



## John 10

### Background

Jesus makes some exclusive claims about his leadership of God's people and what that means for them. In doing so he contrasts himself with other leaders. In the immediate context of chapter 10 the leaders are the Pharisees.

Behind this passage are echoes of Ezekiel 34 and 37. They address the problem of Israel's leadership and failure as a nation. This is a common theme throughout the Old Testament. Through God's judgment this led to Israel being split into two kingdoms in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. By 722 the northern kingdom was effectively finished and scattered. By the time of Ezekiel, Babylon had taken the first steps of taking Judah (the southern Kingdom) into exile as slaves. Ezekiel, through his ministry, points out how the judgment of God on Judah will play out. God will leave the temple. Jerusalem will fall. The people of Judah will be enslaved and taken to a foreign land. In Ezekiel 34 and the second half of 37 Yahweh looks to remedy some of the problems by dealing with leadership. There is a promise of restoring Israel for God's glory. In chapter 34 the leaders of Israel are described as false shepherds who will face justice. His people need a shepherd and God himself will take that role so that his people will dwell safely and live life abundantly (Eze 34:30-31). His people will no longer be divided but be one in his hand (Eze 37:19). These prophecies look to a restoration of Israel but also hint to a flow on affect to the world. Jesus is emphatic about his special role in restoring and leading God's people saying 'I AM the door', 'I AM the good shepherd'. Which both evokes the God's name Yahweh and discounts others who would like to claim those roles for Israel.

### Study Suggestion

Opening: If you surveyed your friends and neighbours: What does life to the full (the abundant life) look like? How does one attain it? How have they gone at getting it? Who has helped them along the way? Who is offering the means to the abundant life?

### Read John 10 and Ezekiel 34:1-24.

Jesus uses 'figures of speech' to the Pharisees just after he has had an altercation with them (9:35-41). Who then do you think the different characters in Jesus' sayings refer to?

Character in Story	Who is Jesus referring to?
<i>Man who doesn't use the gate (thief)</i>	
<i>Man who enters by the gate</i>	
<i>Watchman</i>	
<i>Sheep</i>	
<i>Stranger</i>	

What does Jesus say about his own leadership, the leadership he is replacing and the people he will lead? What parallels do you see in Ezekiel 34 and the second half of 37? (You may want to break into smaller groups and divide up the areas and then report back to the group.)

	Jesus	Israel's leadership	People under leadership	Ezekiel 34:1-24; 37:15-28
1-5				
7-10				

	Jesus	Israel's leadership	People under leadership	Ezekiel 34 and 37:15-28
11-18				
22-30				

How does Ezekiel 34 help us understand what Jesus means by 'the abundant life'? What other clues are in John 10 about life to the full? What would it have meant for those who heard him that day? What does it mean for us?

What does Jesus say he will do for his sheep that no one else can? Why does Jesus need to do that in order for anyone to live life to the full (the abundant life)?

How do you think your friends, neighbours and colleagues would respond to Jesus' claims to bring life to the full and how he delivers it? What alternative ways would they suggest to achieving the good life (personal, national, international)?

What do you think Jesus means when he says he has sheep in other folds v. 16? (see also Ezekiel 37:15-28) What do you think the listeners would have thought of this? What do we know now that the gospel has come to us?

What kind of leadership does Crossroads and other churches in Australia have? How might this passage and 1 Peter 5:1-5 help us understand leadership and responding to leadership? (Peter is told to 'feed my sheep' by Jesus after his resurrection - John 21:15-17.)

How does John 10 and its background help us to understand how the Christ is also God the Son? (How does this passage along with Ezekiel 34 help with your doctrine of the Trinity?)

How is it that people can listen to God and that he can talk to them? What makes it hard for people to hear? (esp. from v. 6, v.4, 14, 34-38 also Gen 1:26-28, Gen 3: Psalm 89)

What problems, concerns and comfort come from Jesus' claims that he has exclusive rights to God and to life?

How can we encourage other Christians with the ideas in this passage?

What does it mean for explaining who Jesus is to others?