

# “Jesus is the Good Shepherd”

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**"I am the good shepherd"**  
 -- Jesus, John 10:11, 14

The Good Shepherd. Photo Copyright David Padfield. Used under license. Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11, 14). Jesus told a parable about a good shepherd who went searching for one of his sheep that was lost (Luke 15:1-7). Jesus said, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Photo source: [FreeBibleImages.org](http://FreeBibleImages.org).

***"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." (John 10:11)***

***"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me." (John 10:14)***

"Our Lord not only declares that He is the reality of which the earthly shepherd is the shadow, and that He as the flawless, perfect One, but that He alone is the reality. 'I am the Good Shepherd; in Me and in Me alone is that which men need.' " -- Alexander MacLaren (1826-1910) ([Ref. 1](#), [Ref. 2](#))

This lesson is the fourth in a series on the "I AM" statements of Christ. This lesson discusses Jesus' statements, "I am the good shepherd," in John 10:11 and John 10:14.

**Consider.** Are you like a lost sheep? Have you gone astray (Isaiah 53:6)? Are you living outside of the sheepfold? Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd, the one who loves us, seeks us, saves us, and protects us. He is the one who laid down his life for his sheep. He is the one who knows us.

***God is our shepherd (Old Testament perspective).*** The Old Testament describes God as the shepherd for his people. God is the one who cares for the total well-being of his sheep. David wrote, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake" (Psalm 23:1-3).

In a perhaps less widely-known passage, Ezekiel also described the characteristics of the Lord God as the shepherd of Israel (Ezekiel 34:11-16):

- "I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out" (v. 11)
- "I will care for My sheep" (v. 12)
- "I will bring them out ... to their own land" (v. 13)
- "I will feed them in a good pasture" (v. 14)
- "I will lead them to rest" (v. 15)
- "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick" (v. 16)

Hundreds of years before Jesus came, Isaiah spoke of Jesus. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah 40:11).

***"I am the good shepherd."*** The Greek word for *good* means *beautiful, as an outward sign of inward good, noble, honorable character* (Ref. 3). Think of the greatness and the immensity of the claim that Jesus makes upon our faith in John 10:11 and John 10:14. Jesus claims to be the divine

shepherd witnessed to and described by the psalmist and the prophets.

Jesus states that in him alone is everything that we need - sustenance, protection, care, restoration, direction, and eternal life (Luke 15:4, Luke 19:10, Psalm 23:1-3, John 10:3-4, John 10:9, John 10:27-28, Ref. 1). The Greek text in John 10:11 and John 10:14 uses the definite article "the" before "good shepherd" (Ref. 4, Ref. 5). "The definite article claims this ['I am the good shepherd'] as a description applicable to Himself alone" (Expositor's Greek Testament - Ref. 6, brackets added).

***"The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."*** Jesus states two features by which he as the good shepherd would be known. The first feature is his giving his life for the sheep (John 10:11, Ref. 6). Recall the personal risk of life that David faced because he was a shepherd. David himself rescued the lamb of his father's flock from the mouth of the lion and the bear (1 Samuel 17:34-36, Ref. 7). "That self-sacrifice that would lead the shepherd to risk his own life for that of the flock has its ideal fulfillment in Him who is the Good Shepherd, and will give His life for mankind" (Ref. 7).

"The death of the Shepherd is the security of the sheep; and I say to you, the flock, that for every soul the entrance into the flock of God is through the door of the dying Christ, who laid down His life for the sheep, and makes them His sheep who trust in Him" (Ref. 1, Ref. 8).

***"I know My own and My own know Me."*** Jesus stated a second feature by which he would be known as the good shepherd. That feature is the reciprocal knowledge of the sheep and the shepherd (John 10:14, Ref. 6). The Greek word for *know* in John 10:14 is *ginóskó*, which means *to know*, especially through *personal experience* (Ref. 9). However, the language for *know* in John 10:14 describes more than a dictionary lookup alone conveys. Jesus describes closest communion between himself as the good shepherd and his sheep (Ref. 7). Jesus describes the relationship as loving regard, affection, and recognition between the shepherd and his sheep (Ref. 1). He knows us because he loves us. As his sheep, we know him as our shepherd, and we love him and trust him. We know his voice and we follow him (John 10:4, John 10:27-28).

*Apply.* Jesus loves you and already knows you. Jesus wants to have a close reciprocal relationship with you. Are you loving him, trusting him, and following him today?

### References

1. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/maclaren/john/10.htm>
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