

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 138 – May 18th – John 10:1-21

Works frequently referenced in these notes on John

Barrett, CK	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , London, SPCK, 1967
Beasley-Murray, GR	<i>John, Word Bible Commentary, vol 36</i> , Word Books, 1987
Carson, DA	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , Leicester, IVP (Apollos), 1991

John 10

Beasley-Murray writes, "The chapter consists primarily of a discourse on the Shepherd and his Flock, vv 1–18, and a dialogue between Jesus and the Jews during the Festival of the Dedication, vv 22–39. The former is followed by a note on a division among the Jews occasioned by Jesus' teaching, vv 19–21, and the latter by a report of Jesus withdrawing to the other side of the Jordan, vv 40–42. Since vv 19–21 make mention of the healing of the blind man, it is often thought that the passage should immediately follow 9:39–41; and as vv 26–29 develop the theme of the Shepherd and his Flock, it is also proposed that vv 22–29 should immediately follow 19–21. The effect of this is to set the entire narrative of chap. 10 within the Festival of the Dedication." As Beasley-Murray goes on to remark, most recent commentators see the current ordering as the work of the writer of this Gospel who includes the picture of the Shepherd and his flock here as a comment on the events of the previous chapter. The Pharisees, like hireling shepherds, have cast out the man who was born blind, but Jesus, the good shepherd, searches until he finds him. It is the man who was born blind who hears Jesus' voice and follows him.

Beasley-Murray concludes, "Accepting then the present order of text, we propose that 10:1–21 is set in close association with the narrative of the healing of the blind man in the period following the Festival of Tabernacles, while 10:22–39 falls within the Festival of Dedication, shortly after the preceding events. We are evidently intended to assume that Jesus spent the time between the two festivals in the area of Jerusalem. The Dedication festival, with its celebration of the deliverance from the tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes and the rededication of the profaned temple, forms a suitable background for 'the Jews' to question Jesus whether he is the Messiah, and for the discussion it provoked."

Verse 1

Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ μὴ εἰσερχόμενος διὰ τῆς θύρας εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τῶν προβάτων ἀλλὰ ἀναβαίνων ἀλλαχόθεν ἐκεῖνος κλέπτης ἐστὶν καὶ ληστής·

For ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν cf. notes on 1:5.

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

θυρα, ας f door, gate

αὐλη, ης f courtyard, fold (for sheep)

Barrett thinks the enclosed courtyard of a house used as a fold for sheep.

προβατον, ου n sheep

ἀναβαινω go up, come up

ἀλλαχοθεν by another way

I.e. climbs the wall instead of coming through the door and thus comes from another direction.

κλέπτης, ου m thief

ληστής, ου m robber, insurrectionist

The reference is either to Messianic pretenders or to the Jewish leaders. Sanders thinks that the parable was originally directed against the former but that it is here used by John as part of his polemic against the latter. In context the description looks back to 9:40-41.

Beasley-Murray comments, "Of the many relevant OT passages the polemical discourse in Ezekiel 34 is outstanding; Israel's leaders are condemned for neglecting the sheep, for slaughtering them and leaving them as prey to the wild beasts; the Lord declares that he will be their Shepherd, that he will gather his scattered sheep and pasture them on the mountains of Israel, and set over them as shepherd 'my servant David,' i.e., the Messiah."

Carson also draws out many parallels between Ezekiel 34 and this section of John 10. He then comments, "The same themes – God's servant David ruling over his people in the constraints of a new covenant, 'a covenant of peace' and 'an everlasting covenant', and serving as their shepherd – recur in Ezekiel 37 as the climactic explanation of the miracle of revivification in the valley of dry bones. This in turn follows hard on the promise of cleansing water and transforming spirit (Ezk. 36:25-27), already picked up in John 3 (cf. notes on 3:5). Other Old Testament passages castigate the shepherds of Israel for their dereliction of duty (e.g. Is 56:9-12; Je 23:1-4; 25:32-38; Zech 11), or portray God as the ultimate shepherd of Israel (Ps 80:1; Is 40:11; cf. Ps 23:1). The mingling of the foci – the promised shepherd is the LORD, or the promised shepherd is the LORD's servant David – is peculiarly appropriate in a book where the Word is God, and the Word is God's emissary, distinguishable from him."

Verse 2

ὁ δὲ εἰσερχόμενος διὰ τῆς θύρας ποιμὴν ἐστὶν τῶν προβάτων.

ποιμην, ενος m shepherd

Verse 3

τούτω ὁ θυρωρὸς ἀνοίγει, καὶ τὰ πρόβατα τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούει καὶ τὰ ἴδια πρόβατα φωνεῖ κατ' ὄνομα καὶ ἐξάγει αὐτά.

θυρωρος, ου m & f door keeper

ἀνοιγω open

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

φωνεω call, call out

ὄνομα, τος n name

He calls his own sheep by name i.e. individually. There are other sheep in this fold who are not his. It would have been common for several flocks to share the same overnight fold.

"Cf. v.16, where it appears that the shepherd has other sheep which are not of the original fold. This, then, is the fold of Judaism, which contained the first disciples and also the unbelieving Jews, of whom the former were to be joined by Gentile believers." Barrett.

ἐξάγω lead or bring out

The picture Jesus uses reflects commonplace practice in the Middle East. In his nineteenth century book, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, G. A. Smith comments, "On the boundless Eastern pasture ... the shepherd is indispensable. With us sheep are often left to themselves; I do not remember to have seen in the East a flock without a shepherd. In such a landscape as Judea, where a day's pasture is thinly scattered over an unfenced tract, covered with delusive paths, still frequented by wild beasts, and rolling into the desert, the man and his character is indispensable.... Sometimes we enjoyed our noonday rest beside one of those Judean wells, to which three or four shepherds come down with their flocks. The flocks mixed with each other, and we wondered how each shepherd would get his own again. But after the watering and the playing were over the shepherds one by one went up different sides of the valley, and each called out his peculiar call; and the sheep of each drew out of the crowd to their own shepherd and the flocks passed as orderly as they came."

Cf. Num 27:17. The picture here may include that of Jesus leading his sheep out of Judaism to create a new community of the people of God, distinguished not by race or descent but by their relationship to him: they are his sheep whom he knows by name and who, in turn, know his voice and follow him.

Verse 4

ὅταν τὰ ἴδια πάντα ἐκβάλῃ, ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν πορεύεται, καὶ τὰ πρόβατα αὐτῶ ἀκολουθεῖ, ὅτι οἶδασιν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ.

ὅταν when

ἐκβαλλω throw out

Here used in the weaker sense of bring out (though there may be a deliberate echo of 9:22,34).

ἔμπροσθεν prep + gen before, in front of

πορευομαι go, proceed, travel

ἀκολουθεω follow, accompany

οἶδα know

Beasley-Murray comments, "As is customary in Palestine, the sheep *follow* the shepherd (it is the butcher who drives them!); following the shepherd makes the picture peculiarly apt to Christian discipleship."

Verse 5

ἄλλοτρίῳ δὲ οὐ μὴ ἀκολουθήσουσιν ἀλλὰ
φεύζονται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ οἶδασιν τῶν
ἄλλοτρίων τὴν φωνήν.

ἄλλοτριος, α, ον belonging to another;
another, stranger

ἀκολουθήσουσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl
ἀκολουθεῶ

φεύζονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl
φευγῶ flee, run away from

Not indifference but positive aversion and avoidance.

Verse 6

ταύτην τὴν παροιμίαν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς·
ἐκείνοι δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τίνα ἦν ἢ ἐλάλει
αὐτοῖς.

παροιμία, ας f parable, figure of speech,
proverb

"Occurs again in 16:25, 29, but nowhere in the synoptic gospels; nor does παραβολή, which is common there, occur in John. In biblical usage there is little or no distinction between the two terms. In the LXX, παραβολή is the usual rendering of מָשָׁל (*mashal*), and translates no other word. παροιμία is occasionally used for מָשָׁל (*mashal*), and seems to have increased in popularity in the later VSS... What special flavour παροιμία may have had in biblical usage is accounted for in its use in Prov 1:1: one of the meanings of מָשָׁל (*mashal*) is 'proverb', and this meaning παροιμία naturally acquired (cf. 2 Peter 2:22, the only other use of the word in the New Testament). But it is impossible simply to translate 'proverb' here. In 16:25,29 speech ἐν παροιμιαῖς is contrasted with speech (ἐν) παρρησια; παροιμία must therefore mean some kind of veiled or symbolic utterance." Barrett.

ἔγνωσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl γινώσκω
λαλέω speak, talk

I.e. the Jews of Ch. 9. "John's comment in this verse is ... simultaneously a theological indictment and a step toward the further explanations in the next verses. Misunderstanding is frequently followed by explication in this Gospel." Carson.

Verses 7-18

"The expansions in these verses are not predicated on a single, narrative parable [of vv 1-5], but are further metaphorical uses of the three dominant features of the shepherding language introduced in vv. 1-5 – viz. the gate, which generates further metaphorical expansion in vv. 7-10; the shepherd, whose parallels with Jesus are further elucidated in vv. 11-18; and the notion of his own sheep, further expanded in vv. 26-30." Carson.

Verse 7

Εἶπεν οὖν πάλιν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν
λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα τῶν προβάτων.

πάλιν again, once more

θύρα, ας f see v.1

The door may refer to the practice of the shepherd of lying down in the door to protect the sheep. But it is not really the idea of protection which we have here but that of entry into the blessings of salvation (v.9). Again, Carson comments, "This is not an explanation of vv. 1-5, so much as an expansion of the metaphors found in those verses."

Chrysostom comments, "When he brings us to the Father he calls himself a Door, when he takes care of us, a Shepherd."

Beasley-Murray writes, "The saying is parallel to 14:6, 'I am the Way, the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father except through me.' Jesus is the Door to the life of the kingdom of God, which is given to those who come to the Father through him."

ἡ θύρα is replaced by ὁ ποιμὴν in P⁷⁵ and various Coptic MSS – an obviously secondary reading.

Verse 8

πάντες ὅσοι ἦλθον πρὸ ἐμοῦ κλέπται εἰσὶν καὶ
λησταί· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἤκουσαν αὐτῶν τὰ πρόβατα.

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
pl. as many as, all

πρὸ ἐμοῦ is omitted by P^{45vid} P⁷⁵ ⁸* E F G, most minuscules and many MSS of versions. The position also varies before or after ἦλθον. Normally this would suffice to indicate that the expression is a later insertion; but some early MSS also omit πάντες (D it^{bd} vg^{mss}). It looks as though both omissions were made to soften the strong meaning of the statement, which may have been interpreted by some as a condemnation of all OT leaders and prophets. The UBS therefore includes the phrase, but in brackets.

κλεπτης, ου m see v.1

ληστης, ου m see v.1

Carson comments, "It sounds ... as if reference is being made to messianic pretenders who promise the people freedom but who lead them into war, suffering and slavery."

Verse 9

ἐγὼ εἰμι ἢ θύρα· δι' ἐμοῦ ἐάν τις εἰσέλθῃ σωθήσεται καὶ εἰσελεύσεται καὶ ἐξελεύσεται καὶ νομὴν εὐρήσει.

ἐάν if
 σωθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s σωζω
 save
 εἰσελεύσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl
 εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in
 ἐξελεύσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s
 ἐξερχομαι
 νομῆ, ης f pasture
 εὐρίσκω find, discover

"The believer is first of all delivered, then finds freedom in the fold (cf. 8:32,36), and finds also the means of sustaining life (mentioned in the next verse). With νομῆ cf. the 'water of life' (in ch. 4) and the 'bread of life' (in ch. 6)." Barrett.

Verse 10

ὁ κλέπτης οὐκ ἔρχεται εἰ μὴ ἵνα κλέψῃ καὶ θύσῃ καὶ ἀπολέσῃ· ἐγὼ ἤλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσιν καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν.

κλεπτω steal
 θύσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s θυω slaughter,
 kill
 ἀπολλυμι destroy, kill

"ἀπολεσαι is precisely what Christ will not do to any of his own (6:39; 18:9; cf. 3:16; 6:12; 10:28; 17:12)." Barrett.

ζωῆ, ης f life

Cf. 1:4; 3:16; 20:31

περισσὸν adv. to the full

"Within the metaphorical world, *life ... to the full* suggests fat, contented, flourishing sheep, not terrorised by brigands; outside the narrative world, it means that the life Jesus' true disciples enjoy is not to be construed as more time to fill (merely 'everlasting' life), but life at its scarcely imagined best, life to be lived. It is tempting to see here an allusion to Psalm 118:20, 'This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.' Certainly the subsequent verses (118:22-24) are happily applied to Christ elsewhere in the New Testament (Mt. 21:42; 1 Pet. 2:7)." Carson.

Verse 11

Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός· ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων·

"As vv. 7-10 depict Jesus as the gate for the sheep, so vv. 11-18, picking up on another expression from vv. 1-5, portray Jesus as the shepherd – indeed, the 'good' (καλός) shepherd." Carson.

ποιμην, ενος m see v.2
 καλος, η, ον good, right

The idea of God's people being led by a shepherd is common in the OT. It is used of God himself (e.g. Ps 23) and also of religious leaders (e.g. Zech 11:4-9).

The term καλος here suggests nobility or worth – the 'worthy' shepherd. Carson adds, "There may ... be a self-conscious allusion to the worthless shepherds of Zechariah 11:17."

ψυχη, ης f self, life
 τιθημι place, set, appoint

τιθεναι την ψυχην is peculiar to John and 1 John (10:11,15,17f.; 13:37f.; 15:13; 1 Jn 3:16), but cf. δουναι την ψυχην (Mk 10:45). Some early MSS (P⁴⁵ & D etc.) read δίδωσιν here rather than τίθησιν, conforming to John's more common expression.

For ὑπερ used in connection with Christ's death, cf. Mk 14:24. The word suggests sacrifice. Cf. also Hebrews 13:20 which echoes Jesus words here.

Verse 12

ὁ μισθωτὸς καὶ οὐκ ὢν ποιμὴν, οὗ οὐκ ἔστιν τὰ πρόβατα ἴδια, θεωρεῖ τὸν λύκον ἐρχόμενον καὶ ἀφήσιν τὰ πρόβατα καὶ φεύγει – καὶ ὁ λύκος ἀρπάζει αὐτὰ καὶ σκορπίζει –

"Theives and robbers (vv. 1, 8) are obviously wicked; the hired hand is not wicked, simply more committed to his own well-being than to the well-being of the sheep." Carson.

μισθωτος, ου m hired man, labourer
 ιδιος, α, ον one's own
 θεωρω see, observe, notice
 λυκος, ου m wolf

Cf. Acts 20:29.

ἀφιημι leave, forsake
 φευγω flee, run away from
 ἀρπαζω take by force, take away
 σκορπιζω scatter, disperse

Cf. the attacks of the prophets on the religious leaders of Israel, Jer 23:1ff.; Ezek 34:2ff.; Zech 11:16f.

Verse 13

ὅτι μισθωτός ἐστιν καὶ οὐ μέλει αὐτῷ περὶ τῶν προβάτων.

μέλει impersonal verb it is of concern, it matters

"The hireling's flight is due to his character and relation with the sheep; he cares for himself and his wages, not for the sheep." Barrett.

Verse 14

ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, καὶ γινώσκω τὰ ἐμά, καὶ γινώσκουσί με τὰ ἐμά,

ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my

Cf. v.3.

Verse 15

καθὼς γινώσκει με ὁ πατήρ καὶ ἐγὼ γινώσκω τὸν πατέρα, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν μου τίθημι ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων.

καὶ ἐγὼ a compound word = καὶ ἐγὼ

Cf. v.11. Beasley-Murray comments, "In vv 14–15 we have a good example of how concepts in different languages can draw close, yet still require discrimination. In the Greek tradition knowledge is thought of as analogous to *seeing*, with a view to grasping the nature of an object; for the Hebrew, knowledge means *experiencing* something. In the area of religion, therefore, knowledge of God for the Greek is primarily contemplation of the divine reality; for the Hebrew it means entering into a relationship with God. This latter is vividly, if not shatteringly, illustrated in Amos 3:1–2. On this background vv 14–15 have a clear meaning: the mutual knowledge of the Shepherd and his 'sheep' denotes an intimate relationship which reflects the fellowship of love between the Father and the Son." For further analogy between the Father's relationship with the Son and Jesus' relationship with his people, cf. 15:9–11; 17:21.

Verse 16

καὶ ἄλλα πρόβατα ἔχω ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς αὐλῆς ταύτης· κάκεινα δεῖ με ἀγαγεῖν, καὶ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἀκούσουσιν, καὶ γενήσονται μία ποίμνη, εἷς ποιμὴν.

"The sheep are his before they hear his voice, for they have been given him by the Father (cf. v 29, and the repeated similar affirmations in chap. 6 – vv 37–39, 44–45, 64–65)." Beasley-Murray.

αὐλή, ης f see v.1

This sheep-fold is Judaism.

κάκεινος, η, ο contraction of καὶ ἐκεινος and that one; pl. those also

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must ἀγαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἀγω

"The Gentile mission is itself an activity of Christ, just as his ministry in Palestine was." Barrett.

γενήσονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl γίνομαι

γενήσονται has stronger attestation than the singular γενήσεται; the latter appears to be "a stylistic correction" Metzger.

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος οηε ποίμνη, ης f flock

"John's thought is not identical with that of the Stoic view of the unity of mankind... For John, the unity of the one flock is not a given unity naturally existing, but a unity created in and by Jesus... As is indicated by the first part of this verse, his primary thought is of the unity of Jew and Gentile in the Church; cf. especially Eph. 2:11–22; 4:3–6. He also emphasises again, as frequently, the unity of believers with Christ and of Christ with the Father. For the 'one shepherd' cf. Ezek 34:23." Barrett.

Beasley-Murray comments, "Their unity is the fruit of his solitary sacrifice (vv 15, 17–18) and his unique relation to God and man (vv 14–15a) as the Pauline epistles joyfully proclaim (Rom 5:12–21; 2 Cor 5:14–21; Eph 2:11–18)."

Verse 17

διὰ τοῦτό με ὁ πατήρ ἀγαπᾷ ὅτι ἐγὼ τίθημι τὴν ψυχὴν μου, ἵνα πάλιν λάβω αὐτήν.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

"The relation between the Father and the Son is essential and eternal; John does not mean that the Father loved Christ because the crucifixion took place. But the love of the Father for the Son is a love that is eternally linked with and mutually dependent upon the Son's complete alignment with the Father's will and his obedience even to death." Barrett.

πάλιν again, once more

λάβω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s λαμβανω

"It is possible, but, in view of the weakening of ἵνα in Hellenistic Greek, not certain, that *purpose* is intended and stressed: the resumption of life was the intention behind the suffering of Jesus; he died that the power of his resurrection might be manifested and released. Otherwise the clause means simply, 'with a view to taking it again!'" Barrett.

Beasley-Murray comments, "Here two thoughts coalesce: the unity of the death and resurrection of the Son for the salvation of the world, and the attribution of the resurrection to the Son. Both are characteristic of this Gospel (cf. the 'lifting up' sayings, 3:14-15; 8:28; 12:31-32; and 2:19-21), but not inharmonious with the others."

Verse 18

οὐδεὶς αἶρει αὐτὴν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τίθημι αὐτὴν ἀπ' ἐμαντοῦ. ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θεῖναι αὐτήν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν· ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου.

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
αἶρω take, take up, take away

A few early MSS (P⁴⁵ & B) read ηρεν instead of αἶρει; while it is the more difficult reading the greater attestation of the latter led the UBS editors to retain it (Barrett and Lindars, accept the former reading).

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, right
θεῖναι Verb, aor act infin τιθημι
λαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin λαμβανω
ἐντολη, ης f command, order, instruction

"The words ἐντολὴ and ἐντέλλεσθαι are frequent in the latter part of John (and in 1 and 2 John). The Father gives a commandment to Jesus (10:18; 12:49f.; 14:31; 15:10) and he gives commandment to his disciples (13:34; 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12, 14, 17). The characteristic ('new') commandment of Jesus is that his disciples should love one another (13:34; 15:12, 17). If they keep his commandments they abide in his love and show their love for him (14:15, 21; 15:10, 14). Similarly the love of the Father for the Son is bound up with the Son's voluntary acceptance of suffering in the work of salvation. The word ἐντολὴ therefore sums up the Christian doctrine of salvation from its origin in the eternal love of God, manifested in Jesus, to the mutual love of Christians in the Church. Jesus himself found complete freedom of action in obedience (v.18a); so will the disciples." Barrett.

Verse 19

Σχίσμα πάλιν ἐγένετο ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις διὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους.

Carson comments, "Despite the reference to the blind man in v. 21, it seems especially unwarranted to make vv. 19-21 follow after 9:41 (cf. notes on 10:1) since the division is caused by *these words* of Jesus."

σχισμα, τος n division, split

Cf. 9:16.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι

Here τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις probably refers to the crowds generally, rather than their leaders (cf. 7:11-13 for John's double use of this term).

Verse 20

ἔλεγον δὲ πολλοὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν· Δαιμόνιον ἔχει καὶ μαίνεται· τί αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε;

δαιμονιον, ου n demon, evil spirit
μαινομαι be out of one's mind, be insane

Cf. 7:20; 8:48.

Verse 21

ἄλλοι ἔλεγον· Ταῦτα τὰ ῥήματα οὐκ ἔστιν δαιμονιζομένου· μὴ δαιμόνιον δύναται τυφλῶν ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀνοῖζει;

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter
δαιμονιζομαι be possessed by demons
δυναμαι can, be able to
τυφλος, η, ον blind
ἀνοιγω open