

Vicarious Sacrifice: Sheep Follow Their Shepherd's Voice, John 10:4; Pharisees Challenge the Validity of the Beggar's Sudden Acquisition of Sight, John 9:27-34; David's Doctrinal Orientation, Ps 23:1-2; Jeremiah's Doctrinal Inculcation, Jer 15:16a; the Jewish Declaration of Faith: The *Shema*, Deut 6:4-5; the Foremost Commandment: The *Shema*, Mark 12:28-29

John 10:4 - "When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice."

1. The verse begins with the verb "puts forth," which is the aorist active subjunctive of **ἐκβάλλω (ekballō)**: "to bring out."
2. The idea here is that Jesus as the Shepherd, leads His sheep out of the sheepfold in order to feed them. Salvation is phase one in the plan of God which qualifies a new believer to progress in phase two, the Christian way of life.
3. Among the sheep that are now in the Lord's flock is the formally blind beggar of John 9. His ability to see presents a problem for the Pharisees since they desperately wanted to discredit the miracle and in doing so discredit Jesus as being the Messiah.
4. In their exchange in John 9:24-34, the Pharisees denounce the beggar's testimony by claiming that Jesus had to be a sinner (v. 24) to which the beggar responded, "One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see" (v. 25).
5. Angered by this, the Pharisees counter by asking what Jesus did to enable him to see (v. 26). The beggar turns the tables on these gurus with this brilliant response:

John 9:27 - He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?"

6. Incensed by the accusation, the Pharisees reviled Him and said:

John 9:28b - "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

v. 29 - "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from."
7. Blindness was the reason the man was a beggar. Inability to see limited his ability to use his talents to support himself. This does not mean he was ignorant.
8. Helen Keller was rendered blind, deaf, and mute at the age of nineteen months by an unknown illness. Yet she learned to speak and write through the guidance of her mentor, Anne Sullivan. Through the beneficence of philanthropist Henry Rogers, she attended Radcliff College where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. Her autobiography was among twelve published books. Although a proponent of socialism and cofounder of the American Civil Liberties Union, she was not the first to be misguided by Progressivism. The fact remains she was a brilliant woman.
9. Our passage's beggar, although blind, was an extremely intelligent man himself with a sharp wit and quick use of deductive reasoning and logic.
10. The Pharisees considered themselves the magna-cum-laude theologians of the day, yet were buffaloes by this beggar now endowed with the ability to see.
11. In the following dialogue you will appreciate how he outthinks the theologians. Confident of his beliefs, he shows no fear of reprisals from the religious authorities.

John 9:30 - The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes.

v. 31 - "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.

v. 32 - "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.

v. 33 - "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."

v. 34 - They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and you are teaching us?" So they put him out [ἐκβάλλω (*ekbállō*): "to cast out"].

12. The Pharisees cast the beggar out, but having believed in Jesus he has become one of the Lord's sheep. As a sheep, he and others will follow the voice of their shepherd.
13. Knowing the Pharisees had cast the beggar out, Jesus employs a play on words in John 10:4 by using the same word: *ekbállō*. In verse 4, Jesus does not "cast out" the sheep, He "brings them out" to pasture which is a picture of eating the Word of God for spiritual sustenance.
14. David understood the relationship between sheep and their shepherd. One of his more famous Psalms is structured on this theme and in verses 1 and 2 he writes:

Psalms 23:1 - The Lord is the One constantly shepherding me [**occupation with Christ**], I cannot lack anything [**logistical grace**].

v. 2 - He causes me to lie down [**security from the Shepherd's teaching**] in pastures of choice grass [**advance to spiritual maturity**]; He leads me beside waters of refreshment [**his soul is hydrated with doctrinal recall**]. (EXT)

15. Jeremiah refers to his study of the Word as a spiritual feast leading to spiritual growth:

Jeremiah 15:16a - Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart [לֵבָבִי (*levavi*) cf. καρδία (*kardía*)].

16. In John 10:4, the Lord says that the shepherd "goes ahead of his flock; they follow him because they know his voice."
17. Coming out of the sheepfold is a picture of transitioning away from phase one – salvation – and into phase two – the Christian way of life.
18. New believers are to respond to the voice of the shepherd who leads by communicating God's Word. The passage that amounts to the Jewish declaration of faith is Moses' mandate to the Israelites in:

Deuteronomy 6:4 - "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

v. 5 - "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

19. This is called the *Shama'*, a commandment for the Israelites to take the yoke of the sovereignty of God upon themselves as a pledge of allegiance to Him.

20. The verb “Hear” is the Qal active imperative of שָׁמַע (*Shama'*). The Israelites are commanded to listen to the statements that follow. The entire sentence in Hebrew is: שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד. (*Shama', Yisra'el! YHWH [Adonai] Elohanu, YHWH [Adonai] echath.*)
21. This introduces the most revered prayer in Judaism:
The Shema is the central prayer in the Jewish prayerbook and is often the first section of Scripture that a Jewish child learns. During its recitation in the synagogue, Orthodox Jews pronounce each word very carefully and cover their eyes with their right hand. Many Jews recited the Shema at least twice daily: once in the morning and once in the evening. It is also sometimes said as a bedtime prayer (“the bedtime Shema”).
22. In response to a question posed by the scribes, our Lord attested to the primacy of this commandment above all others in:
Mark 12:28 - One of the scribes came and heard them [the Sadducees and Jesus] arguing, and recognizing that He has answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost [πρώτος (*prōtos*): first; #1] of all?”
23. Now there are a lot of commandments in the Torah. Most would give one of the Ten Commandments high marks for number one. There are hundreds more throughout the five books of the Pentateuch, especially in Leviticus.
24. But the command the Lord cites as Number One is the *Shama'*:
Mark 12:29 - Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The LORD our God is one LORD.’”
25. The word “Hear” is the present active imperative of the verb Ἀκούω (*Akoúō*): “to hear with attention and concentration; to listen to the voice and obey.”
26. The imperative mood indicates it is a command and the Lord classifies it as “foremost” in response to the scribes’ question.
27. When the Israelites heard the voice of Jesus, they were to submit to the foremost commandment found in the Tanakh, Deuteronomy 6:4: “Listen!”
28. And on what were they commanded to concentrate? Verse 5:
Deuteronomy 6:5 - “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
29. Instead of doing this, the high pooh-bahs of theology have ears to hear, but did not perceive that the Man they interrogated was the Messiah.
30. They hear His voice, but they did not follow what He was saying, indicating they were not sheep and more importantly, they were not authorized shepherds of God’s flock in Palestine.
John 10:4 - “When he [the shepherd] puts forth [leads them out of the sheepfold] all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow [present active indicative of ἀκολουθέω (*akolouthéō*): to follow a teacher] him because they know his voice.
31. The concept is to follow the shepherd by listening to what he has to teach. In the Incarnation, those who “followed” Jesus did so literally.

John J. Parsons, “The Shema,” http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Scripture/Torah/The_Shema/the_shema.html (accessed February 27, 2014). Note: Listen to “The Shema” sung on this site.

32. Post ascension, believers follow Jesus by listening to His Word, a principle the Lord emphasized in His high priestly prayer in Gethsemane:

John 17:17 - "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."