3, 4 and 5. οἶδασιν means they know without anyone telling them. They know instinctively.
7. Vs. 5: δὲ again is "but" denoting strong contrast. ἀλλότριος means "stranger". He is a stranger to the sheep. οὐ μὴ is very strong: "definitely not". ἀλλὰ, following the negative, is "quite to the contrary". Fleeting from the stranger rather than following him is strong contrast. Again we have the reason in ὅτι "because". Again οἶδασιν is used. The genitives αὐτοῦ in vs. 4 and τῶν ἀλλοτρίων are adjectival, making a distinction between the true and false voice.
8. Vs. 6: The word παραβολή does not occur in the Gospel of John. There are no parables in the ordinary sense in this Gospel. But the word παραομιλία occurs here and at 16:25 and 29. The only

other occurrence in NT is at II Pet. 2:22. Both παραβολή and παροιμία are denoted by the Hebrew mashal. Both are figurative and teach a lesson. The former is usually a story with a point, a simile. The latter is not a story but an illustration with a point, a metaphor. Here AV, TEV, JB, and NEB translate "parable". LB, NKJV and AAT have "illustration". NIV and NASB "figure of speech". And RSV has "figure". Note that all avoid the word allegory, though commentators often refer to this as an allegory to distinguish it from a parable. The antecedent of αὐτοῖς is Jesus' audience, described under #1 in these notes. δὲ is plainly "but". ἐκεῖνοι is not demonstrative but simply a person pronoun. Jesus is speaking specifically to those who do not accept Him, as becomes clear in vs. 19. He is speaking to His enemies. ἔγνωσαν means "understand, comprehend". It denotes knowledge which is given. Note that it is different from forms of οἶδα in vss. 4 and 5. They understood nothing. They reveal their blindness. At this point one would have expected Jesus to give up or to tell them off, but He does not. Jesus gave His enemies clear testimony.

9. Vs. 7: οὖν "therefore", is view of their failure to understand. πάλιν He starts all over. He repeats the strong asseveration of vs. 1. ὅτι is recitative, introducing direct discourse. Here is one of the great "I Am's" in this Gospel. In all cases subject and predicate are interchangeable and are totally exclusive: "I and none other am the door of the sheep." Here τῶν προβάτων is objective genitive or genitive of advantage "for the sheep". No sheep enters the fold except through Christ.
10. Vs. 8: "All as many as have come before Me are thieves and robbers." Jesus is speaking only of the false prophets who appeared in the several centuries before His coming. πρὸ ἐμοῦ can only be temporal. εἶσιν must mean "are". Thus AV, NKJV, RSV, TEV and NEB wrongly have "were". ἀλλά means "however", despite the greed, violence and selfishness of the false shepherds. Note the word order: "there did not listen to them the sheep." This denotes the true church of all believers both in the OT and NT. The Spirit of God stands by them so that they turn deaf ears to false shepherds.
11. Vs. 9: "I am the door." This time He does not add the word "sheep". This time He is speaking of both true shepherds and the sheep. δι' ἐμοῦ is placed prominently forward. It is only through Jesus. Now follows a future more vivid condition, open to all and drawing a logical conclusion. τις "anyone", it makes no difference who, including both sheep and Jesus' shepherds. σωθήσεται "he shall be saved". Thus AV, NASB, LB, RSV, AAT, NKJV, TEV and NIV. JB and NEB wrongly have "shall be safe", applying it to illustration, not to application. Lenski too errs here. This vs. is quoted in F.C., S.D., Art. XI, Election, Tappert, page 627: "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' (Jn. 14:6), and 'I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved' (Jn. 10:9)." It is no secret that Lenski espoused the intuitu fidei view of election. Cf. his exegesis of Rom. 8:29 where it comes out plainly. At any rate, here he departs from the explanation given in the reference in the *Formula of Concord*. But, on with the text: "he will go in and go out" only at the bidding of the Savior. This is Christian liberty, freedom from the guilt of sin, the power of death and the power of the devil. "And he will find pasture" reminds one of Ps. 23. He supplies all needs and wants. Kretzmann aptly remarks: "Three great blessings fall to the lot of those that accept Jesus as their Savior. They have deliverance from dangers, they have liberty, the glorious liberty of the children of God, and they have sustenance." And then he adds: "Here is an offering sustaining comfort which is without equal in all religions without Christ, of which no unbeliever can have the faintest conception."
12. Vs. 10: The thief is the false teacher. Jesus means the Jewish authorities who are standing before

Him. Note that the thief merely "comes". This is always said of false teachers in Scripture. True teachers are sent. The three verbs in the purpose clause, all effective aorists, say that false teachers seek the sheep for selfish purposes, to work them harm, and to destroy them. The very antithesis of that which follows. Note emphatic ἐγὼ again as in vs. 7 and 9. Jesus is speaking of His historical coming into this world. He too has a purpose. Note that forms of ἔχω occur twice. Not will have but have now, constantly, have as in Jn. 3:16. LB, TEV and NEB translate περισσὸν "in all its fullness". NIV and JB have "to the full". AAT has "overflowing in them". Jesus is here offering Himself to His enemies who are blind to His purpose and coming. It is remarkable how often Jesus spoke some of His most beautiful passages of Gospel to His enemies.

13. Fahling: "The point is that unlike the OT prophets, who pointed forward to Christ, the members of the present hierarchical party, like thieves and robbers, had broken into the herd and assumed authority over the people of God, misleading many, all but the true children of God, who in spite of force or persuasion, would not permit themselves to be lured from the voices and promises of God. The parable itself is clear. . . . Christ is the Door, and only through Him, if a man enter in, shall he be saved."

14. Kretzmann: "The sheepfold is the Church of God of all times. The sheep are the members of the kingdom of God, the believers of both the Old and New Testaments that put their trust in the Word of their redemption through the work of the Messiah. But the men that were to be their shepherds, their leaders, have from olden times been divided into two classes. There are such as come to the door openly, that have the call and the duty to take care of the souls entrusted to them, and that carry out their difficult calling in the proper manner, with all faithfulness. For they are assistants of the great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and it is His voice that calls through them. The sheep thus hear the voice of Jesus in the voice of the true pastors, and this they recognize and know perfectly, they heed gladly. . . . The spiritual hearing of the true sheep of Christ, of the believers, soon becomes so keen that they will distinguish at once between true and false teaching, and they will fear and shun the voice of strangers. . . . All false teachers are thieves and robbers in the sense of Scriptures, and their presence is a constant menace to the Church of God. . . . All real pastors will preach only of this one Door, of this one Way to heaven, through faith in Jesus and the redemption through His blood."