

underlying danger set out in vv. 1-2 with the remedy, verse 14?

11. What is the lesson of this passage, in a sentence? How would you explain why Jesus is known as the Good Shepherd to someone with no church or Christian background?

References (excerpts)

[Psalm 80:1](#) Please listen, O Shepherd of Israel...O God, enthroned above the cherubim...

[Isaiah 40:10-11](#) The Sovereign Lord is coming in power...He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to His heart...

[Ezekiel 34:11-16](#) "...The Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search and find My sheep... I will find My sheep and rescue them... I will give them good pastureland... I Myself will tend My sheep and give them a place to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign Lord. I will search for My lost ones who strayed away...But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes — feed them justice!

[Zechariah 10:2](#) Household gods give worthless advice...So My people are wandering like lost sheep; they are attacked because they have no shepherd.

[Mark 6:34](#) Jesus saw the huge crowd as He stepped from the boat, and He had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd...

[Ezekiel 34:2-4](#) "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with harshness and cruelty.

Jesus said: "I AM the Good Shepherd" John 10:11,14

Read John 10:1-16 NLT [Context notes](#) [Questions](#) [Reference verses](#)

1-2 "I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! But the one who enters through the gate is the Shepherd of the sheep.

3 "The gatekeeper opens the gate for Him, and the sheep recognise His voice and come to Him. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.

4-5 "After He has gathered His own flock, He walks ahead of them, and they follow Him because they know His voice. They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."

6-7 Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what He meant, so He explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.

8 All who came before Me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them.

9 Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through Me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures.

10 The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

11-13 "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd sacrifices His life for the sheep. A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

14-15 "I am the Good Shepherd; I know My own sheep, and they know

Me, just as My Father knows Me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice My life for the sheep.

16 "I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to My voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd."

Context

Jesus is talking about something familiar to His first-century Palestine hearers. At day's end, several families' flocks would be corralled together in a walled enclosure. At daybreak, each shepherd would come and call out his own flock, who would know his voice. They were used to following their shepherd to grazing and water.

Some leaders were seen as shepherds of the nation, with a role to lead the nation in and out e.g. Joshua who was appointed by Moses with God's call to lead Israel into the promised land, Numbers 27:15-18. The Shepherd of Israel is a title of the Lord (Yahweh) used in Psalm 80:1.

• **Some verses for further study:** Psalm 80:1, Psalm 23:1, Isaiah 40:10-11, Ezekiel 34:11-16, Zechariah 10:2, Mark 6:34

The context is the man healed from blindness in chapter 9.

The healed man in John 9 is one of the 'sheep' who hear the Lord's voice. By contrast, those who expelled him from the synagogue are "strangers", v.5, who Jesus likens to conventional thieves and robbers, and to the 'false shepherds' of Ezekiel 34:2-4.

The condition of the man who needed healing, and the condition of those who treated him harshly is held up for comparison.

The point of the story: the difference between the thief and the Good Shepherd, and how people today can be helped to tell the difference.

Questions to guide discussion

1. Jesus says "I AM the gate (verses 6-7 and 9) and also says "I AM the Good Shepherd" verses 11 and 14. How can he be both? *Clue: "I AM...."*
2. Who tries to get to the sheep without going through the gate?
3. Who might the gatekeeper refer to, in our world?
4. Is the thief, v.10, who sneaks over the wall, v.1, a real threat?
5. What light does the picture of the thief, coming over the wall unobserved (verse 1) for evil purposes (verse 10) shed on situations we face or hear about every day?
6. What defines the Good Shepherd? What words would we use to describe what the Good Shepherd is like?
verses 11-16
 - He regards the sheep how?
 - puts what value on the sheep?
 - sees each sheep how?
 - looks at many sheep in different groups how?
7. What did 'shepherd' mean in a political sense? What does Jesus mean in verse 8?
8. How do the sheep recognise the voice of the Good Shepherd? In a world of many voices, how do we recognise the content and tone of this particular voice?
9. The sheep may know His voice (verses 4-5) but why do they follow Him as He walks ahead?
10. The danger of verse 10 is clear enough. What is the greater,