

**The Gospel of John**  
**Week Sixteen**  
**John 9:35-10:24**

**Day One**

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." 37 Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." 38 Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." 40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" 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.

v. 35 – The word must have spread quickly through the grapevine that the man had been expelled. Jesus went looking for him, which could have been difficult in Jerusalem. Jesus pursued this man just as Jesus pursued you and me, or I would not be writing and you would not be reading what I write! Jesus found you; you didn't find Him. When He found him, Jesus asked the man if he believed in the Son of Man. This is one of the few instances we have where Jesus directly revealed himself to someone in the gospels by identifying who He was. The other was the woman in John 4.

vs. 36&37 – The man was ready to believe, but did not know about whom Jesus was talking. This reminded me of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts:

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him (Acts 8:30-31).

**Are you explaining to anyone the truths about Jesus and His word?**

v. 38 – Jesus revealed His identity and the man immediately fell down in worshipful reverence. As I have pointed out many times in these studies, if Jesus was not God and received this man's worship, He was worse than a false prophet, for He received what only belongs to God. He was and is to be worshipped, however, and this man's response was the correct one, thus Jesus did not prevent him from worshipping.

v. 39 – Jesus once again used almost everything that happened as a teachable moment, so here He alluded to the fact that He had come to open blind spiritual eyes, just as He had just opened the man's natural eyes. At the same time, those who claimed to see but did not put their faith in Jesus were rendered spiritually blind and helpless to help themselves.

v. 40 – Some Pharisees heard what Jesus said and suspected that He was referring to them when He said those who see will be blind. They asked the right question, but were not ready for the cure to their blindness.

v. 41 – Jesus indicated that the Pharisees were guilty of sin because they could see – they had access to the things of God with Him standing before them. Yet they persisted in unbelief so they were blind, and God held them accountable for their blindness and unbelief. Faith in Jesus is the key to spiritual sight. Unbelief is the equivalent of blindness and sin. **Have you put your faith in Christ?** If you have, then you can see more clearly than the educated theologian who has not done so.

## Day Two

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

vs. 1-3 – I have lost count of how many times Jesus said “I tell you the truth.” **What was His startling truth on this occasion?** He is the door and keeper of the sheep pen. Anyone who tried to enter the sheep pen by another way was considered a thief and robber – they were there for no good. He said this in the context of His self-revelation to the man born blind and as part of His response to the Pharisees who asked if they too were blind.

Jesus is the shepherd of the sheep. It seems that shepherds sometimes put their sheep into a pen with stone walls, even mixing flocks. Yet when the shepherd came and called his sheep, those who were his would come out immediately to follow him. Jesus was using an analogy and metaphor that His audience would have easily understood. **When you teach, do you do the same? You are a teacher, aren't you?**

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! (Hebrews 5:11-12).

Jesus was indicating that there were those who are His, assigned to Him by the Father, and they will know His voice and follow Him. We just saw that a man born blind was one of those the Father gave Him, but the leaders of Israel, including the Pharisees, were not among those given to Him. They did not know His voice, but God held them accountable that they did not.

**So do you know the voice of God?** You probably do even more than you realize. It is my opinion that God is always speaking to you and me. For instance, we often say,

“Something told me to take my umbrella!” No, it wasn’t something, it was Someone! When I hear people say, “I don’t hear God,” I don’t believe it. Usually when I pursue it, I find they do but they just haven’t understood the process or how He speaks.

After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too" (1 Kings 19:12-14).

**So in light of this, what is God saying to you at this point in time?**

v. 4 – Jesus is your leader. He leads you and you follow Him. That is why it’s so important to recognize that He is speaking to you, whether through His Word, His still, small voice or other people. Don’t over-spiritualize this process. It is as simple as a shepherd leading his sheep.

### Day Three

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." 6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. 7 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

v. 5 – Sheep are not the smartest animals, or so I am told, but they are smart enough to run away from a stranger and follow the one who has their best interests at heart. They know the voice of their shepherd. We are sheep and, if we belong to Christ, we recognize His voice. This isn’t a big deal; you know His voice. So you don’t have to fret about hearing another voice. You hear His voice. That should give you confidence. Remember, you should put your faith in God’s ability to speak to you, not your ability to hear from Him. Make God the focus and not your abilities.

v. 6 – With 2,000 years between what Jesus said and today, it seems clear what He meant. It was not, however, clear to those who heard Him then. They did not have the benefit of understanding Jesus’ identity and the power of the Spirit to understand what He was saying to them. I have to ask myself then, **“What am I not hearing or understanding that Jesus is saying to me because of the context in which I am listening?”**

v. 7 – Jesus repeated what He said so they had a chance to understand. Every opportunity with the people was a teachable moment for Jesus. He did not complain or back off telling the truth. **What are you doing to be an effective teacher?** You don’t just have to speak to be a teacher; you can write, record, broadcast or conduct seminars, classes or

workshops. Jesus was an effective teacher because He was a creative teacher. **How creative is your teaching style?**

Jesus is the gate of the sheep. No under-shepherd can access the sheep without His permission. No other gatekeeper can take care of His sheep. He is the only shepherd whom His sheep will follow. When I speak to God's people, they need to hear God in what I say or they don't have to listen. When I preach, I should speak the words that Jesus would say if He were standing before the people. He is the Master Shepherd. He is the Gatekeeper and Door for and to the sheep.

v. 8 – I would imagine that there had been false prophets and messiahs before Jesus. I have often wondered, however, if this isn't a veiled reference to Buddha and other false teachers who predated Jesus' appearance. That, however, is pure conjecture on my part, although the application would be appropriate. Anyone who speaks to God's people like they are from God but are not are thieves and robbers. The true sheep that belong to Jesus will not listen to them. You don't have to worry about being led astray if you put your trust in Jesus and are truly His. You will know the difference between His voice and the stranger's and follow His. I never worry about being led astray. I follow Him and put my trust in His saving power.

#### Day Four

9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 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. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 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.

v. 9 – Jesus kept repeating this “figure of speech” that He is the gate for the sheep. Jesus will watch over the sheep's care and provision. This makes me think of Psalm 23, which we have already quoted in this study of John, but it's worth looking at again:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Psalm 23:1-6).

v. 10 – Jesus came to give life. **Is this only eternal life or is it a quality of life now that is the fullest it can be?** I remember someone who once defined eternal life as a quality of life so good, nothing can ever end it. I like that definition. Jesus did not come to impart halfway or renewed life. He came to give life abundantly. **Are you living an abundant life?**

v. 11 – Jesus made a statement about what He was going to do – lay down His life for His sheep. That is what any good shepherd must and will do for his flock. Jesus was ready to do the same, but the people would not have understood that statement either. Jesus was not only a shepherd but a good one, which is what the Lord promised in His Word.

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 myself 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. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice (Ezekiel 34:10-16).

v. 12 – A hired shepherd can never be paid enough money to lay down his life. Only the true shepherd will do that. Jesus willingly laid down His life for the sheep the Father had given Him. This laying down of His life was more than just dying on the cross, as Paul wrote in Philippians:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5-8)

Jesus emptied Himself, took up His cross and followed His Father's will. He commands that we do the same. **Have you picked up your cross and followed Him?**

### Day Five

13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 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.

v. 13 – This principle applies for his Jesus’ under-shepherds as well. We must serve God’s people because we care, not because we have are hired to do so.

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:2-3).

v. 14 – Jesus is the good shepherd in that He has a living relationship with each one of His sheep. They know Him and He knows them, which is best symbolized for the Jews then as a shepherd with His sheep. This must have been a rich, vibrant image that communicated the truth of what Jesus wanted to say. The problem was that the people did not understand because they had a completely different idea of what their Messiah would be. They were not looking for a shepherd, therefore they did not see the One who was standing and talking to them. They were looking for a military leader, so they heard Jesus’ words but could not comprehend His truth.

I have written about that dynamic many times in these studies. What we think limits what we see. If you are looking for a round peg, because all pegs are round, you won’t see a square peg right in front of your eyes. Why? It is because you are not looking for or expecting what is right before you.

So what are you not seeing right now because you are conditioned not to see it? It’s not a matter of intelligence, so don’t think you are stupid. You aren’t. You learned how not to see; you can learn how to see.

v. 15 – Jesus compared His relationship with His sheep to that of the one He has with the Father. That is quite a thought! Just as the Father and Son know One another, so the Son and His sheep know one another. This is the capacity that Jesus has to save and preserve you, me and all those who call on His name. As I have pointed out in these studies again and again, only God Himself could make a promise like Jesus made here, and have the power and authority to back it up.

There is nothing that can separate His people from Jesus! If they are separated, they never were His sheep to begin with. He is able to preserve those who are His to the end.  
**Do you have confidence in Him for that truth?**

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[m] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

v. 16 – **Is this a reference to Jesus’ ultimate mission through His disciples to the Gentiles?** I believe it is. Of course, this was another statement that the Jews listening that day would never have understood. They didn’t understand when it unfolded, even those who were believing Jews!

## Day Six

17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. 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." 19 At these words the Jews were again divided. 20 Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?"

v. 17 – The Father loved Jesus with a perfect love because Jesus carried out His perfect will, perfectly. Jesus was about to lay His life down in perfect surrender and confident faith that He would receive it back. He would indeed pick it up again. The same is true for you and me. If you lay it down, you will get it back – your life, that is. If you don't lay it down, then you will lose it anyway and forfeit your right and privilege of being disciples.

**Are you laying your life down in any situation right now? How do you know? Are you resisting that process at all? How do you know?**

v. 18 – Jesus was not being forced to lay down His life. What He had done and was about to do were voluntary acts. The Father commanded Him but Jesus chose it this way. This is an indication of the perfect agreement in the Trinity. The three are individual beings but One! They act and move in harmony, but even when I write that, my words fail to describe the state of their relationship. I can see some of it, but I cannot understand most of it.

There is a covenant nature in the Godhead, for there is one will among many. And there is a covenant between Jesus and His followers, so there is the similarity that we mentioned earlier. Our relationship with Him is like the relationship between the Father and Son, yet much less perfect. **Are you confused?** Don't be! Just believe and accept it in faith!

v. 19 – Jesus once again succeeded at dividing the Jews with what He said, something He still does today. His purpose is not to divide, yet those who believe what He says will be with Him on one side and those who don't will be against Him on the other. His words divide only because some refuse to believe and follow.

v. 20 – Some concluded that Jesus was a madman and demon-possessed. This was how radical Jesus' words sounded to some of those who were listening! Their spirituality was so subnormal that when Jesus talked about what was normal, they assumed He was abnormal! They were so far from God that when someone spoke for God, they thought Him insane or worse!

Since they concluded that Jesus was mad, many did not listen to Him and the same is true today. They do so, however, at their own peril, for this "madman" is the source of eternal life. This makes me think of what Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? (1 Corinthians 1:18-20).

I would expect that God's view and perspective is going to sound "crazy" to my degenerate, fallen mind from time to time. **So where is God saying something to you that you dismiss as crazy?** Jesus said if you die, you will live. If you give, you will have. If you have, you will die. Perhaps you need to reexamine at that which you have dismissed. You could very well be missing the words of God!

### Day Seven

21 But others said, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" 22 Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. 24 The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

v. 21 – Yet for all those who thought Jesus a madman, there were others then and some today who say that He is a holy man of God, even God Himself! They knew then and know today that what Jesus said and did cannot be the result of anyone less than a prophet and the Son of God! **How could anyone open blind eyes and not be from God, they reasoned?**

v. 22 – Jesus was at the Temple during what we know to be Hanukkah, which was a celebration also called the Feast of Lights. Here is what this festival was all about according to Mary Fairchild, an author on the about.com website:

Prior to the year 165 BC, the Jewish people who dwelled in Judea were living under the rule of the Greek kings of Damascus. During this time Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greco-Syrian king, took control of the Temple in Jerusalem and forced the Jewish people to abandon their worship of God, their holy customs and reading of the Torah, and he made them bow down to the Greek gods. According to the records, this King Antiochus IV defiled the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar and spilling its blood on the holy scrolls of Scripture. As a result of the severe persecution and pagan oppression, a group of four Jewish brothers, led by Judah Maccabee, decided to raise up an army of religious freedom fighters. These men of fierce faith and loyalty to God became known as the Maccabees. The small band of warriors fought for three years with "strength from heaven" until achieving a miraculous victory and deliverance from the Greco-Syrian control. After regaining the Temple, it was cleansed by the Maccabees, cleared of all Greek idolatry, and readied for rededicated. The

rededication of the Temple to the Lord took place in the year 165 BC, on the 25th day of the Hebrew month called Kislev.

So Hanukkah received its name, the Feast of Dedication, because it celebrates the Maccabees' victory over Greek oppression and the rededication of the temple. But Hanukkah is also known as the Festival of Lights, and this is because immediately following the miraculous deliverance, God provided another miracle of provision. In the Temple, the eternal flame of God was to be lit at all time as a symbol of God's presence. But according to tradition, when the Temple was rededicated, there was only enough oil left in the temple to burn the flame for one day. The rest of the oil had been defiled by the Greeks during their invasion, and it would take a week for new oil to be processed and purified. But at the rededication, the Maccabees went ahead and lit the eternal flame with the remaining supply of oil, and God's Holy presence caused it to burn miraculously for eight days, until the new sacred oil was ready. This is why the feast is also called the Festival of Lights, and why the Hanukkah Menorah is lit for eight consecutive nights of celebration. Jews also commemorate this miracle of oil provision by making oil-rich foods, such as Latkas, an important part of Hanukkah celebrations.

vs. 23&24 – Jesus was in the Temple on the occasion when the Temple miracle was remembered. It is significant that the new light of the Temple, Jesus, was there to commemorate the old lighting. The Jews confronted Jesus and demanded to know how long He was going to keep them guessing. Was He or was He not the Christ? Up to this point, Jesus had spoken to them in parables and indirect references to who He was and this had confused, infuriated and kept them off balance.

Of course, when Jesus did finally tell them plainly that He was the One, they used this as testimony that He was guilty of death. So Jesus was in no hurry to give them what they demanded. We know, however, that He already had given them what they were asking. Their spiritually dead condition just did not allow them to hear His words for what they were. As Jesus had said in Matthew,

You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." (Matthew 15:7-9).

His indirect talk would only continue for a little longer and, when it ended, it would only be because Jesus' time had come – time to depart according to the will of the Father, not according to the rage of the Jews.