

Other Sheep

(John 10:16) “And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

Christ Jesus said *"not of this fold"*. What *"fold"* is he talking about? The one from John 10:1.

(John 10:1) “Most truly I say to you, the one who does not enter into the sheepfold through the door but climbs in by another way, that one is a thief and a plunderer.

So Christ was referring to the sheepfold that he had been discussing in the previous 15 verses. First let's confirm what a *"sheepfold"* is. In both verse 1 and verse 16 the same Greek word *"aule"* is used which refers to the pen that holds the sheep and not to the sheep themselves. A sheepfold is an enclosure or pen designed and built specifically to hold sheep. Even when a sheepfold is empty it is still a sheepfold.



To identify the *"other sheep"* we first need to identify *"this fold"* that they are *"not of."* We can do that by examining the illustration.

(John 10:1-6) “Most truly I say to you, the one who does not enter into the sheepfold through the door but climbs in by another way, that one is a thief and a plunderer. ² But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The doorkeeper opens to this one, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought all his own out, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. ⁵ They will by no means follow a stranger but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ Jesus spoke this comparison to them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Christ tells the illustration, *"but they did not understand what he was saying to them"* so he tells them the same illustration *"again"*, only worded a little differently:

(John 10:7-15) So Jesus said again: “Most truly I say to you, I am the door for the sheep. ⁸ All those who have come in place of me are thieves and plunderers; but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved, and that one will go in and out and find pasturage. ¹⁰ The thief does not come unless it is to steal and slay and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance. ¹¹ I am the fine shepherd; the fine shepherd surrenders his life in behalf of the sheep. ¹² The hired man, who is not a shepherd and to whom the sheep do not belong, sees the wolf coming and abandons the

sheep and flees—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them—¹³ because he is a hired man and does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the fine shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I surrender my life in behalf of the sheep.

Let's look at each of the different elements of the illustration to get a better understand of it.

Door

This "*fold*" has Christ as the door. Twice he calls himself "*the door*."

(John 10:7, 9) ⁷ "Most truly I say to you, I am the door for the sheep... ⁹ I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved, and that one will go in and out and find pasturage.

Christ, as the door, functions as part of the fold, that is to say part of the enclosure. He positions himself in the one and only entrance and exit of the fold. He is the door.



Doorkeeper

(John 10:2, 3) But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The doorkeeper opens to this one, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

The Greek word "thura" translated in verses 2, 7, and 9 as "*door*" is translated at Matthew 27:60 as "*entrance*".

(Matthew 27:60b) And after rolling a big stone to the entrance of the tomb, he left.

Matthew is talking about the opening or entryway to a tomb showing that "thura" does not always have the meaning of a physical gate or door but can merely mean the opening through which you enter or exit. Since the fold in Christ's illustration does not have a gate, but has himself as its door, the Greek word "thuroros", translated as "*doorkeeper*" at John 10:3, has the meaning of 'keeper of the entrance'.

The doorkeeper decides who to allow to lead sheep out to pasture.

Intruders

There are intruders who do not come in through the entrance, but climb in over the walls.

(John 10:1) “Most truly I say to you, the one who does not enter into the sheepfold through the door but climbs in by another way, that one is a thief and a plunderer.

These try to steal the sheep away from this fold and into a non-Christian fold.

One

(John 10:2, 3) But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The doorkeeper opens to this one, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

As a cardinal number "one" means a single and specific person. But used as a pronoun "one" refers to any person in general. (see John 3:36; 6:57; 8:47; 9:32; 11:25; 14:21; 15:5)

How is "*one*" used in verses 2 and 3? If we look at verse 9 in the second telling of the illustration we can see what form of "*one*" that Christ is using.

(John 10:9) I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved, and that one will go in and out and find pasturage.

So "*one*" is referring to "*whoever*", showing that it is not referring to a specific person, but to anyone in general. Further, if this illustration was only talking about one shepherd then the shepherd would not only call out the sheep that are "*his own*", but he would call out all of the sheep. No, but each shepherd calls out the sheep that are "*his own*."

(John 10:2-4) But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The doorkeeper opens to this one, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought all his own out, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.

Sheep

The sheep are people. The sheep in this fold listen only to the voice of their particular shepherd and take pasturage where he leads them, that is to say, they learn from him the teachings of Christ.

(John 10:3-5) ³ The doorkeeper opens to this one, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought all his own out, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. ⁵ They will by no means follow a stranger but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."

The Fine Shepherd

(John 10:11-15) I am the fine shepherd; the fine shepherd surrenders his life in behalf of the sheep. ¹² The hired man, who is not a shepherd and to whom the sheep do not belong, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and flees—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them— ¹³ because he is a hired man and does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the fine shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I surrender my life in behalf of the sheep.

The Greek word "kalos", here translated as "*fine*" has the definition of "beautiful, good." Beautiful as an outward sign of the inward good; good or noble and seen to be so. The word "kalos" encompasses the action that proves one to be beautiful and good. It is like the word "hero". A hero is not a hero until he performs a heroic act. Only then is he a hero.

One could also be called a hero if there is intent. For instance, if you were held captive by a criminal and you saw a police officer coming to rescue you, you could say "here comes my hero" even though he had not saved you yet. The same applies to Jesus calling himself "*the fine shepherd*" because it was his intent to "*surrender (his) life in behalf of the sheep.*"

So "*fine shepherd*" means the shepherd that surrenders his life for the sheep. The shepherd is not "*fine*" until he dies for the sheep. Jesus became the "*fine shepherd*" when he gave up his life for us.

The shepherd of the sheep

The "*fine shepherd*" refers to Jesus as the shepherd that sacrifices himself for the sheep, but "*the shepherd of the sheep*" at John 10:2 refers to others:

(John 10:2) But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep.³ The doorkeeper opens to this one, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.⁴ When he has brought all his own out, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.

As covered above, "*one*" does not refer to a single person, but refers to "*whoever*" Christ allows to enter through the door, that is to say, those shepherds that he allows to lead his sheep to pasture. This, of course, includes the "*hired*" men who do the job of a shepherd but think of themselves first and the sheep second. (Jn 10:12, 13)

Christ's fold has multiple flocks led by multiple shepherds.

[Jt-2 p. 924] The flocks of several shepherds were sometimes penned in the same sheepfold for the night, with a doorkeeper to watch over them. When the shepherds arrived in the morning, they called to their flock, and the sheep responded to their shepherd and to him only. Walking ahead of the flock, the shepherd led it to pasture.

So John 10:2, 3 shows that the doorkeeper (Jesus) and the shepherds are not the same. Jesus does not open to himself. (Jn 10:3) The fold is used by the shepherds and '*hired men*' of all the different denominations who teach the words of Christ. (Jn 10:12) Each shepherd has a flock of "*his own*." (Jn 10:4) Christ personally asked John to be a shepherd. (Jn 21:16) The shepherds of each flock are to shepherd the flock until "*the chief shepherd has been made manifest.*" (Ac 20:28; 1Pe 5:1-4)

This Fold

(John 10:16) "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

The "*fold*" that Jesus has been talking about contains the flocks of sheep that follow the shepherds who teach the ways of Christ. Therefore if someone is not of this fold, then they do not follow the teachings of Christ. Either they have not yet heard his teachings, or have heard and have rejected them. (Mt 13:19)

Other Sheep

(John 10:16) "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

These "*other sheep*" are not of Christ's "*fold*" and have not yet learned his teachings. But they have the right heart condition (Lu 8:15), and when they hear his teachings they will listen and believe, thus becoming a member of the fold that has Christ as the door. They will then be his sheep, not "*other sheep*". (Jn 10:14)

Current Teaching

Current teach of the Governing Body (GB) of Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) is that the "*other sheep*" of John 10:16 refers to the "*great crowd*" of Revelation 7:9 who are JW's that will remain on earth, and that they and the "*little flock*" who will go to heaven are/were two flocks and that they are/were added together to "*become one flock*". The GB have provided no scriptural backing for this teaching.

(Revelation 7:9a) After this I saw, and look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues,

John 10:16) "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

(Luke 12:32) "Have no fear, little flock, for your Father has approved of giving you the Kingdom.

Christ did not say '*I have other sheep, which are not of this flock*'. He said "*I have other sheep, which are not of this fold*". So "*other sheep, which are not of this fold*" cannot be referring to either the earthly class or heavenly class of JW's since both of them are "*of this fold*" which has Christ as the door and contains the sheep who listen to his voice.

The earthly class of JW's are already Christians. They do not need to be brought in to listen to his voice. They are already in and listening to his voice and are already one flock with the "*little flock*".

For "*other sheep*" to be referring to JW's who are not of the heavenly class would be as if your Kingdom Hall was the only one in existence and Christ came to your Kingdom Hall and said to you:

I have other sheep, which are not of this Kingdom Hall; those too I must bring into this Kingdom Hall, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one congregation.

And you asked Christ: *Who are those other sheep?*

And Christ replied: *The brothers and sisters standing around you here in this Kingdom Hall.*

Do you see how that does not make sense? You do not need to bring in to teach, those who are already in and have already been taught. JW's are already "*of this fold*", and have already 'listened to his voice', and are already of this flock.

The "*other sheep*," on the other hand, are those who are not yet in this fold and have not yet listened ("*will listen*") to his voice. That rules out the earthly class of JW's as being the "*other sheep*."

Though Christ was speaking of the *"little flock"* as its own flock at Luke 12:32, they are not in a *"fold"* of their own. All JW's are in the same fold which has Christ as its door and contains multiple flocks who listen to his voice. Christ has only one fold, and everyone who accepts his teachings are in that fold.

Yes, a minority are selected to form a small flock in heaven (Luke 12:32) but they were never separate from the larger flock. JW's never existed as two separate segregated flocks which needed to be brought together to *"become one flock."* They were always together as one group. They didn't even make an announcement about their being a difference until 1935. So John 10:16 could not be referring to them as the ones that need to *"become one flock"* (as the GB teaches).

My Voice

(John 10:16) "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

Here, Christ refers to the sheep as listening to his voice, but in verse 4 the sheep are said to listen to the voice of their individual shepherd. Is this a contradiction? No. Consider John 21:15-17. There, Jesus asks John to teach his lambs and little sheep. *"Lambs"* are baby sheep. *"Little sheep"* are a bit older, but are not yet adults. These new ones to the teachings of Christ are fed the appropriate spiritual food for their spiritual age. They need someone to teach them. (Ro 10:14) (see the article "Feed My Lambs")

So the lambs and little sheep listen to their shepherds to learn Christ's teachings. But once they have been taught, that is to say, once they have become mature Christians, they no longer need someone to lead them by the hand. They can listen to Christ's voice directly, that is to say, they are mature enough to read and understand the Bible on their own. At that point Christ himself has become their one and only mediator between themselves and Jehovah. They have grown past the need for a human middle-man.

(1 Timothy 2:5) For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus,

One Shepherd

At John 10:16 it says that they will join together and become one flock AND one shepherd.

(John 10:16) "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

The original Greek does not imply in any way that they will follow one shepherd or have one shepherd. No, but it says that they *"will become one flock, one shepherd."*

Consider the sentence structure of John 10:16 and the commas used to mark the breaks between different parts of the sentence. Commas are used to make the meaning of sentences clear by grouping and separating words, phrases, and clauses.

This site explains their use well: <https://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/commas.asp>
(if that link does not work just do a web search for "rules for comma use")

John 10:16 has four commas. The first one uses rule 15 from the website above, to separate contrasting parts of a sentence.

"And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd."

The next two commas use rule 3b, where two independent clauses are joined by the connector "and".

"And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd."

The final comma use falls under rule 1, to separate nouns in a simple series. The nouns separated by a comma refer back to a single verb. Here the verb is "become" prefaced by the helping verb "will".

"And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd."

John 10:16 is one sentence in the original Greek. The subject is "other sheep", which "those" and "they" refer us back to. And each part (clause) of the sentence has its own verb: bring, listen, become.

The "other sheep" he will bring in.

The "other sheep" will listen to his voice.

The "other sheep" will become one flock, one shepherd.

And the final clause has two nouns in a simple series: "one flock, one shepherd".

So my hypothesis that they will become "one flock" and "one shepherd" comes from the sentence structure itself, backed up by the commas within the sentence.

For John 10:16 to be saying that the "other sheep" will have "one shepherd", the final noun ("one shepherd") would have to have a separate verb of its own (such as "have") and a connector (such as "and") in front of that separate verb. Example:

"and they will become one flock, (and have) one shepherd."

But neither exist in the original Greek. The comma in front of "one shepherd" shows that it shares the same verb as "one flock", and that shared verb is "become."

"One flock" and "one shepherd" are within a single clause, which contains one subject (they), one verb (become), and one comma to separate the simple series. The clause can work with either noun independently. Example:

"and they will become one flock"

'and they will become one shepherd.'

Nouns in a simple series can even be switched without the clause losing its intent. Example:

'and they will become one shepherd, one flock.'

So how do they become "one shepherd"? Isn't Jesus our shepherd?

Here is how i see it. Jesus became the "*fine shepherd*" by dying for us. No longer being on earth means he could no longer be our shepherd, which is why he said what he said in the following scriptures.

(John 13:1) Now because he knew before the festival of the Passover that his hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father, Jesus, having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end.

(John 14:26) But the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you.

(John 17:11, 12) "I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, watch over them on account of your own name, which you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are one. ¹² When I was with them, I used to watch over them on account of your own name, which you have given me; and I have protected them, and not one of them is destroyed except the son of destruction, so that the scripture might be fulfilled.

(John 17:15) "I do not request that you take them out of the world, but that you watch over them because of the wicked one.

(John 21:15-17) When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter: "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He replied to him: "Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you." He said to him: "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ Again he said to him a second time: "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He replied: "Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you." He said to him: "Shepherd my little sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him a third time: "Simon son of John, do you have affection for me?" Peter became grieved that he asked him the third time: "Do you have affection for me?" So he said to him: "Lord, you are aware of all things; you know that I have affection for you." Jesus said to him: "Feed my little sheep."

How does one "*shepherd*" little sheep? By caring for them and putting their needs above your own as you guide them to spiritual food. (John 10:11-13; 1Pe 5:1-3) A "*hired man*" may perform the work of a shepherd, but he does not put their well being above his own so he is not a true shepherd. (John 10:12)

How does one "*feed*" lambs and little sheep? By providing spiritual food for them.—Mt 24:45

Christ may have stopped being our shepherd when he went to heaven but he is still the door, that is to say, the fold still belongs to him and he decides who he lets act as shepherds. Christ being the door is also the identifier of that particular sheepfold, like a sign or a marker to label the fold and identify him as the owner. The sheep within this fold are those that listen to Christ's voice, even though they are watched over by a variety of shepherds, such as Simon son of John. (Jn 21:16)

What is Christ's voice? His teachings. And who are the ones that use this Christian fold? Well since this fold represents the followers of Christianity then the fold is not only used by JW shepherds, but also by the shepherds and '*hired men*' of the different denominations in Christendom.

(Revelation 18:4) And I heard another voice out of heaven say: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues.

Christ's description of the '*hired men*' fits well the paid clergy in Christendom who are not loyal to the sheep in their congregations because it is just a job to them. Christ allows those hired men to act as shepherds, just as the governments of the earth are allowed to have the positions that they have. (Ro 13:1) They could not '*abandon the sheep*' at the first sign of danger (wolf) if they were not acting as shepherds, but true

shepherds put the sheep's safety above their own. At Armageddon the earthly governments will be replaced, as will the *'hired men.'*

(John 10:16) "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

So the *"other sheep"* not of this "Christian" fold are therefore sheep of non-Christian folds. Most JW's came from the churches of Christendom. They just swapped flocks within the fold and therefore never were in the category of *"other sheep"*. But many can say that they used to be a part of some non-Christian religion in the world (or had no religion at all) and therefore used to be in the category of *"other sheep"*.

(Acts 15:14) Sym'e-on has related thoroughly how God for the first time turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name.

Whether one is going to heaven or will remain on earth is not mentioned in Christ's illustration of the sheepfold, or in verse 16 that follows. John 10:16 is not about that.

But how is this *"one flock"* also *"one shepherd"*? Since leading a sheep to pasture means leading them to the Bible, then all who teach the words of Jehovah God and Christ Jesus are part of that one shepherd who leads others to the Bible. (John 17:20-23)

(John 4:14) Whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty at all, but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water bubbling up to impart everlasting life."

Conclusion

(John 10:16) "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

When Christ made that statement there was no Christendom, no false Christianity. All who accepted *"the word"* (Mr 4:16) became part of the one and only Christian congregation. (Mt 16:18)

So *"other sheep"* referred to those that had not yet heard the word and became Christian. And although they were not Christians, as they are described in Christ's parable of the sower, they were *"fine soil"* and had *"a fine and good heart."* (Mt 13:23; Mr 4:20; Lu 8:15) These *"other sheep"* would learn the truth, convert to Christianity, and *"become one flock"* with them. If they took part in teaching others what they had learned they would becoming part of that *"one shepherd"* that collectively taught the one true message. (John 17:11, 22-23)

Fold Design

I was thinking about the design of the fold; why it is round, why there is no gate, and so on. I could find no information regarding the reason for the shape of sheepfolds, but we do know about the behavior of sheep, so that can help explain things. Here are my reasonings on this topic:

Sheep are excitable and skittish. They can even die from panic. They run from danger and band together for protection. They have an intensely gregarious social instinct. Isolation from other sheep can cause severe stress. A mirror has been successfully used to calm a lone sheep down since it sees its own reflection and thinks it is no longer alone.

When a sheep is startled and they don't know where the source of the perceived danger is, they will bunch up and circle, like when fish form a bait ball. A round enclosure allows the sheep to run in a circle when startled without them coming up against a corner wall that a square pen has. A running frightened sheep that is confronted with a corner wall will very likely try to jump it. A round sheepfold takes advantage of their natural instinct to circle when frightened and yet still keeps them in one place.

Out in the open, if a danger is seen by the sheep, they will of course run directly away from it. But in a round enclosure, where they cannot see over the wall and the noise that startled them, they will bunch up in a ball and circle until they calm down and realize there is no danger. Even when nothing has distressed them sheep will often circle seemingly out of contentment or to feel more at ease.

Other than their shepherd, sheep do not have a leader. Because of their strong tendency to congregate, the flock itself, as a whole, is their leader. A sheep will follow the lead of the sheep that happens to be in front of it.

These characteristics, however, do not all describe a ram. Shepherds will typically keep just one mature ram in their flock. Rams behave differently than ewes, especially during breeding season. A ram that becomes overly aggressive is replaced. If you have to enter an area where there are sheep, keep an eye out for a ram and do not turn your back on it. And do not encourage their butting behavior. It only makes them see humans as a challenge to their dominance which makes them more aggressive and dangerous. You may think he is playing, but to him it is no game. Many people have lost their lives or gotten severely injured for not taking seriously that innocent looking ram.

(That description of a ram's behavior reminds me of some elders i've known.)

Why no gate in a sheep fold?

Shepherds take sheep to pasture during the day, then bring the sheep to the fold at night. The shepherds are then off work, clean up, eat dinner, and sleep until morning.

The keeper of the fold is on duty during the night keeping watch over the sheep. Come morning he allows the shepherds to take their sheep, and then it is his turn to be off work, clean up, eat, and sleep until the shepherds return in the evening.

The lack of a gate forces a young family member who is given this job and stationed at the entrance of the fold to remain at his post. If there was a gate he could just close it and sleep or wander off in the night.

Since sheep are skittish, the walls are tall enough so the sheep cannot see over them, but a single standing fold keeper can see over the walls and keep an eye out in all directions for danger.

So what do *you* think?

:^)

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