

John 10:1-18 – “I am the gate” & “I am the good shepherd”

Who is Jesus? Different people have different ideas. We do not need to be unsure. Jesus himself tells us. In the book of John, seven times he says “I am...”. We have studied his words, “I am the bread of life” and “I am the light of the world.” Now we study the next two sayings in John chapter 10.

1. How did people look after their sheep?

These words are about a shepherd and his sheep. In the East when Jesus lived, sheep spent the night in a sheepfold. They were protected there from thieves and wolves. The sheepfold would have a wall, with only one gate to get in. A gate-keeper would sleep in the gate at night. He kept guard, and nobody could come in unless he allowed them. The only other way in was for a thief to climb over the wall. In Jesus' words, the sheep are God's people. Jesus is explaining how he looks after his people.

2. “I am the gate” (v7, 9)

The gate-keeper was very important, to protect the flock. The gate was the only proper way into the fold. Jesus said “I am the gate”. He is the only entrance to God's family. By him, alone, we can be safe. Jesus says through him we will “go in, and out, and find pasture”. We need to be saved from the wrath of God for our sins, and the hatred of Satan, and being eternally lost. The way to be safe is not baptism, or going to church, or being blessed by a pastor – but to go to Jesus himself. Then we can “go out” to serve God. He gives us the strength to serve, suffer and give ourselves. He died and rose again for our sins. He alone is the centre of true worship, true service and true religion. Is he central in your thinking? Is he central in your life? Is he only a helper, or is he everything?

3. “I am the good shepherd” (v11, 14)

Jesus was not a “hired hand” (v12). There are many “men of God” in Kenya, but they only serve for money or power. When trouble comes, they will abandon their people. Jesus will not – he gives everything for the sheep. He gave himself when he died on the cross to pay the price for our sins and remove the wrath of God from us to himself. He is not a thief or a wolf, who comes to feed from the flock or to scatter them. He came to bring all who truly love God together, in his church (v16-17). He is not a stranger (v5), but knows and cares for every one of his sheep personally. Have you heard his voice? When you hear his teaching, do you believe it? Do you trust him and obey him? Is he your shepherd, leading you to life?