

John 10:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And 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.

Analysis

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold—Jesus looks beyond Israel to the Gentiles who will be brought into His flock. The Greek ἄλλα πρόβατα (alla probata, "other sheep") refers to believers from every nation, not yet incorporated into the covenant community. The phrase "not of this fold" (οὐκ... ἐκ τῆς αὐλῆς ταύτης/ouk ek tēs aulēs tautēs) distinguishes Jewish believers ("this fold") from Gentile converts, anticipating the mystery Paul would later articulate: Jews and Gentiles united in one body (Ephesians 2:11-22, 3:6).

Them also I must bring—The divine necessity "must" (δεῖ/dei) reveals this is no afterthought but God's eternal purpose. The verb "bring" (ἀγαγεῖν/agagein) is the same word used of leading sheep, emphasizing Christ's active role in gathering His elect from all nations. This demolishes Jewish presumption that salvation belonged exclusively to Abraham's physical descendants.

They shall hear my voice—The same recognition that marks Jewish believers (verse 27) extends to Gentiles. Spiritual hearing transcends ethnic boundaries. The sheep know the Shepherd's voice whether they come from Jerusalem or the ends of the earth.

There shall be one fold, and one shepherd—The Greek reads "one flock" (μία ποίμνη/mia poimnē), not "one fold." The distinction matters: not uniformity of culture or ethnicity (one fold) but unity in Christ (one flock under one Shepherd).

Jew and Gentile retain cultural distinctions but share one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6). This verse prophesies the church's catholicity—universal in scope, united in Christ, transcending all human divisions.

Historical Context

First-century Judaism maintained rigid separation between Jew and Gentile. Gentiles were "dogs," "uncircumcised," outside God's covenant. The temple had a Court of the Gentiles beyond which non-Jews could not pass under penalty of death. Pharisees avoided Gentile contact to maintain ritual purity. Peter himself initially resisted eating with Gentiles (Acts 10-11, Galatians 2:11-14).

Jesus's declaration that "other sheep" would join the Jewish fold was revolutionary, even scandalous. His audience would have understood the implications: the Messiah's kingdom extends beyond Israel to embrace all nations. This fulfilled Old Testament prophecies that Gentiles would stream to Zion (Isaiah 2:2-3, 49:6, 60:3) and that God's servant would be "a light to the Gentiles" (Isaiah 49:6).

The early church struggled mightily with this reality. Acts 15 records the Jerusalem Council's debate over whether Gentile converts must become Jewish (circumcision, dietary laws) to be saved. Paul's letters repeatedly defend salvation by grace through faith apart from works of the law, demolishing ethnic privilege. The vision of one flock under one Shepherd took decades to permeate the church's consciousness.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's promise of "one flock" challenge modern tribalism, nationalism, and ethnic division within the church?

2. What does it mean that Christ "must" bring the other sheep—how does this reveal both divine sovereignty in salvation and the certainty of God's purposes?
3. In what ways might contemporary churches create separate "folds" (cultural, socioeconomic, racial) rather than embracing the unity of "one flock" under Christ?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἄλλα	πρόβατα	ἔχω	ἃ	οὐκ	ἔστιν	ἐκ	τῆς	αὐλῆς
And	other	sheep	I have	which	not	are	of	G3588	fold
G2532	G243	G4263	G2192	G3739	G3756	G2076	G1537		G833
ταύτης·	κάκεῖνα	με	δεῖ	ἀγαγεῖν	καὶ	τῆς	φωνῆς	μου	
G3778	them also	I	must	bring	And	G3588	voice	my	
	G2548	G3165	G1163	G71	G2532		G5456	G3450	
ἀκούσουσιν	καὶ	γενήσεται	εἷς	ποίμνη	εἷς	ποιμήν			
they shall hear	And	there shall be	and one	fold	and one	shepherd			
G191	G2532	G1096	G1520	G4167	G1520	G4166			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 56:8 (Parallel theme): The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

John 11:52 (Parallel theme): And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

1 Peter 2:25 (Parallel theme): For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Ezekiel 34:23 (Parallel theme): And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

John 6:37 (Parallel theme): All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Ezekiel 37:24 (Parallel theme): And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

John 10:11 (Parallel theme): I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:27 (Parallel theme): My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Revelation 3:20 (Parallel theme): Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

1 Peter 2:10 (Parallel theme): Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.