

Time Audit Chronicles: The Good Shepherd

(John 10:1-21)

Prologue: The Good Shepherd's Care

The Presswood family gathered around the table, their hearts moved by the powerful teaching in John 10:1-21, where Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd. The warmth of the room, combined with the glow of the evening lamp, added a comforting backdrop to their discussion. Ariel was contemplating the deep love and care Jesus expressed for His followers, calling them His sheep. She felt a sense of awe at the idea of such intimate care. Alice, clutching Mr. Fluffernutter, was pretending to be one of the sheep, her imagination painting a vivid picture of following Jesus as the Good Shepherd through lush green fields, feeling safe and loved.

"Daddy," Ariel asked, "What does it mean that Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd? Why does He say we are like sheep?"

Ryan smiled, eager to explain. "That's a great question, Ariel. Think about it like this: just like you depend on Mommy and me to guide you, keep you safe, and make sure you have everything you need, sheep rely on their shepherd in the same way. Shepherds were known for caring for their sheep—they would protect them, feed them, and guide them to safe places. In ancient Israel, being a shepherd was a demanding job. Shepherds had to stay with their flock day and night, protect them from predators, and lead them to fresh pastures and clean water. Sheep, on the other hand, are vulnerable animals that depend entirely on their shepherd for safety and direction. When Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd, He is saying that He cares for His followers just like a shepherd cares for his sheep. Just like sheep need a shepherd, we need Jesus to guide us, protect us, and provide for us."

Ariel nodded. "So, Jesus is saying that we need Him, just like sheep need a shepherd?"

"Exactly," Ryan said. "Jesus is not only our protector, but He is also the one who knows us intimately, leads us to safety, and gives us life. Let's use the Time Audit Machine to go back and see this beautiful teaching of Jesus in action."

The Journey Begins: Jesus as the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-5)

The Time Audit Machine hummed to life, and with a flash, the family found themselves outside a small village in ancient Israel. The air was warm, filled with the scents of earth and livestock, and the soft bleating of sheep echoed across the fields. The village was bustling, with people gathered to listen. The shepherd was calling to his sheep, and the animals responded to his voice, following him through the fields. Jesus, standing near the edge of the gathering, spoke to the crowd with a clear, authoritative voice: '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.' (John 10:1).

Ariel watched as the shepherd carefully guided the sheep, his gentle voice calming them as they followed him. She felt a deep sense of safety just watching the scene unfold. 'So, Jesus is saying that only the true shepherd comes through the right door, not by sneaking in like a thief?' she asked, her eyes filled with curiosity, trying to understand the deeper meaning of Jesus' words.

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Jesus is making a distinction between Himself and others who claim to offer guidance but are not truly the shepherds. Just as the shepherd enters through the proper gate to care for the sheep, Jesus is the only true guide who leads us to safety and life. Others may try to deceive or lead us astray, but only Jesus is the true Shepherd who cares for us completely.”

Ariel nodded, understanding the metaphor. “So, Jesus is saying that anyone who tries to lead us in a different way is not really trustworthy.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Jesus is the true shepherd, and He alone offers us the path to true safety and peace.”

The Sheep Recognize the Shepherd’s Voice (John 10:3-5)

Jesus continued, “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.” (John 10:3-4). The crowd watched as the sheep followed the shepherd, recognizing his voice and staying close behind him.

Ariel watched, fascinated, as the sheep moved in unison, their ears perked up as they heard the shepherd's call. 'The sheep know the shepherd's voice!' Ariel said, her face lighting up with understanding. 'They follow him because they trust him and recognize that he will keep them safe.' Ryan nodded. 'Yes. Just as the sheep know the voice of the shepherd, Jesus is saying that we—His followers—should recognize His voice and trust Him. He calls us by name, and we are to follow Him because He leads us to what is best for us.' Ariel smiled, feeling a deep connection to the metaphor. She imagined herself as one of Jesus' sheep, hearing His voice and knowing He would always lead her to safety.

Ariel smiled, thinking about the deep connection between the sheep and the shepherd. “So, when we hear Jesus speaking to our hearts, we should trust and follow Him just like the sheep trust their shepherd.”

“That’s exactly right,” Ryan said. “Jesus knows each of us personally, and we are to follow Him because He is the one who will guide us to life and safety.”

Jesus as the Door: The Way to Salvation (John 10:7-10)

Jesus then made another powerful declaration, saying, “I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” (John 10:8-9).

Ariel was intrigued, her brows furrowed in thought. 'Jesus says He is the door? What does that mean?' She tried to picture it in her mind—Jesus as a door that provided entry to something safe and good. Ryan explained, 'In ancient times, a shepherd would often stay at the entrance of the sheepfold at night to protect the sheep from predators. The sheep would enter the fold through the gate—the door—and the shepherd would keep watch to make sure no harm came to them. The shepherd himself would sometimes lie across the entrance, becoming the "door" to the sheepfold. Jesus is saying that He is the door to salvation. He is the only way to be saved and to find safety. No one can come to the Father

except through Him.' Ariel's eyes lit up with understanding. 'So, Jesus is the way to eternal life and safety with God, just like the door is the way into the sheepfold where the sheep are protected!'

Ariel's eyes lit up. "So, Jesus is the way to eternal life and safety with God, just like the door is the way into the sheepfold where the sheep are protected!"

"That's right," Ryan said. "Jesus is the only way to salvation, and through Him, we have access to the pasture—the abundant life God has for us."

Jesus Lays Down His Life for His Sheep (John 10:11-15)

Jesus then declared, 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.' (John 10:11). Ariel could feel the weight of His words. She imagined a shepherd standing in front of his flock, facing down wolves, protecting them no matter the cost. 'But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth.' (John 10:12). Ryan explained, 'Jesus was foreshadowing His sacrifice on the cross. The Good Shepherd is willing to give His life to protect His sheep from harm. He loves us so much that He was willing to die for us. No one else would do that—only Jesus. Just like David, who was a shepherd before he became king, stood up to protect his sheep from lions and bears, Jesus is willing to protect us from the greatest danger of all—sin and death.' Ariel's voice was filled with awe. 'So, Jesus wasn't just talking about leading us and caring for us—He was talking about giving His life to save us from the greatest danger of all—sin and death!'

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"That's right," Ryan said. "Jesus' ultimate act of love and care was to give His life for us on the cross, so that we could be saved and have eternal life with Him. The Good Shepherd doesn't just lead the sheep to safety—He lays down His life to rescue them."

Jesus' Authority and the Unity of the Father and Son (John 10:16-21)

Jesus went on to say, 'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.' (John 10:16). Ariel looked thoughtful, her mind drifting to the many different people she had seen in her young life. 'So, Jesus was saying that His care for the sheep isn't just for the Jewish people, but for all who will follow Him, even those who aren't Jewish.' Ryan nodded. 'Yes. Jesus was pointing to His mission to bring salvation to all people, not just Israel. Through Jesus, people from every nation can become part of God's family.' Ariel felt a deep sense of unity at this thought—Jesus' love extended to everyone, no matter who they were or where they came from.

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Jesus continued, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (John 10:17-18).

Ariel listened with reverence. “Jesus has the power to lay down His life and to take it back. He’s saying He’s not just a victim of what happens—He has the authority to give His life willingly.”

“That’s exactly right,” Ryan said. “Jesus is not a victim—He is in complete control. He laid down His life for us willingly, and He took it up again in His resurrection. This shows His divine authority and His love for His sheep.”

Reflection: The Good Shepherd’s Love and Care

Back in the garage, the Time Audit Machine powered down, and the family sat in quiet reflection. Ariel turned to her father, moved by the depth of Jesus’ love for His followers. She thought about the way Jesus described Himself as both the shepherd and the door—protector, leader, and savior. Alice, still holding Mr. Fluffernutter, was imagining herself as one of the sheep, walking beside Jesus as He led her through green pastures, feeling utterly safe and happy. Ryan looked at his daughters, his heart full, and said, ‘Jesus really cares for us, like a shepherd cares for his sheep.’ He smiled at Ariel. ‘He knows us by name and is willing to protect us, even if it means laying down His life for us.’ Ariel smiled back, understanding. ‘So, Jesus isn’t just a leader—He’s also our savior and our protector. We can trust Him to guide us, just like a shepherd leads his sheep to safety.’

“Jesus really cares for us, like a shepherd cares for his sheep,” Ariel said softly. “He knows us by name and is willing to protect us, even if it means laying down His life for us.”

“Yes,” Ryan said, “Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows each of us intimately, leads us to safety, and is willing to sacrifice everything for our well-being. He gave His life so that we could have eternal life and be part of His flock forever.”

Ariel smiled, understanding. “So, Jesus isn’t just a leader—He’s also our savior and our protector. We can trust Him to guide us, just like a shepherd leads his sheep to safety.”

“That’s exactly right,” Ryan said. “When we follow Jesus, we are part of His flock, and we know that He will always guide us with love, protect us from harm, and provide for all our needs. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and His love for us is greater than anything we can imagine.”

Takeaway: Jesus, the Good Shepherd

In John 10:1-21, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd, the one who lays down His life for His sheep. He lovingly guides, protects, and cares for all who follow Him. Unlike a hired hand who runs from danger, Jesus offers His life to save us from sin and death. Through His sacrifice, He brings all who believe in Him into God’s family, offering eternal life and abundant care. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the one who knows us by name and leads us to safety, offering His protection and provision to all who trust in Him.

How can we apply this in our lives? Think about ways you can follow Jesus as the Good Shepherd—by listening for His voice, trusting Him with your fears, and sharing His love with others. Just as sheep

trust their shepherd completely, we are called to trust Jesus, knowing He will lead us to the best places, care for us, and protect us from harm.

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Interactive Reflections: Exploring the Good Shepherd

- **What does it mean to trust Jesus as your Shepherd?**

Think of a time when you felt lost or scared. How did you find comfort or guidance? How can you look for Jesus' voice in those moments?

- **How can you recognize the Shepherd's voice?**

Jesus says that His sheep know His voice. What are some ways you can listen for His guidance in your daily life, like prayer, reading the Bible, or spending quiet time with Him?

- **How does it feel to know Jesus knows your name?**

Take a moment to reflect on the idea that Jesus knows you personally and cares for you deeply. What does this mean for how you see yourself and your relationship with Him?

Song for Little Hearts: "The Shepherd's Voice"

(To the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

Verse 1

Jesus is the Shepherd true,
Guiding me in all I do.
He calls my name, I hear His voice,
In His care, I will rejoice.
Jesus is the Shepherd true,
Loving me and leading too.

Verse 2

Through the gate, I follow near,
In His arms, I have no fear.
He laid His life to set me free,
Good Shepherd cares for you and me.
Jesus is the Shepherd true,
Forever safe, I'll stay with You.

Mr. Fluffernutter's Perspective: "Baa-Rific Adventures"

Hello, dear readers! It's Mr. Fluffernutter here, reporting from the pasture of imagination!

Today, Alice and I learned about Jesus being the Good Shepherd. Now, I have to admit, being a bunny, I'm not used to baa-ing like a sheep. But let me tell you, hopping around and pretending to be part of His flock made me feel so loved and safe!

Did you know that sheep follow their shepherd because they trust him? I like to think of Jesus saying, "Fluffernutter, follow Me!"—and off I'd hop, straight to green fields of carrots...I mean, heavenly places!

What about you, little readers? If you could be a sheep in Jesus' flock, what would you ask Him to lead you to? Write it down or share it with a friend—and don't forget, He's always listening!

Ariel's Journal: Finding the Shepherd in Everyday Life

Dear Journal,

Today, I thought about how Jesus said He is the Good Shepherd. It's so comforting to know that He leads us and calls us by name. I realized that in my life, this might look like trusting Him even when I don't know what's ahead—like when I'm nervous about a test or when I have to stand up for what's right.

Jesus said He's the door, too, which made me think of choices. There are so many "doors" in life, but I want to choose the one that leads to Him. Sometimes, it's hard to hear His voice with all the noise around me, but I'm learning that quiet moments of prayer or reading His Word can help.

What's really amazing is that He knows me by name—He knows everything about me! It makes me want to trust Him more and follow where He leads, even if it's a little scary sometimes.

Alice's Reflection with Mr. Fluffernutter: "Hopping Along with Jesus"

Alice sat on her bed, her fingers brushing through Mr. Fluffernutter's soft ears. "Mr. Fluffernutter," she said thoughtfully, "Jesus is like the best shepherd ever. He takes care of us and keeps us safe, even from scary wolves. You'd like that, wouldn't you? No wolves in our pasture!"

Mr. Fluffernutter "replied" in Alice's high-pitched bunny voice, "That's right, Alice! And I'd hop right after Him because He always knows the best places to find carrots...or love!"

Alice giggled. "Do you think we'd hear His voice if He called us?" She imagined a gentle, loving voice calling her name. "I think I'd run to Him as fast as I could, like I do when Mommy calls me for dessert!"

She tucked Mr. Fluffernutter under her chin. "I'm glad Jesus knows my name and that I can follow Him. You and I can be part of His flock, Fluffernutter. Isn't that wonderful?"

Key Scriptures (KJV)

- **John 10:3** – “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.”
- **John 10:11** – “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”
- **John 10:16** – “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”
- **John 10:27-28** – “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”