

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further
International Bible Lessons

John 10:1-15
Sunday, April 30, 2017
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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why do you think “thieves and bandits” is a good description of false messiahs, false prophets, false teachers, and false religious leaders?

A thief can steal without being seen, though perhaps he is caught later. A false prophet or false teacher can be a thief when they steal the faith and truth from someone without the person knowing what is happening until it is too late to stop the thief. Recovering the faith and the truth that has been stolen from someone is sometimes impossible and often difficult, even after the false prophet or false teacher has been exposed as a thief. A bandit is seen, though he is sometimes masked, when he uses threats or violence to commit a robbery. A false messiah or false teacher (prophet or leader) is a bandit when they use threats or violence to mentally or physically abuse someone in an effort to turn them from their ideas, their faith, their trust in God, or their understanding of the truth. If the “religious” bandit succeeds, they have robbed someone spiritually and have stolen the truth and commonsense from them. People who turn from God when they or their families are threatened, sometimes find it difficult to return to their beliefs.

2. As the sheep of God, what are some things we can do so we do not get tricked into listening to religious, spiritual, or psychological “thieves and bandits”?

We can read and study the whole Bible, and learn the Bible’s teachings in the context of the whole Bible (so we will not be misled as the devil tried to mislead Jesus when the

devil tempted Him by quoting Scripture). We can keep believing that the Bible is the inspired and infallible word of God, and keep trusting in the Bible and keep praying for the Holy Spirit to help us understand, interpret, and apply the Bible to our situations in life. We can memorize some important Bible verses and recall them to mind when tempted or threatened to believe differently. We can pray and trust in Jesus and the precious promises He has given us in the Bible. We do not need to debate the unbelieving thief or bandit, and we can always turn away from them mentally and spiritually, if we cannot turn from them physically. We can turn to God in trusting prayer for God's help.

3. What are some things God has done and does for His sheep to keep them safe?

God has given us His Word in the flesh, Jesus Christ. God has given us His Word in print, the Bible. God has given us pastors, teachers, evangelists, and others to teach us about Jesus, help us come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, and give us godly and wise counsel as the Holy Spirit leads. God has given us the Church, and the Bible to help us know when a church is being faithful to God and when it has turned from God. God has given us a great variety of ways to learn more about Him and the Bible and the godly way to live, including radio, television, and the internet. God has filled with the Holy Spirit those who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and no one can take the Holy Spirit from His sheep. God has given us eternal life, so if we lose our physical lives for His sake, we can live with God forever in heaven and someday on the new earth.

4. Why does Jesus speak so pointedly of there being only one gate, only one flock of sheep, and only one good shepherd?

Because Jesus wanted to instill this truth within our hearts and minds. God provided only one Person to die for our sins so we could be justly and mercifully forgiven for our sins, and that one Person is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Only Jesus Christ has the power to cleanse us from our sins and prepare us spiritually for heaven and life on the new earth. Only Jesus Christ gives us the wisdom and power to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Only Jesus Christ helps us love our neighbors as we love ourselves. No other religion offers or promises all these blessings.

5. Why might it have been important for Jesus to teach that His Father had commanded Him to use His own power when He laid down His life in death and when He took it up again in rising from the dead?

Jesus taught that He only did what His Father commanded Him to do. Jesus obeyed His Father in everything He said and did. He said that His words were the words of His Father. Therefore, He said that when you saw Him, you saw the Father. Some might have thought that Jesus had chosen to die of His own will and that Jesus chose to raise himself from the dead of His own will apart from what the Father wanted Him to do. Jesus wanted to teach that His Father and He were in perfect agreement regarding His life, way and time of death, and way and time of His resurrection. Only God could raise himself from the dead without external help, so in these words Jesus taught in advance that He was God and then He proved the fact by His way and time of death and resurrection.

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