

# "I AM"

## Seven Great Claims of Christ in the Gospel of John

### "I AM... The Good Shepherd"

John 10:11-18

Sunday | May 15th, 2016 | Pastor Patrick Bowler

#### CONSULT THE SCRIPTURES

John 10:1-18 "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. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens.

The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 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. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 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. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 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."

(See also Acts 20:18-35; Ezek. 34:1-24; Ps. 23, Matt. 18:12-14; Jn. 17:20-26; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4)

#### CONSULT THE SCHOLARS

[Gary M. Burge] "Jesus assumes his audience understands the scene he is constructing. In the desert at night sheep were often herded into walled enclosures that either backed up against a cliff face or were at the end of a canyon. Such enclosures (still used today by Palestinian shepherds in the Judean desert) had waist-high stone walls topped with thorny branches. Such a pen was entirely for safety so that the sheep would not become prey to wild animals. One small doorway (or opening) in the wall served as the only entrance and exit. The shepherd would either close this area with dry thornbushes or would himself serve as the sentry in the opening.

Not only can sheep identify rightful shepherds by their access through the main gate, but they also recognize the voice of their shepherd (10:3-5). The Middle Eastern shepherd is well known for having personal devotion to his sheep. He talks to them and sings to them. Often shepherds will carry a short flute and use a repeated tune so that the flock has a consistent auditory cue to follow. Jesus notes that this shepherd does not simply lead any sheep but rather leads 'his own' (10:3b). That is, just as Arab shepherds today can separate personal sheep from larger flocks by using peculiar calls, so Jesus knows his own sheep, they recognize his voice, and he leads them (10:4). Note that this shepherd does not drive the sheep; rather, he is out in front, leading the way."<sup>1</sup>

#### DISCUSS

1. Read Acts 20:18-35. What is Paul's primary concern in this passage? What does he urge the Ephesian elders to do?
2. Compare the above passage to Ezek. 34:1-24 and Matt. 23:1-36 and discuss. What are the marks of these particular shepherds? How do they compare to the "thieves and robbers," "strangers" and the "hired hand" in Jn. 10:1, 5, 12-13?
3. Read Psalm 23 and contrast the "Good Shepherd" (Jn. 10:11) with those mentioned above. In what ways has Jesus shown Himself "good"<sup>2</sup> to us?
4. Pastor Patrick mentioned that the fact that a shepherd would have to lay his life down assumes a couple things about the sheep: (1) that they are vulnerable, and (2) that they are valuable. How does this relate to the Gospel with regards to Jesus' intended meaning in the passage?
5. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?

<sup>1</sup>Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), p. 289.

<sup>2</sup>The word "good" (*kalos*) is not in regards to skills but to quality (moral) and character. The word could be translated "noble."