

Lesson 31 – The First Sabbath after the Great Assembly
Saturday 10/26/29 AD – 5 ½ months before the Cross

In lesson 30 we saw Jesus' visit to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. We studied His address in the Temple on the eighth and last day of the Feast. We also saw the episode when the Pharisees dragged the woman taken in adultery before Him. We also noted the two times the Jews failed to arrest Him and the time when they started to stone Him. As we resume the story, it was three days later.

This scene took place on the Sabbath in Jerusalem. The blind man in the scene washed in the pool of Siloam, which is a pool in the lower Tyropoeon valley, to the south of the Temple Mount, just out of the city. Since the Feast of Tabernacles that year ended on a Tuesday, and the events of the previous chapter were on the following day, this must have occurred three days later.

The Man Born Blind

John 9:1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.

To begin with, we must understand that this man could not have been ignorant of who Jesus was, or what all the people had been saying about Him for the last three years. As a blind man, he probably listened to, and pondered what he heard, a lot more carefully than most sighted men.

John 9:2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

This comment betrayed ignorance on the part of at least some of Jesus' disciples. It assumed that physical infirmity and sin were connected. This seems to have been a commonly held belief in Israel in those days. It was also what was believed by the Pharisees. The assumption was self-righteous and arrogant. It mirrored the wrongful attitude of Job's friends in the Book of Job. They had assumed Job's sufferings had to be the result of his sins, but they were proved wrong. Sin will always result in some kind of loss, but not all loss is a result of personal sin. Sometimes God uses loss to teach His blessing or provision.

John 9:3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

The Scripture makes it clear that sin, death, and disaster often are actually often used as a means of blessing. It can bring people closer to God. We have the principal from Romans:

Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

We also know that in the Old Testament some people died young to shield them from disasters to come. One example was King Jeroboam's son Abijah, a good man who died young to protect him from seeing the coming destruction of his family. This principal applied not only to this blind man, but to many people before and since whose suffering has been turned to blessing.

John 9:4-5 **As long as it is day, we I¹ must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."**

Jesus knew it was the Sabbath and the storm of criticism He was about to provoke, so He prefaced His action with this comment. The "night" here was the coming "hour of darkness" when Jesus would submit completely to the Cross. In the meantime, he would still shine forth the proof that He was the Savior sent of God.

John 9:6 **Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.**

Try to imagine the feelings of the blind man as he realized that one he had heard about that had raised the dead and healed the blind was the one who stopped by him and was now, unmasked, ministering to him.

John 9:7a **"Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent).**

It was from this very same Pool of Siloam that the waters had been drawn on the recent Feast of Tabernacles. Those waters symbolized the outpouring of the new life by the Spirit. It should be noted that the Pool of Siloam was outside of the southern walls of the city. The blind man would have had to pass many wells and fountains² to get to the Pool of Siloam,³ yet he must have walked a considerable distance to get there. This was his act of faith.

John 9:7b **So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.**

¹ *The Textus Receptus has the Greek word ἐμέ {e-me'} here which means "I." The flawed Codex Sinaiticus has the Greek word ἡμᾶς {hā-ma's} which means "we." As in every case I choose the Textus Receptus. Also, "I" makes more sense.*

² *Although the text doesn't tell us specifically where Jesus had encountered the blind man, we know he was a beggar (verse 8), so he was almost certainly in the city, probably close to the Temple.*

³ *The Pool of Siloam was a rock-cut pool on the southern slope of the City of David, the original site of Jerusalem, located outside the walls of the Old City to the southeast. The pool was fed by the waters of the Gihon Spring, carried there by two aqueducts.-- excavations reveal that the pool was 225 feet wide---The pool is not perfectly rectangular, but was a soft trapezoid.*

This miracle was full of symbolic meaning. It illustrated what Jesus had been teaching in Jerusalem. The mud was made of two parts. There was the soil which symbolized humanity.⁴ The soil was mixed with spit that came out of Jesus' mouth. That which came out of Jesus' mouth symbolized the Word of God. Therefore, the spit mixed with dirt symbolized the Word made Flesh, which was the Incarnated Christ. The water that he was sent to at Siloam was the promise of everlasting life (Revelation 22:17 "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life"). The result was the man's physical sight which spoke of the spiritual sight which came upon him as he saw the light of life and of the world (John 8:12).

John 9:8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?"

After the man had received his sight, he headed back home to the place where he lived. As he got ready to enter his house his neighbors saw him and began to question him.

John 9:9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am *he*. KJV

Some of them recognized him even though they could see that he was now sighted. Others denied that it could possibly be him even though the man himself affirmed who he was.

John 9:10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded.

Once they had established who he was, they demanded to know what had happened.

John 9:11a He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes.

He didn't say "a man called Jesus." He said, "the man they call Jesus." Although he was blind he had heard all the things that the people had been saying about "the man they call Jesus." He also must have heard some in the crowd around Jesus identify Him as the one who had smeared mud on the blind man's eyes.

John 9:11b He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

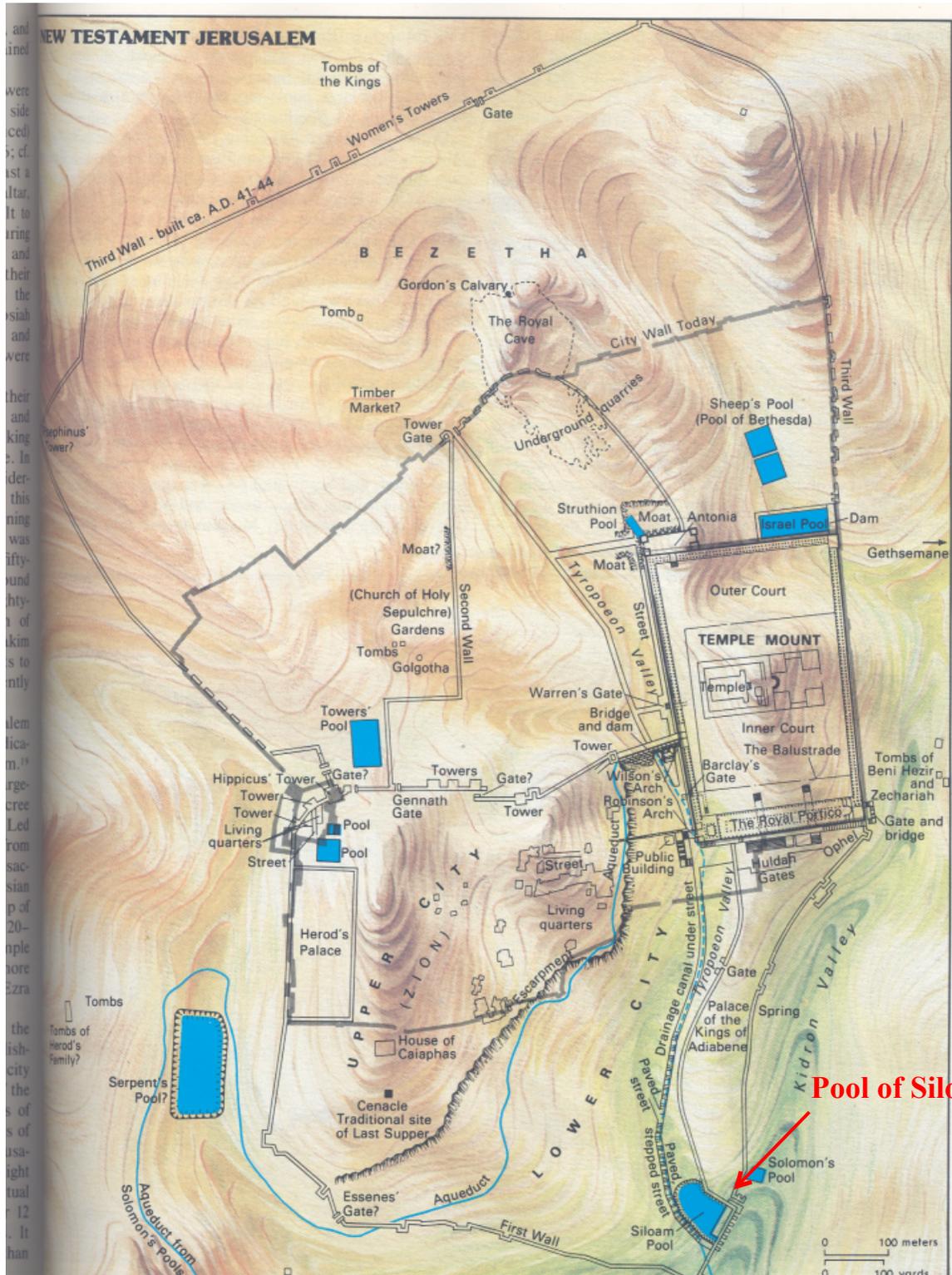
He simply related what had happened without any frills.

John 9:12 "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

From what happened next, it seems like the people who took charge of the situation were enemies of Jesus. They were outraged that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. Healing on the Sabbath had been an ongoing complaint against Jesus since the beginning of His ministry three

⁴ *God made Adam from clay.*

years earlier. Everyone knew that the Pharisees were looking for an excuse to arrest or kill Jesus.



*Map of 1st Century AD Jerusalem
Pool of Siloam*

John 9:13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind.

They took the man to the Pharisees so that they could accuse Jesus. This was not the Sanhedrin, but a Sabbath day gathering of some prominent Pharisees in one of the synagogues. In that day, the Sadducees ruled in the Temple, but the Pharisees dominated the synagogues.

John 9:14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath.

Working on the Sabbath was to be the excuse for the complaint. Note that in other cases recorded in the Gospels the Pharisees were outraged because Jesus had told healed cripples to take up their beds and walk. In those cases, at least they could claim that Jesus had told the cripples to “work” on the Sabbath. In this case all the healed man was doing was walking down the street. It was Jesus who was accused of “working” on the Sabbath. However, the “work” that had been done could only have been done by God.

John 9:15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”

Again, the man gave a simple account of just what he had experienced.

John 9:16 Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others ⁵ asked, “How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?” So they were divided.

Evidently most of the Pharisees were already determined to condemn Jesus without any examination of the facts. A few wanted to subject the case to rational analysis.

John 9:17a Finally they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

Since the majority couldn't get a unanimous agreement, they hoped to intimidate the formerly blind man into supporting them.

John 9:17b The man replied, “He is a prophet.”

They were disappointed. Contrast the attitude of this man who refused to be intimidated to the crippled man Jesus that had healed on His last visit to Jerusalem the year before (John 5:1-16). That man had gone out of his way to accuse Jesus. Instead, this man called Jesus a prophet, which means “one who speaks forth.” This indicates that the blind man had heard Jesus preach. His conversion was not just the result of the miracle, but of the words of Jesus.

⁵ *Others of the Pharisees. They were possibly Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.*

John 9:18 The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents.

The unbelieving Pharisees now realized they were on shaky ground in accusing Him of working. They then decided to accuse Jesus and the blind man of perpetrating a fraud.

John 9:19 "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

The words "you say was born blind" implied to the parents that these powerful Pharisees were accusing the parents of lying.

John 9:20-21 "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself."

The parents did their best to extricate themselves out of the situation, but they did affirm that their son had been born blind.

John 9:22-23 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

Particularly in Jerusalem, where the synagogues and the Pharisees were very powerful, being thrown out of the synagogue could mean social ostracism, economic ruin, and being cut off from all social and family contact.

John 9:24 A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

The implication of their words to the man was that if he did not condemn Jesus as a sinner, he wouldn't be giving glory to God and was guilty of sacrilege.

John 9:25 He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

All the man would testify to was what he knew. He had been blind and now he could see.

John 9:26-27 Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

When this man was blind and only had his hearing, he had undoubtedly listened to what men said more carefully than others. He realized what they were doing and was offended by their attempt to get him to lie and change his testimony. Instead of complying with what they wanted he sarcastically supposed that they wanted to hear his testimony again because they wanted to become Jesus' disciples.

John 9:28-29 Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.”

The proud Pharisees were enraged that this inconsequential man had presumed to match wits with them. They proclaimed their expertise in the Laws of Moses. They also indirectly impugned the birth of Jesus. That was bald faced lie. In those days, after the return from Babylon, careful records were kept in the Temple of the birth and lineage of every Jew. They survived until the destruction of the Temple. These were the genealogies recorded in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. The Pharisees had the recorded proof that Jesus was a “Son of David,” born in Bethlehem, but they refused to acknowledge it.

John 9:30 The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.

The man shot back at them that for a group of supposed experts there was an awful lot they claimed that they didn’t know.

John 9:31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.

He refuted the earlier accusation that Jesus was a sinner (verse 16). He then went further to propose that Jesus could only be a godly man who was doing God’s will.

John 9:32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.

Undoubtedly this man had been taken to many doctors by his parents. They had probably told them of cases where eyes blinded by injury had eventually healed, but never a case of blindness from birth.

John 9:33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

Here he went beyond calling Jesus godly to calling Him “sent by God.” This was very close to calling Jesus the Messiah.

John 9:34 To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out.

Notice that the learned Pharisees didn't answer him. They couldn't. Instead they turned to personal abuse, the way they did with Jesus in the previous chapter (John 8:48). When it says "they threw him out" it means they threw him out of the synagogue (see verse 22), both physically and as a member of the synagogue, with all the deprivation that entailed.

John 9:35 **Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"**

Through some process, Jesus learned what had transpired. He then sought him out. He approached the man who had never seen him. However, the man was familiar with what Jesus had taught and had done for the last three years. He also knew that Jesus had healed him of blindness. He would have known that Jesus had taught that He was the Son of Man.⁶ However, he didn't know that it was Jesus to whom he was talking at that moment.

John 9:36 **"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."**

The man wasn't sure about how his faith should be expressed, but he wanted to express it face to face.

John 9:37 **Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."**

Jesus revealed to the man that He was the one about whom he had heard, and who had healed him. The man could now see Jesus with his physical eyes. We can see the conclusion of this living parable. The word of Christ made flesh (the spit and mud) was washed off in the Pool of Siloam. The man's going to that Pool was his act of faith. As a consequence, he saw Jesus face to face. Even so, one day we will too.

John 9:38 **Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.**

The man had the privilege of confessing his faith face to face with the incarnate Christ.

John 9:39 **Jesus said, "For ~~judgment~~ *separation* I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."**

The Greek noun which is translated "judgment" by the NIV is κρίμα {krē'-mä}. It is the noun form of the Greek verb κρίνω {kree'-no}. The Outline of Biblical Usage says that the prime meaning of that verb is "to separate, put asunder, to pick out, select, or choose." I believe the translation "separation" is clearer here. It just means that Jesus came into the world to separate those who want to see the LORD, from those who are willfully blind to Him.

⁶ *Jesus is referred to as the "Son of Man" 82 times in the Gospels.*

John 9:40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?”

These would not have been the same Pharisees who had thrown the blind man out of his synagogue. They would have been of the number that followed Jesus everywhere He went. Their job was to try to find something of which they could accuse Him. These Pharisees picked up that Jesus meant that while the formerly physically blind man could now see spiritually, they were spiritually blind.

John 9:41 Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

Jesus was saying that if these Pharisees had the honesty to admit they had been spiritually blind, they wouldn't be guilty of the sin of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.⁷ Since they persisted in clinging to the lie, they were also clinging to their sin of being willfully blind to God.

The Good Shepherd of the Sheep

Next, Jesus told a parable about “the sheep.” It must be understood that the characters in this parable were the sheep, the false shepherds, and the true shepherd. The Jews shouldn't have been ignorant of who they represented. They were extensively defined in the Old Testament scriptures. The sheep (or sheep of His pasture) represented the people of Israel:

Psalms 74:1 “Why have you (*the LORD*) rejected us (*Israel*) forever, O God? Why does your anger smolder against the sheep of your pasture?”

Psalms 78:52, 70-71 “But he (*the LORD*) brought his people (*Israel*) out like a flock; he led them like sheep through the desert.--- He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance.”

Psalms 79:13 “Then we (*Israel*) your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever.”

Psalms 100:3 “Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”

The false shepherds were the false teachers who were leading them astray as shown below:

⁷ Mark 3:28-29 “I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.” Also see Matthew 12:31.

Jeremiah 23:1 “Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 50:6 “My people (*Israel*) have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains. They wandered over mountain and hill and forgot their own resting place.”

The LORD had promised to rescue them from the false shepherds Himself.

Ezekiel 34:8b-12 “Because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them. For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself⁸ will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.”

The Good Shepherd would be the LORD Himself and their promised King. He would lead those who were His sheep out to the pasture of His everlasting Kingdom.

Micah 2:11-13 “If a liar and deceiver comes and says, ‘I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,’ he would be just the prophet for this people!’ ‘I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people. One who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through the gate and go out. Their king will pass through before them, the LORD at their head.’”⁹

However, to lead His people out, the Good Shepherd would have to pay a heavy price.

Isaiah 53:6 “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

When Jesus told this next parable, Jesus was still in the presence of the blind man who had believed and the Pharisees who did not. None could have doubted what Jesus meant. Jesus was the true shepherd, and the unbelieving Pharisees were the false shepherds.

⁸ *In other words, God would come himself to be our shepherd-king in the form of Jesus Christ.*

⁹ *Jesus was the one who was the good shepherd, “the one who breaks open the way,” and “their King” in John 10:1-5. Also notice here the clear indication that their King and the Lord are one and the same.*

John 10:1 “I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

The “gate” by which Jesus entered into the sheep pen was His incarnation as sinless humanity and Son of God. It was only by that entrance that He was qualified to redeem His sheep. It is His life and work that we are identified with when we are “in Him” through faith, and it is by that life and death by which we as His flock will go out.

Those that climbed in some other way to lead the sheep represented the “blind” Pharisees. They were offering a false salvation to the people, but they were incapable of entering through the gate for the sheep because only Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of Man and Son of God, was qualified to enter the gate. They were thieves and robbers who were trying to steal the flock of God for their Father the Devil.

John 10:2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.

Only Jesus could be the true Shepherd of the Sheep.

Psalms 28:8-9 “The LORD is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed one. Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever.”

Psalms 80:1 “Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us. Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.”

John 10:3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

The “watchman” is the Father by whose plan and instrumentality the Virgin Birth of Jesus took place.

John 10:4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

Those sheep that were His would recognize His voice and follow Him. Those that were His were those whose hearts had combined the powerful revelation of the Spirit with their choice to exercise faith. This choice was also described in Psalms and Hebrews:

Psalms 95:6-8a “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah (*the Exodus generation*).”

Hebrews 4:2 “For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them (*the Exodus generation*), because those who heard did not combine it with faith.”

John 10:5 **But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”**

Those who are truly seeking the LORD will never be led astray by a false shepherd. They will recognize that there is no loving care in their voice.

John 10:6 **Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.**

This revealed how little they really understood of their own scriptures. Jesus tried to explain what He had said.

John 10:7 **Therefore Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.**

Here are some passages from the Old Testament that take on a deeper significance when we understand that when they spoke of the gate they were often speaking of Jesus’ work as the Messiah:

Psalms 87:1-4 “He has set his foundation on the holy mountain;¹⁰ the LORD loves **the gates of Zion** more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are said of you, O city of God: Selah. “I will record Rahab ¹¹ and Babylon among those who acknowledge me-- Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush -- and will say, ‘This one was born in Zion.’”¹²

Isaiah 26:1-2 “In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts.¹³ **Open the gates** that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith.”

Isaiah 62:10 “Pass through, **pass through the gates!** Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations.¹⁴

¹⁰ *Mt. Zion was the Holy Mountain in David’s time when the Ark rested there. Mt. Zion became God’s Holy Mountain when Jesus Christ was crucified there. The gates of Zion is the way to salvation.*

¹¹ *“Rahab” – sometimes used to refer to Egypt (Isaiah 30:7) as here. Sometimes used to refer to Satan.*

¹² *Here is the principal of being “born again.” Zion refers to the place where Jesus was crucified. Jesus death on the Cross was “the gate of Zion.”*

¹³ *See Psalms 48:12.*

John 10:8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

The sheep here were those that were His sheep that would hear His voice. The thieves and robbers were those other names described by Peter in Acts:

Acts 4:12 “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

John 10:9a I am the gate; whoever enters (*the gate*) through me will be saved.

The only way to enter the gate of salvation is through the work of Jesus Christ.

John 10:9b He will come into (*the gate*) and go out, and find pasture.

He will come into the gate of salvation in Christ, and go out to the pasture of God’s blessing. We must understand that it is the gate we enter, not the sheep pen. We enter the sheep pen (this world) through birth. Once we enter the gate through faith in the gate (Jesus Christ), we leave the sheep pen of this world and enter God’s pasture. Furthermore, we only go out, not back in.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.¹⁵

The term “thief” described all others who preached another avenue to God except Jesus Christ. Life to the full applies to both this life and the life to come.

John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

To be the good shepherd required a great sacrifice.

John 10:12-13 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

The false shepherds were only working for money. This described the religious leaders of Jesus’ day who rejected Him. They were really working only for money, position, and celebrity. If they had loved God, they would have recognized the voice of the good shepherd. They didn’t really care for the sheep and wouldn’t and couldn’t lay down their lives for the sheep.

¹⁴ See Isaiah 11:10 “In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.”

¹⁵ That is salvation and blessing.

John 10:14 “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—

Here Jesus made the parable clear to everyone. The healed blind man still standing there was one of those who heard His voice and knew him. The Pharisees were the thieves, liars, and men who worked for hire.

John 10:15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

It did not make any difference if the “shepherds of Israel” didn’t know Him. The Father knew Him.

John 10:16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Up till then, Jesus had only revealed what He was doing for Israel. Here He revealed that He was also doing it for the whole world. He was talking about the one Church of both believing Jews and Gentiles. He would fulfill the prophecy made in Isaiah:

Isaiah 49:5-6 “And now the LORD says-- he who formed me (*the Messiah*) in the womb (*the virgin birth*) to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength-- he says: ‘It is too small a thing for you (*the Messiah*) to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

John 10:17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.

For the third time here Jesus prophesied His atoning death. He also prophesied His resurrection. As we shall see, His disciples seemed not to have listened.

John 10:18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

The decision to die on the cross was strictly in Jesus’ hands. It was the Father’s will, but Jesus’ decision.

John 10:19-21 At these words the Jews were again divided. Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?” But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

Jesus had said that He had come to divide or separate believers from unbelievers (Matthew 10:34-36). There were some in that crowd who seemed to begin to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd.

Many of the Jews accused Jesus of being raving mad. As it turned out, just before the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 AD, a real madman appeared to warn the Jews. He was also named Jesus, son of Ananus. Ananus was the name of the High Priest who ruled the Sanhedrin from Jesus' time until Ananus' death in about 68 AD. This man was probably not a son (or descendant) of that Ananus, but we can't know for sure. We have the account in Josephus. Was this a case of the Lord's sense of irony and humor? You be the judge. The account is copied below:

Flavius Josephus's, Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Chapter V, Paragraph 3.3: "Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them. ----- But, what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began,¹⁶ and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for everyone to make tabernacles to God in the temple, began on a sudden to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!" This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet did not he either say anything for himself, or anything peculiar to those that chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon our rulers, supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator, where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him, Who he was? and whence he came? and why he uttered such words? he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him. Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" Nor did he give ill words to any of those that beat him every day, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what

¹⁶ The war started in 66 BC, so this man appeared in 62 AD, not long after the execution of James and the leaders of the Jerusalem Church by the Jews. It was just after this time that Albinus was appointed Procurator. In 70 AD, the siege of Jerusalem started and finished.

was to come. This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And just as he added at the last, "Woe, woe to myself also!" there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost."