



John 10:1-5

(1) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (2) But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (4) And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. (5) And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

King James Version

Although [Jesus Christ](#) is the Good Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd, He is not the church's *only* shepherd. From the days of ancient Israel up through the New Covenant church era, He has also appointed under-shepherds to watch over His physical or spiritual flock—and this will continue into the Millennium ([Numbers 27:15-17](#); [II Samuel 5:2](#); [7:7](#); [I Chronicles 11:2](#); [17:6](#); [Psalm 78:70-72](#); [Isaiah 44:28](#); [Ezekiel 34:23](#); [37:24](#); [John 21:15-17](#); [Acts 20:28](#); [I Peter 5:2-4](#)). The Chief Shepherd provides the pattern for His under-shepherds, and thus He gifts them to carry out their responsibilities in a way that reflects His own shepherding. Notice some of the attributes of a godly shepherd:

- » He cares for his sheep to the point of giving his own life for them ([II Samuel 24:17](#); [John 10:11](#), 13).
- » He knows his sheep ([John 10:14](#)).
- » He is known by his sheep ([John 10:14](#)).
- » He feeds his flock ([Isaiah 40:11](#); [Ezekiel 34:23](#); [John 21:15](#), 17).

- » He pays special attention to the young ([Isaiah 40:11](#); [John 21:15](#)).
- » He gathers his flock when they become scattered ([Jeremiah 31:10](#); [Ezekiel 34:12](#)).
- » He oversees the flock willingly rather than by compulsion ([I Peter 5:2](#)).
- » He is not greedy for money, but eager to serve ([I Peter 5:2](#)).
- » He serves by example rather than force ([Ezekiel 34:4](#); [I Peter 5:3](#); see [Matthew 25:20-28](#)).
- » He seeks out the lost sheep ([Deuteronomy 22:1](#); [Ezekiel 34:16](#); [Psalm 119:176](#); [Matthew 10:6](#); [18:10-14](#); [Luke 15:1-7](#)).
- » He protects the sheep ([I Samuel 17:34-36](#)).

On the other hand, false shepherds also exist, those whom [God](#) has not appointed. Jesus describes a person who tries to access the sheep without going through Him as "a thief and a robber" ([John 10:1](#), 8). The thief comes "to steal, to kill, and to destroy" ([John 10:10](#)), though these actions may not be apparent on the surface. He also describes "hirelings," whose care is not for the sheep but for their own safety and security ([John 10:12-13](#)). Rather than laying down their lives for them, such hirelings abandon the sheep at the very time they need help the most.

God also calls attention to His appointed shepherds who have become derelict in their duties. In [Jeremiah 23:1](#), the One who became Jesus Christ pronounces a "woe" on "shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture," who have "scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them" (verse 2). He says in [Jeremiah 50:6](#), "My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray . . ." [Jeremiah 10:21](#) speaks of shepherds who "have become dull-hearted, and have not sought the LORD," and the result is that "they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered."

Likewise, Ezekiel mentions shepherds who feed themselves rather than the flock ([Ezekiel 34:2-3](#)), who rule with "cruelty and force" rather than strengthening, healing, binding what is broken, bringing back what was driven away, and seeking what was lost (verse 4). Though the most immediate application in these verses is to the physical leaders of the [nations of Israel](#), it also applies in antitype to the shepherds of God's spiritual flock.

Even though under-shepherds do not always perfectly emulate the Good Shepherd, He has nevertheless established their roles and offices, and He has specifically gifted them to serve in this way. This is the order that Jesus Christ has ordained. Yet, our carnal tendency may be to either abuse or rebel against this order—either to become too dependent on an under-shepherd or to reject human shepherds altogether, believing that we are better off on our own, finding our own food, and determining our own paths.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:
[**The Shepherd's Guidance \(Part Two\)**](#)

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