

# Daily Bible Study Commentary by Pastor Steve

We're excited to have you digging deeper into the Word. The best way to use this study guide is to read the Bible verse(s) first, then Pastor Steve's commentary. God bless you.

## John 9:41

**v41:** Jesus said to them, "If you were blind you would not have had sin, but now that you are saying 'we see,' your sin remains" (literal). Though these students of the Bible were positive toward Jesus, judging from this statement, as well as the lesson Jesus was about to teach them concerning the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:1-18), there was an important truth these Pharisees did not believe. It appears they did not believe Jesus would die as a sacrifice for their sins (Jn 10:11, 15, 17-18). They believed enough of what He taught to admire Him and probably believed God had sent Him in some special capacity, but they didn't believe enough to receive the gift of righteousness which is given only to those who place their faith in His death and resurrection. Even though Jesus repeatedly preached this truth (Jn 2:19-21; 3:14; 6:51-58) very few people, including the Twelve, understood or believed Him. To some He was a teacher; to some a prophet; to some even the Messiah but never the suffering Messiah, always a glorious Messiah who would soon bring God's kingdom to earth.

## John 9:41

**v41** (continued): These Pharisees had much knowledge of the Bible and therefore understood Jesus' claims better than most (Mt 27:62-66). But based on Jesus' statement to them, they, like Peter (Mt 16:21-23), must have decided that He was confused on this subject. So to them He said, in effect, "If you had not understood what I have been saying about My death, your ignorance would be an excuse, and you would be innocent of rebelling against God. But since you are convinced you know God's ways better than I and reject the idea of My death on your behalf, you will continue in your sin because you do not [yet] have the righteousness of faith" (paraphrase).

## John 10:1-2

**vs1-2:** In the Greek text there is no break in Jesus' dialogue between chapter 9, verse 41 and chapter 10, verse 1. That means that Jesus' discussion of the Good Shepherd was part of what He said to "the ones being with Him from out of the Pharisees" (v40). After telling these would-be disciples that they were still spiritually blind and unrighteous before God (Jn 9:41), He then went on to give them a set of guidelines to protect them from following false religious leaders. Apparently this teaching was, at least in part, in response to the spiritual abuse the Pharisees and Israel's highest religious leaders had done to an innocent man (A. Plummer, St. John, Cambridge Greek Testament, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1893, pp.215-216).

## John 10:1-2

**vs1-2** (continued): In effect, here is what He said to them, "You have just watched bad shepherds abuse a sheep. Here is why that happened: They aren't God-appointed leaders; they are self-appointed. They deceived and stole their way into those positions of religious authority because of greed. Anyone who desires to be a shepherd in God's flock must be willing to pay the price that God requires of every one of His shepherds. There is a doorway through which all true shepherds must pass: They must be willing to die for the people they lead" (vs11, 15).

## John 10:1-2

**vs1-2** (continued): We cannot properly understand Jesus' teaching about the Good Shepherd unless we understand the prophetic passage He drew upon. In Ezekiel chapter 34, God rebuked the spiritual leaders of Israel. He called them "shepherds" and the people they led, "sheep." The comparison between human leaders and shepherds was an ancient one. Anticipating his death Moses asked God to appoint a leader in his place so "that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd" (Nu 27:17). But in Ezekiel God listed the failures of Israel's spiritual leaders when He called them "shepherds" and warned that He would take His people away from them and care for them Himself through the person of the Messiah. He said Israel's spiritual leaders had abused and neglected His people. They greedily took resources from them but did nothing to care for them, and they didn't love their "sheep." God said, "With force and severity you have dominated them" (Eze 34:4), which is exactly how the current high priest and other members of the Sanhedrin had treated the man whose eyesight Jesus had restored.

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## **John 10:1-2**

**vs1-2** (continued): Through Ezekiel God prophesied that because Israel's spiritual leaders had and would fall, He Himself would shepherd His people, but He said He would do it through the Messiah. He said, "Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. I will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I the Lord have spoken" (Eze 34:23-24; 37:24). When Ezekiel spoke that prophecy, King David had been dead for 400 years, so the reference to "David" was understood by all to mean the promised Messiah, the "Son of David" (2Sa 7:12-17). By employing the imagery from Ezekiel of shepherds, sheep and the Good Shepherd, Jesus was explaining to these Pharisees, who knew the Bible well, that He was that "Shepherd," the Son of David, that God had promised to send to care for His "sheep." And He gave them a list of specific signs by which they could confirm His claim.

## **John 10:3-4**

**vs3-4**: In answer to the question: "How can we identify a person who is truly a God-appointed leader?" Jesus gave four more signs in addition to the sign He called the "door" in which a leader must be willing to die for the people they lead. 1) The first such sign is that the "doorkeeper of the sheepfold" (the Holy Spirit) will "open the door" for that person. Jesus didn't specifically identify the meaning of the word "doorkeeper," but if we consider the circumstances of His own ministry He was very likely referring to the Holy Spirit. When Jesus (the Good Shepherd) came, the Holy Spirit miraculously opened the "door" to welcome Him. One divine appointment and miracle after another made it possible for Him to speak to the nation. It was the Spirit's guidance and provision that placed Him in leadership, and it was the Spirit's power at work through Him when He ministered that confirmed to all honest seekers that He had been sent by God.

## **John 10:3-4**

**vs3-4** (continued): By contrast, Israel's spiritual leaders, at that time in Israel's history, had climbed into God's sheepfold "by another way." That particular high priest's family had paid money to the Romans to buy that position, and once they held it, they used their authority to mercilessly extract resources out of the people. No one trusted them to lead them closer to God; people obeyed only because they feared them. 2) The second sign of a true shepherd is that those who love God and are familiar with His voice will recognize a leader who truly speaks God's words. They can hear God's voice behind the human voice. That person's authority does not come from physical stature, force of personality or a formal title but from their faithfulness which is witnessed within the hearts of those they lead. 3) The third sign of a true shepherd is that "he calls his own sheep by name." Just as people must recognize a God-appointed leader, so that leader must also recognize those God has asked him or her to lead. He or she will know them "by name." Though they may lead many, they value them as individuals. They feel a deep sense of responsibility and love for those entrusted to them. They recognize those who belong to God.