

I Am the Door

(John 10:1-10)

Expository Lessons from the Gospel of John

I. Background

- a. Jesus had just healed a man who had been born blind.
- b. Performing this miracle antagonized some of the Pharisees.
 - i. The Pharisees were upset that Jesus performed miracles like this on the Sabbath, since the Law of Moses said that Jews were not supposed to “work” on the Sabbath.
 - ii. The young man who had been cured of blindness courageously stood up for Jesus and what He had done, getting cast out of the synagogue by the Pharisees as a result.
- c. Jesus hears about this, finds the young man, and reveals to him that He is the Son of God.
- d. Jesus uses this as an opportunity to teach about spiritual blindness; the Pharisees correctly understand that this is addressed against them, and are offended, but Jesus does not back down and accuses them of being in sin.
- e. This discussion with hostile Pharisees and the young man who had just been cured of blindness continues into what we are about to read, in John chapter 10. It is important to understand the context of what we will be reading in this lesson.
 - i. Note that our modern chapter divisions were not added to the Bible until the early 1200’s. Verse divisions were added later, mid 1500’s. For reference, the King James version was completed 1611.
 - ii. Prior to that time (going back to at least the mid-300’s) the copyists provided “headings” to organize sections of the gospels, each with a short title. Gospel of John was divided into 18 “headings”, each with a short title reflecting a prominent person or episode in that section. All of the text in our modern **chapters 9 and 10 of John** were in one section, entitled, “concerning the blind man”.
 - iii. Therefore, for most of Christian history, there was no artificial break in the story between the end of our **John chapter 9** and the start of **John 10**.

iv. For more information on ancient “headings” in the gospels, see:

1. <http://www.thetextofthegospels.com/2016/04/kephalaia-ancient-chapters-of-gospels.html>
2. http://www.jgrchj.net/volume6/JGRChJ6-7_Goswell.pdf

II. The Parable of the Sheepfold (Read **John 10:1-6**)

- a. Jesus uses an illustration that would have been more familiar to his listeners than it is to us, regarding sheep and shepherds.
- b. But what is a “sheepfold”?
 - i. Read **Numbers 32:16, 32:24 and 32:34-36**
 1. A sheepfold is a walled-off area for protecting sheep (at night) from robbers or predators.
 2. At the end of the day, the shepherd would lead the sheep into the fold, for the night. Then in the morning he would call them and lead them out of the fold, to a green pasture.
 - ii. In James M. Freeman’s *Manners and Customs of the Bible* (p. 428), the author wrote that in Syria at the time he was writing (book was published in 1874), shepherds would bring their flocks into a courtyard surrounded by a low stone wall at night, as a shelter from wild beasts. He said that typically the top of the wall would be protected by a layer of thorns. (Like an early version of barbed wire?) The entrance would be a carefully guarded doorway.
 - iii. In a large park near here, Middlesex Fells, there is a well-known 10-acre grassy area popular for picnics and for walking dogs, called “sheepfold”. (Perhaps there was a pen for sheep there once, long ago.)
- c. The elements in this illustration
 - i. The sheepfold
 - ii. The door, gate or entrance way to the sheepfold
 - iii. The doorkeeper
 1. He only opens the door or gate when he sees the shepherd. He will not open it for anyone else.
 - iv. The shepherd
 1. The doorkeeper recognizes him and opens the door for him.

2. He (the Shepherd) knows his sheep individually and calls each one by name.
3. He goes before the sheep; he leads them.
- v. The strangers (who are not the true shepherd)
- vi. The sheep
 1. They know the shepherd; they recognize his voice and follow him.
 2. They will not heed the voice of a stranger; in fact, they flee from a stranger, whose voice they do not recognize.
- d. Why did Jesus choose to tell this story at this particular time?
 - i. Who is present when Jesus tells the story of the sheepfold:
 1. The former blind man who was healed by Jesus.
 - a. He withstood opposition from the Jewish leaders.
 - b. He was cast out of the synagogue.
 - c. He recognized Jesus as being the Son of God.
 - d. He believed in Jesus, and even worshiped Him.
 2. The Pharisees, who Jesus calls spiritually blind.
 - ii. This parable is told at this time for a reason. The young man is one of the sheep of the shepherd.
 1. He heard the shepherd's voice, recognized it and followed Him.
 2. As opposed to the Pharisees, who are not sheep of the shepherd. (They may be sheep that belong to another.)

III. Jesus is the Door (Read John 10:7-10)

- a. Summary of the points here:
 - i. Jesus says, I am the door of the sheep.
 1. He is specific in saying "the" door. There is only one.
 2. He explains that He is the "door" that provides entry or access to salvation. "If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved." (**John 10:9**)

- ii. Jesus says that all who came before him were “thieves and robbers”. However, “the sheep did not hear them.” (**John 10:8**)
 - iii. He says that He came that the sheep “may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (**John 10:10**)
- b. **Question:** Is there any particular significance to the statement about Jesus being “the door”?
 - i. Meaning of the word rendered “door” here: Greek word as used throughout the New Testament and the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament quoted by Jesus and the apostles, and used by the early church), encompassed:
 - 1. A door or gate;
 - 2. An opening or entrance into a tent-type structure; or
 - 3. An entranceway into some type of structure.
 - ii. **Question:** Can you think of any specific *prophecies* in the Old Testament about a “door”? For example, can we find anything like that in Isaiah or from David or any of the other prophets? Did anyone speak of a specific door that would come in the future, *which someone would have to enter through* in order to be saved?
 - 1. **My Answer:** I can’t think of prophecies like that.
 - iii. **Another Question:** (This is similar to the one above, but slightly different.) Can you think of any special doors in the Old Testament through which someone had to enter in order to be saved from death? Was there any door that separated those bound for destruction, from those who would be saved? **Answer:** I can think of a few.
 - 1. First place where *a door* is discussed in the Bible is in the story of Noah’s ark. (Read **Genesis 6:14-22, 7:12-16** and **7:20-23**). In this story, the door has an important role.
 - a. There was only one door on the ark. All had to pass through it to be saved. Those who did not enter through that door were destroyed.
 - i. One of the most important things I am taught as an engineer who designs large structures in which people work: always provide *at least two* means of egress/exit (for safety). However, Noah’s ark only had “the door”.

- b. A few of all kinds (various animals) were saved, along with (only) eight people.
 - c. The flood of destruction came suddenly, catching the world by surprise. (**Luke 17:26-27**)
2. The Passover account (Read **Exodus 12:21-23**)
- a. The door of each home was to be marked with the blood of the Passover lamb.
 - b. Those who remained inside the homes with the blood-stained doorway until morning were saved from death.
 - c. All other families (not inside homes with blood-stained doors) suffered the death of their firstborn that night.
3. The destruction of Sodom (Read **Genesis 19:1-11**)
- a. The righteous few are on one side of the door, with the wicked crowd on the other side.
 - b. The door of separation is suddenly shut and cannot be opened.
 - c. The wicked who are left outside the door all are *struck with blindness*, and as a result are unable to find the door. Ultimately, those left outside the door are all destroyed in judgment of God, by fire.
4. There are four stories early in the Bible that foreshadow Final Judgment (a righteous few saved, comes suddenly catching the unrighteous by surprise, death comes to all the others). They are: the Flood, Sodom & Gomorrah, the Passover and the Destruction of Jericho. Since we have prominent doors in the first three, I decided to check the fourth story as well (I only remembered a prominent *window* in the story of Rahab.) I was surprised to find a significant mention of a *door* in that story as well; this was a detail I had missed! (Read **Joshua 2:14-21** for the promised deliverance, fulfilled in **Joshua 6:20-24**.)
- a. Those in the room marked by the scarlet cord. (Several early Christians saw that red cord of protection as foreshadowing the blood of Christ; similar to the blood on the doorways in the Passover story.)

- b. Rahab and her family are told to remain in the room when the day of judgment comes to Jericho, and *Joshua* (in Septuagint Greek = *Jesus*) returns.
- 5. These Old Testament stories regarding a separating door, especially the one from Noah, remind me of the story Jesus told in **Luke 13**, after someone asked Him if only a few would be saved. (Read **Luke 13:22-30**)
 - a. As in Noah's ark story, only a few will be saved.
 - b. The door will not remain open forever. After the Master shuts it, it will be too late.
 - c. Many will be thrust out of the kingdom of God; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- 6. Note that in each of these four stories foreshadowing the final judgment there is a door that plays an important role. The righteous few on one side of that door are saved; while death comes to the many wicked ones who are outside that door.
 - a. Four very different stories, in four different locations (world of Noah, Sodom, Egypt and Jericho).
 - b. All occurred well over 1,000 years before Jesus announced that He is "the door".
 - c. **Question:** Are these parallels *just a coincidence*, or were these details planned in advance and woven into the stories deliberately by the Holy Spirit to convey something important that would be fulfilled by Jesus? What do *you* think?
- c. **Questions:** Is there *only one* door? Is Jesus the only way?
 - i. Peter said to the Jewish rulers in Jerusalem: "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' (**Psalm 118:22**) Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (**Acts 4:11-12**, NKJV)
 - 1. Clearly the apostles who had been with Jesus understood that He was the only way to God, and they said so directly to the Jewish rulers who opposed them, after the resurrection.

- ii. God also revealed this truth beforehand, in the Old Testament, foreshadowed by accounts of a door separating those to be saved from those who would be destroyed.
- iii. Lessons for us from those accounts include:
 - 1. There was only *one door* on the ark, through which all had to pass through in order to be saved from destruction.
 - 2. It is only through the door stained by the blood of the Passover Lamb that the people in Egypt could be spared from death.
 - 3. Only the few who make it through that door will be spared destruction.
 - 4. The door of opportunity will not remain open forever. One day it will be closed, and it will be too late to enter. If you are outside that door now, do not delay!
 - 5. Once we are on the right side of that protective door, we need to remain there with the righteous, until the judgment day comes.
 - 6. Jesus said it clearly in **John 10**; there is only one door through which all must pass to be saved, and *He is that door*!
- d. Jesus said that all who came before Him were thieves and robbers. What do you think He mean by that statement?
 - i. **Question:** Could “all who came before Me” in this context refer to *Moses and the prophets*, who came before Jesus?
 - 1. **Answer:** No. Recall that Jesus said of them, “the sheep did not hear them”. (**John 10:8**) The sheep who follow Jesus certainly *did heed* Moses and the prophets. Consider the following statements:
 - a. “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.” (**John 5:46**, NKJV)
 - b. “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’” (**John 1:45**, NKJV)
 - c. As a prisoner in Rome, Paul spoke to the Jews “...and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and

the Prophets, from morning till evening.” (**Acts 28:23**, NKJV)

- d. Clearly, those who were the sheep of the Good Shepherd (Jesus) *did hear and pay attention to* the words of Moses and the prophets. Therefore, this statement by Jesus could not have been referring to them.
- ii. Then who was Jesus referring to when he said, “all who came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them”.
 1. In **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**, Moses said that in the future the Lord would raise up a prophet like himself (like Moses), and they must “hear” him (same word “hear” that is used twice in the LXX, is also used in **John 10:8**).
 2. Perhaps this reference to “thieves and robbers” referred to others who had come before or during the time of Jesus, who claimed to be the Messiah; or to other leaders who rose up among the Jews.
 - a. When the apostles were brought before the Jewish council in Jerusalem, this subject of other leaders who had risen up making similar claims was raised by Gamaliel. (Read **Acts 5:30-39**)
 - i. Peter and the apostles claimed that Jesus, whom the Jewish leaders had killed, was “Prince and Savior”, exalted to God’s right hand.
 - ii. Gamaliel noted that other Jews had risen up, also claiming to be someone special, yet their efforts came to nothing.
 1. Theudas, and
 2. Judas of Galilee.
 - b. So perhaps Jesus was speaking of others (similar to these two men) who had risen up among the Jews, making great claims.
 3. Some early Christian writers applied this statement by Jesus that “all who came before Him were thieves and robbers” to the pagan philosophers, who had “stolen” small portions of the truth later revealed by Christ, the Wisdom of God. An example from Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215 AD), a teacher in the church in Alexandria, Egypt, follows.

- a. "But, say they, it is written, 'All who were before the Lord's coming are thieves and robbers.' All, then, who are in the Word. ...But the prophets, being sent and inspired by the Lord, were not thieves, but servants. The Scripture accordingly says, 'Wisdom sent her servants, inviting with loud proclamation to a goblet of wine.' (**Proverbs 9:3-5**)
- b. "But philosophy, it is said, was not sent by the Lord, but came stolen, or given by a thief. It was then some power or angel that had learned something of the truth, but did not abide not in it, that inspired and taught these things, not without the Lord's knowledge, who knew before the constitution of each essence the issues of futurity, but without His prohibition.
- c. "For the theft which reached men then, had some advantage; not that he who perpetrated the theft had utility in his eye, but Providence directed the issue of the audacious deed to utility.
- d. "...The devil is called 'thief and robber'; having mixed false prophets with the prophets, as tares with the wheat. 'All, then, that came before the Lord, were thieves and robbers'; not absolutely all men, but all the false prophets, and all who were not properly sent by Him. For the false prophets possessed the prophetic name dishonestly, being prophets, but prophets of the liar."
 - i. (Source: Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies*, in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 2, pp. 318-319)

IV. A Few Comments on "the Abundant Life" Promised by Jesus

- a. Let us consider a few different translations of **John 10:10** regarding this "abundant life" promised by Jesus.
 - i. "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (**John 10:10**, NKJV)
 - ii. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (**John 10:10**, ESV)
 - iii. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." (**John 10:10**, NIV)

- b. How this is portrayed by peddlers of the *modern prosperity gospel* (which is corrupt to the core). Well-known proponents include popular preachers and authors such as Kenneth Copeland, TD Jakes, Benny Hinn and Joel Osteen. This has spread from the US to all over the world and is especially popular in poorer communities in the US, as well as in poorer parts of the world, especially in Africa and South America.
 - i. The “logic” that they try to use is roughly as follows:
 - 1. Jesus came to free you from all of Satan’s snares: sin, poverty, sickness.
 - 2. He wants you to have the abundant life, life to the full, right here and now in this world.
 - ii. The prosperity gospel peddlers twist the Scriptures to tell you there are a few principles you will need to master if you want to *enjoy these blessings right now*, “as God intended”. (Warning: they preach a totally corrupt, false gospel, with the following Scriptures all taken out of context). Their arguments are based on the false teachings, along with popularly-misconstrued passages of Scripture, as follows:
 - 1. **False teaching No. 1:** *God wants to bless His children with prosperity and good health*. He has promised us prosperity; we just need to *claim* that promise.
 - a. “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” (**Jeremiah 29:11**, NIV)
 - i. When preaching this passage, they take out of context, including the fact that when Jeremiah said this, Israel was about to enter forty years of suffering and bondage.
 - b. “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” (**Philippians 4:19**, NIV)
 - i. Does this really mean God will give us everything we “need”/want?
 - c. “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (**Psalms 37:4**, NKJV)
 - i. Does this really mean God will give us everything we want/desire?

2. **False Teaching No. 2:** In order to obtain these blessings (health and prosperity) we need to become Christians, then *just ask, believe, and we will receive* the blessings of material prosperity and health.
 - a. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (**Matthew 7:11**, NKJV)
 - b. "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." (**Matthew 21:22**, NKJV)
 - c. As we will show shortly, these Scriptures are twisted to support a proposition that goes completely against what Jesus taught.
3. **False Teaching No. 3:** We can access these material blessings through "the principle of sowing and reaping"; if we sow money by faith (giving it to a prosperity gospel church leader's ministry), God will multiply that back to the giver, many-fold.
 - a. "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." (**2 Corinthians 9:6**, NKJV)
 - b. "'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.'" (**Malachi 3:10**, NKJV)
 - i. Tithing was a requirement to give 10% of the fruit of one's land to the Lord, under the Law of Moses. (**Deuteronomy 14:22-24**)
 - ii. Note that while Malachi was calling the Jews to follow the Law of Moses, we Christians are no longer under that Law, which included the requirement to tithe. (**Colossians 2:13-17**)
 - c. Why is this modern prosperity gospel such a problem today?
 - i. It tells people what their itching ears want to hear: that they can love both God and money. They can live materialistic lives and be Christians. In fact, God will fulfill all their materialistic desires!

1. Paul told us to beware false teaching that would sweep through the church in the future. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables." (**2 Timothy 4:3-4**, NKJV)
2. Many people want to believe they can be rich AND serve God. They can be a Christian AND be wealthy and comfortable. But consider the following:
 - a. Jesus told us, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." (**Matthew 6:24**, ESV)
 - b. "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (**1 Timothy 6:9-10**, NKJV)
 - c. "Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." (**Mark 4:18-19**, NKJV)
 - d. "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (**Luke 9:23**, NKJV)
 - e. Jesus told us how to pray, and it wasn't to ask for wealth. He said we should ask the Father, "Give us this day our daily bread." (**Matthew 6:11**, NKJV)
 - f. Paul told the Corinthians, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable." (**1 Corinthians 15:19**, NKJV)
 - g. Most of the apostles, like Paul, faced torture, hardship and death. Did they not understand the gospel?
 - h. And what about the Christians in that half of the world where they face persecution (persecution, loss of jobs,

jail, poverty, etc.) just for being Christians. Do they not understand the gospel?

- i. Peter and Paul told slaves that they had to submit, to even harsh masters. (**1 Peter 2:18**, **Titus 2:9**) How does the modern “prosperity gospel” wear in *that* setting?
 - ii. Paul wrote, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” (**2 Timothy 3:12**, NKJV)
- ii. The modern prosperity gospel is rotten to the core. We must be prepared to demolish it by using Scriptures that the proponents of this false gospel avoid, and by explaining how they are taking passages of Scripture out of context.
- iii. This false gospel is being used by Satan to:
 1. Allow corrupt preachers to amass great wealth at the expense of the poor and gullible. In places like Africa, this is especially devastating.
 2. Fool people into thinking they can be Christians without suffering. When trials come, these “Christians” lose their faith in God, thinking something strange has happened. Peter reminds us:
 - a. “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you...” (**1 Peter 4:12**, NKJV)
 3. Many reject the entire Christian faith when they see hypocrisy of these Christian leaders, their self-indulgent, lavish lifestyles.
 4. Many people never hear the true gospel because they are fooled into thinking this counterfeit is the real thing.
- d. When Jesus tells us in **John 10:10** that He came to give us more abundant life, or life to the full, what did He mean by that?
 - i. In the gospel of John Jesus constantly uses words that have two meanings (both a literal meaning and a figurative one) to convey truth in the form of a sort of riddle. Many times, people took Him literally when He means it to be taken figuratively or in some other sense, thereby missing the point of what Jesus was saying. Jesus finally abandons speaking in figurative language, and speaks directly, in **John 17:25-30**.

- ii. There are many examples in the gospel of John where Jesus confuses his listeners by using terms that can be understood in two ways, both in physical and spiritual senses:
1. The physical temple Herod built in Jerusalem, versus the temple of Jesus' body (**John 2:19-21**)
 2. Physical rebirth versus spiritual rebirth in being "born again" (**John 3:1-5**)
 3. Physical light versus spiritual light; and its opposite regarding darkness (**John 3:19-21; John 8:12**)
 4. Physical water to drink versus spiritual water in discussion with Samaritan woman at the well (**John 4:7-14; John 7:38-39**)
 5. Physical food to eat versus spiritual food of doing the Father's will (**John 4:31-34**)
 6. Sowing and harvest physical crops versus sowing and harvest for a spiritual crop of souls (**John 4:35-38**)
 7. Physical oil lamp that burns and shines, versus spiritual "shining lamp" of John the Baptist (**John 5:35**)
 8. Physical food/bread Jesus gave that perishes, versus spiritual food that Jesus gives that endures to everlasting life (**John 6:27**)
 9. Physical "slavery" versus spiritual slavery to sin; and its opposite, physical freedom versus freedom from sin (**John 8:32-36**)
 10. Regular death versus the spiritual second death in the lake of fire, on the Day of Judgment (**John 8:52**)
 11. Normal night versus the spiritual night to come (**John 9:4**)
 12. Physical blindness versus spiritual blindness; and its opposite, seeing physically versus seeing spiritually (**John 9:39-41**)
 13. Physical sheep, shepherd, door, flock, sheepfold, wolves and robbers versus spiritual ones (**John 10:1-16**)
 14. Normal physical "sleep" versus death; and its opposite, waking someone from sleep versus raising them from death (**John 11:11-14**)

15. Going on a physical journey where his disciples know “the way”, to prepare a place in a physical house, versus going on a spiritual journey after dying and preparing a spiritual place **(John 13:36-14:6)**
- iii. With all of this in view, is it possible that when Jesus said he came to give “abundant life” or “life to the full” that he might have been referring to something other than this physical life?
1. “Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city.” **(Matthew 23:34, NKJV)**
 2. “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” **(Matthew 24:9–13, NKJV)**
 3. Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians of his life. “Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?” **(2 Corinthians 11:23–29, NKJV)**
 4. **Question:** Does the “abundant life” Jesus came to give sound like a guarantee of a comfortable, materially prosperous, healthy life here, until its time for us to die? Is that what Jesus taught, and what Paul enjoyed?
 - a. **Answer:** Obviously, NO!

5. The abundant life that Paul and the apostles looked forward to is in the next life.
 - a. “And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.” (**1 John 2:25**, NKJV)
 - b. “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (**Romans 8:18**, NKJV)
 - c. “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’” (**1 Corinthians 2:9**, NKJV)
 - d. “But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:” (**Hebrews 10:32–36**, NKJV)
- iv. The “abundant life” promised by Jesus also encompass the fact that we can be freed from the control of sin in this life. Jesus offers spiritual freedom, not just from the consequences of sin, but also *from being controlled and enslaved by sin*.
 1. “Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’” (**John 8:34–36**, NKJV)
- e. The excesses of the modern prosperity gospel may be easy to see (showy lifestyle of the preachers, blatant materialism, greed, big houses and private jets, etc.) However, there is also a “light” or “softer” version that is much even more pervasive in the US. While the “soft prosperity gospel” may not focus on obtaining great wealth, it still insists that Jesus came to give us “the abundant life” here and now.

- i. This “soft prosperity gospel” has made massive inroads into mainstream churches of all types. It is everywhere. Many outreach-oriented churches, desiring to draw people from the world around them, are offering a gospel package that offers Americans “what their itching ears want to hear”: a more enjoyable life (comfort) in this world.
 - 1. Like Esau, these churches have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. (**Genesis 25:29-34, Hebrews 12:16**)
- ii. How you view *the abundant life* that Jesus promises can have a huge impact on *how you live the Christian life*, and *where you spend eternity*.
- iii. We easily recognize the foolishness and corruption of the full-blown “health and wealth”, “name it and claim it” modern prosperity gospel preachers. We can laugh at rich preachers who con their gullible flock to give more money, with the promise that they, too can become rich. However, many Christians who reject the excesses of that movement nonetheless have bought into its underlying premise: that Jesus came to give us not only salvation, but “an abundant life” here as well. That might include some or all of the following:
 - 1. A loving husband or wife; children
 - 2. Good education and a good job
 - 3. Good health for all in the family
 - 4. A nice group of Christian friends at church; popularity
 - 5. A nice home and cars, money in the bank, retirement, great vacations, entertainment, etc.: “the American dream” lifestyle
- iv. Most churches in the US today, in a desire to “make the gospel attractive” use hooks like these (along with promises of “the abundant life” taken out of context) to market the Christian faith to unbelievers. This is like the proverbial used car salesman, they “sell” the Christian faith as promising a great life in the here and now. However, Jesus promised none of that; and we should not either!

V. Conclusions

- a. Understand that the **John 10** discussion about the good shepherd, the door and the sheepfold *was addressed to the blind man and his adversaries*; it should be understood in that context. Let us be like the blind man who was cured by Jesus.

- i. He was one of the sheep who heard the voice of its Shepherd, recognized the Son of God and followed Him.
- b. Jesus said there is one door leading to salvation, and He is the door. There is no other way to be saved.
- c. Jesus promised “abundant life”. However, let us look to the example of the lives of those closest to Jesus to understand *what He meant* by that: eternal life. Let us reject the modern prosperity gospel root and branch, in all its insidious forms, and demolish it with reason and the Scriptures at every opportunity.