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The Kingdom Series
the Sheepfold

by haRold Smith
a citizen of the Commonwealth (Ephesians 2:19)

*"Now therefore, if you will indeed **obey My voice and keep My covenant** you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...**"*
Exodus 19:5-6

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold **by the door** but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him **the gatekeeper opens**. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, **for they know his voice**. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." This parable Yeshua used with them, but they did not understand what He was saying to them. So Yeshua again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **I am the door of the sheep**. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.*



...a Sheepfold

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have Life and have it abundantly. **I am the Good Shepherd**. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, whose sheep are not his own, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd. **I know my own and my own know Me**, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. I lay down My life for the sheep and I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My Voice. So there will be **one flock, one shepherd**." John 10:1-16*

The interwoven fabric of culture found throughout the extraordinary Land of Israel is illuminated in Yeshua's use of this parable from John 10. Even today, particularly in the territories, you will occasionally see clusters of sheep huddled together standing shoulder to shoulder, heads interlocked, completely oblivious to the sounds swirling around them. When they are spotted, most often they are seen while blocking a part of the roadway, forcing traffic to weave around them; or under the shade of the outstretched branches of a looming olive tree, waiting for the heat of the day to pass. If you are in just the right place as the soft light of day begins to break; small groupings of these sheep can be observed standing in formation near where the shepherds are conversing while drinking coffee brewed over a communal campfire inside a sheepfold. One by one, as a shepherd finishes his coffee and moves away from the others, he will give a distinctive call or whistle. His particular flock of sheep will respond by disengaging from their place to follow him as he leads them through the opening of the sheepfold and out to pasture. It is a fascinating scene to watch as they depart because all the other clusters of sheep stand still, not breaking apart until they hear the familiar voice of their own shepherd. They will not follow the call of another - only the voice they have come to know from spending hours alone with him in the mountains. Some parts of the culture of this Land have not changed in centuries. It was from this real life observation that Yeshua drew His parable and His verbal illustration is a picture of the Kingdom of YHVH. Notice that Yeshua said He is *the door* and *the shepherd* - which raises the questions about what is a "fold", who are the "thieves" and, most specifically, who is a *gatekeeper*? Words mean things. To answer those questions properly means we have to stand back and look at what these words actually mean from the Hebraic perspective they were written in by Hebrews influenced by this Hebrew culture.



a cluster of sheep

The Hebrew word translated as the English "fold" is **gederah** which comes from **gader** ([click on highlighted words to view content](#)) and means a "wall, hedge, fence". It is combined with the Hebrew word **tso'n** (meaning "sheep") in **Numbers 32:16** to construct the translated English word, "sheepfold". As seen in the [previous article](#), the Hebrew word for "house" (as in [House of Israel](#)) means "any fixed residence or abode, i.e., any building, palace or a *tabernacle holding the inhabitants of a family, a fold.*" This is the Kingdom of which Yeshua proclaimed the **good news** of having been restored and, as seen in the previous article, within its confines are the priests which occupy the Kingdom of YHVH. His Kingdom is

tightly surrounded by the hedge or fence of **His Ten Words** through which one has to pass in order to enter His Kingdom. The purpose of a fence is to separate one thing from another. There are two ways to look at a fence. A fence can be considered to be something that constrains or hems in - or it can be considered a protection that keeps predators out.

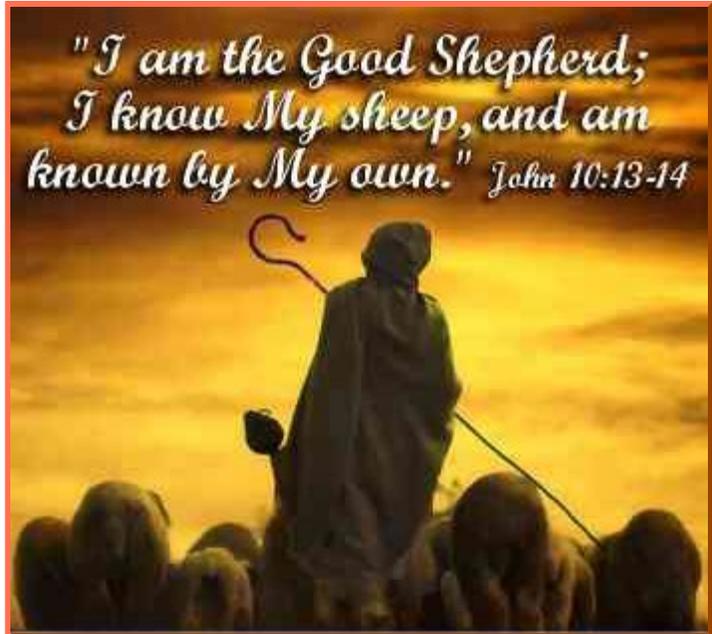
The Hebrew word translated as the English "sin" found in **Isaiah 1:18** is **het'**. It is the combination of the Hebrew letters **chet**, **taw** and **aleph**. The images in **Paleo-Hebrew** these letters represent when strung together mean "*first to destroy the fence*" (Frank Seekins, *Hebrew Word Pictures* - Seekins is the acknowledged founder of the modern study of Hebrew word pictures). If sin is related to destroying the "fence," then what is the fence? Anything that stands in **opposition** to the Words of YHVH is sin. YHVH's fence around His people is found in the protection of the instructions of His Words. The over-arching Covenant with His family of Israel is based on this fence. It is the distinguishing characteristic between Hebrew and Gentile. Those who choose to join themselves to the Family of Israel stand in special relationship to YHVH because they choose to keep **His Words**. - they choose to stay within His protective fence. This is not a relationship of rescue or deliverance. It is a relationship of **purpose**. YHVH chose Israel as the vehicle for bringing the world to Him, a **Light to the Nations**, and Israel was to accomplish this great purpose by living according to His Words, His Covenant - to be a "kingdom of priests". Sin tears down the distinctiveness that YHVH plans to use. Sin destroys purpose.

Yeshua said He is the **DOOR**, the designated place of entry to this sheepfold. The Greek word translated as the English "door" in this passage is **thyra** and means "the vestibule; used of any opening providing passage". In the Hebrew, the word most commonly used for door is **pethach** meaning "an opening, **gate of entrance**" to describe the entryway to a temple, a house or a city. It is in the example of Life Yeshua manifested through YHVH's Ten Words that becomes the entryway providing passage into the sheepfold, into the house of the Father. Anyone attempting to enter by any other means than this example of His Life is a "thief and a robber" - an indication that there are other means by which one can gain entry. So, then - what is the Life that He exemplified? Yeshua goes on to say that His Life is as the **GOOD SHEPHERD**. Yeshua's words in this parable have their root in Psalm 23. The Hebrew word translated as the English "shepherd" in Psalm 23:1 is **ro'i**. The first thing we must notice is that this word is not a noun. The verse does **not** say, "YHVH *is my shepherd*". It is a verb that is a **Qal** participle. The root verb, **r'h**, means, "**to feed, to graze, to lead to pasture.**" This verse that we all know so well contains a verb we don't know at all. It does not say that YHVH is someone **called** a shepherd. It says, "YHVH **shepherding** me". He feeds me. He leads me to pasture. He protects me. He instructs me with His staff. He guides and corrects and does everything someone must do to make sure that I am part of His flock. He is not **a** shepherd. He is **shepherding**. That's how I know Him - as the one who cares for and watches over me. And that is how He expresses Himself - in **actions**, not static ideas. Yeshua says He **does nothing** unless He first sees His Father do it. To follow Yeshua into YHVH's Kingdom is to embrace His **actionable** Life - to **do** the same things He exemplified. Every one can quote **John 3:16**, but there are few that can quote **1John 3:16** which speaks of the doorway into YHVH's Kingdom. Yeshua set that example by **laying down His Life** for the sheep - the brethren of YHVH's family who embrace Him as the promised **Kinsman Redeemer**. This example of His Life is the entry point, the door by which any who would follow Him must enter the Kingdom.

*"My sheep **hear My voice** and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal Life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." John 10:27-29*

As seen in the opening words of this article, there are two requirements for being a priest in YHVH's Kingdom - to obey His Voice and to keep His Covenant. Yeshua tells us in **John 8:28**, that He only speaks, "just as the Father taught me" and in **John 14:23-24** that the words He speaks are not His own, but the Words of His Father. Yeshua said those that embrace His Life hear His Voice - not will hear, maybe hear, or might someday learn how to hear. They hear His Voice. They hear because they follow the example of His manner of Life expressed in the Truth of Who the Father is - "**he who knows Truth hears My Voice**". In order to KNOW Truth, we must fashion ourselves after Who Truth says He is. This is how Yeshua did it. He said He knows the Father because He **keeps the words** of the Father. What words were those? They were the words of His Father's Covenant. This is the definition of a *talmid*, the Hebrew word for a disciple - one who bends his will to conform to the example of the Master. The disciple does not tell the Master what it is he will or will not conform to - he is obedient to the instructions he hears from the Master. (see **Who's Your Daddy?**).

The Hebrew language differs from English in that it often contains a duality of meaning for words and phrases. In Hebrew, the meaning of hearing is not just sound waves striking the sensory portion of the ear but has a concurrent meaning as well. The Hebrew word for "listen" or "hear" in **Exodus 15:26** is *shama'* - but, in **Exodus 19:5**, this same Hebrew word is also found to be translated "obey". In Hebrew, to hear *LS* to obey, to obey *LS* to hear. Whether you hear what is spoken or not is measured by how you obey what you hear. Conversely, how you obey determines whether or not you heard what was said. Yeshua said of those who hear, who know Him in this fashion, no man is able to snatch them out of His Hand or out of the Hand of His Father. **Hearing His Voice** is essential for remaining within His Kingdom; otherwise, the sheep would be led astray by other voices. The sheep that know Him, **know** His Voice. Many would counter this statement by saying



that the only requirement for remaining in the Kingdom is just to *believe* in Yeshua. These folks are not hearing the Voice of the One in scripture but the voice of a traditional religion of men (the **only** thing Yeshua ever pointed to that could nullify the Word of YHVH) and would be well served by heeding to the definition of what it means **to believe** - "*to trust in, to adhere to, to rely upon, to fashion one's life after*". The example Yeshua set was twofold - He did not do anything without first **hearing** the Voice of the Father and He said He knew He was loved by the Father because He **kept the Commandments** of the Father. To **Know** in Hebrew is *yada'* which means "*to be made known, to be or cause to know, to be revealed*". To hear is to obey. Doing the words of the Father causes them to be revealed in our lives. They become **part of our being**. It is a result of knowing YHVH. In **Paleo-Hebrew** the word translated "covenant" is *ברית* and "reveal" is *ל*. When combined it forms *עברית* and that is the word for **Hebrew** - or in the language of Paleolithic-Hebrew **Covenant Revealed !!** His Covenant is revealed in the life of His servants, His priests who join themselves to His Hebrew Kingdom by keeping **His Words** (with emphasis on verse one - see what it means **To Make Manifest** His Name),

*"He who is a hired hand and **not a shepherd**, whose sheep are not his own, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep." John 10:12-13*

The word **thief** used in John 10:1-16 at the top of this article is translated from the Greek word *kleptes* which means "*an embezzler, pilferer, one who abuses the confidence given to them for their own gain*". The tradition handed down to us has been that it is the devil who is the one who has come to "steal, kill and destroy". However, Yeshua is ascribing these characteristics to *men*. These are men who do not care to instruct the sheep in the Way of hearing and knowing the Voice of Truth, the most essential part of following the Good Shepherd - to be taught how to hear His Voice individually for **themselves**. We just observed that, for those who hear His Voice, no man is able to snatch them away from the Father's hand. The thief would have the

sheep continually dependent on coming to them for direction in their lives. These are men who have turned their gifts into "jobs" to benefit their own gain at the expense of the sheep. They have become hirelings - **benefactors**. These are those of whom Yeshua will say, "**I never knew you**" and "**depart from me**". Yeshua said those who do not enter by the door of His example of Life are thieves - so it would seem possible for men to be able to access the sheepfold, the Kingdom, by means other than the Door. Yeshua spoke of men who do not keep the Commandments themselves and teach others to do the same as being the "**least in the Kingdom**" - but they are still in the Kingdom, the **tares among the wheat**.



...not "the devil"

These thieves who gain entrance by means other than through the Door exemplified by the manner of Life Yeshua set as the Good Shepherd are described by Him as "hirelings" that flee when the wolf appears, leaving the sheep exposed. The hireling "flees" by abdicating his responsibility to care for the sheep when, by his endorsement of the doctrine of the wolf, he allows the wolf into the sheepfold for his own gain of status recognition by association with the doctrine of the wolf. We have also been taught traditionally that the wolf is the devil disguised as a sheep. But, in **Matthew 7:15**, Yeshua describes "false prophets" as wolves - men who utter falsehoods under the guise of divine inspiration apart from the recorded Truth of who the Father says He

is. The Hebrew apostle *Sha'ul* (Paul) also spoke of **men as wolves**, "*arising from among you speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them*". Consequently, the sheep are snatched (mesmerized) by the lies of those prophets that teach something other than the words of YHVH and are scattered to "**every wind of doctrine**".

*"For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of YHVH. **But you have turned aside from the way**. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says YHVH..."*
Malachi 2:7-8, Luke 11:52

the Kingdom Series

Part One: the Scriptural Gospel - Part A

Part Two: the Scriptural Gospel - Part B

Part three: A Nation of Priests

Part Four: the Sheepfold

Part Five: Gatekeepers

a discussion of the Sheepfold



???Questions???

Please feel free to email me at harold@hethathasaneer.com. While not claiming to have all the answers, it would be an honor to partake with you of what Spirit is uncovering.

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