

John 10:4 — They Know His Voice

The Sheep Follow Him — One Flock, One Center, and the Final Shout

Scripture Reading: John 10:4, 16

“And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.” (John 10:4)

“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)

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17)

One Flock, Not One Fold

Verse 16 says there shall be one fold and one shepherd in the King James Version, but the correct word is flock, not fold. The distinction matters. A fold is an enclosure — a wall, a pen, a fence that keeps the sheep inside by external constraint. A flock is a company of sheep in the open field, held together not by any wall but by a center. In the Lord’s thought, the center of the flock is the shepherd himself. The sheep are not penned in; they stay together because they are attached to him. There is no fence; there is a shepherd. That is the character of his desire for his people.

He has Jewish sheep, and he has other sheep not of that fold. Both will hear his voice, and there shall be one flock. The unity is not organizational; it is not

maintained by walls or structures. It exists because all the sheep know his voice and follow him who is the common center.

The Sheep Follow Him, for They Know His Voice

The characteristic of the Lord's sheep is that they know his voice. This is not the same as knowing all the Bible, or knowing all theology. It is something more personal and more immediate: if there were one thing that a person heard the Lord say to them, and they did it because he said it, that one act of obedience would make them practically — as to that moment — one of the sheep of the Lord Jesus. The sheep hear and follow. That is what they do.

It is part of his ways with us that when we fail to hear, or hear and find excuses not to obey, he comes back. He says the same thing again. Sometimes his governmental hand is upon us as his children — for our good and his glory — until we are ready to say: the Lord said that to me, and I must do it. That is the work of the shepherd with his sheep. He does not abandon them when they do not immediately follow. He goes before them, and he calls again.

The promise that accompanies obedience to the first thing he says is that he will speak more. When the sheep is obedient in the first small thing the shepherd directs, the shepherd speaks further. This is his way with his own. The path of the life of faith is one of hearing and following, step by step, the voice that goes before.

The Final Shout: All the Sheep at Once

The moment is coming when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. Every one of his people will hear that voice simultaneously. The dead in Christ will rise; those alive and remaining will be caught up. All together, with nothing of the dragging and reluctance and excuse-making that so often marks our response in the meantime. That moment will be the sheep of the Good

Shepherd hearing his voice in its fullest, most final, most glorious expression — and every one of them following without exception.

It is a lovely thing to think about. In ordinary life, the sheep of the Lord Jesus are often slow, often distracted, often failing to look like what they are. But at that moment — that one shout — there will be no hesitation. Not one of his sheep will be left behind; not one will fail to hear; not one will linger over an excuse. Every one of his own will be caught up together with him in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord.

The sheep follow him, for they know his voice. May it be so this very day.