I Am
the Good Shepherd

John 10:11   "*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.*

14 *"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.*

17 *The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."*

The Sign: I am the Good Shepherd.

The Setting:

1. Judea is a land of sheep and shepherds.
2. In the OT, God is often identified as a Shepherd.

Psalm 79:13   *Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever . . .*

Psalm 100:3   *Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

Isaiah 40:11   *He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; . . .*

Ezekiel 34:11   *For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.*

3. The people were looking for a superhero.

John 3:2   *. . . "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

John 6:2   *and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick.*

John 7:31   *Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?"*

John 9:16   *Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."*

But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" . . .

The Story:

The Good Shepherd is Jesus.

The hired hands are the religious leaders.

The wolves are trials and persecution.

The other sheep are non-Jewish believers.

The Significance:

1. The death of Jesus was virtuous.

John 10:11 *"I am the good shepherd . . .*

The death of Jesus was viewed as a curse, meaning God was judging Him.

Deuteronomy 21:22 *If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, 23 … because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse . . .*

Galatians 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

2. The death of Jesus was vicarious.

John 10:11 *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

The key word here is the word "for." Jesus was not dying for Himself.

In some passages of the OT, the Messiah is a superhero. But other places in the OT paint a grim even grotesque picture.

Isaiah 53:4 *Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*

5 *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

6 *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

3. The death of Jesus was voluntary.

John 10:17 *The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord . . .*

4. The death of Jesus was victorious.

John 10:17 *The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."*