

John 10:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Analysis

Jesus describes His sheep with three characteristics: 'hear my voice' (tes phones mou akouousin), 'I know them' (kago ginosko auta), and 'they follow me' (akolouthousin moi). Hearing Christ's voice indicates spiritual perception and receptivity - not merely auditory hearing but responsive listening. The verb ginosko (know) indicates intimate, experiential knowledge, not mere recognition. Jesus' knowledge of His sheep is personal and relational. The sheep's response is following - akoloutho suggests discipleship, continuous accompaniment, and imitation. This threefold description identifies genuine disciples: they recognize Christ's voice, are known intimately by Him, and follow in obedience. The order is significant: hearing enables recognition of the Shepherd, which leads to following. The relationship is reciprocal: the sheep hear and follow; the Shepherd knows and leads.

Historical Context

In Palestinian shepherding, sheep learned to recognize their shepherd's distinctive call. Multiple flocks might water at the same well, but each flock responded to its own shepherd's voice. Jesus uses this familiar imagery to describe spiritual recognition - His sheep discern His voice among competing claims. The discourse addresses the question posed in 10:24: 'How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.' Jesus responds that His sheep recognize Him through His works and words. Jewish leaders rejected Jesus despite evidence, proving they were not His sheep. Early Christian catechesis used this passage to

describe conversion: hearing the Gospel, being known by Christ, and following in discipleship. Reformation theology emphasized that effective calling involves hearing Christ's voice through the Spirit's internal testimony.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What enables some to hear and recognize Christ's voice while others do not?
2. How does Christ's knowing His sheep differ from mere intellectual awareness?

Interlinear Text

τὰ	πρόβατα	τὰ	ἐμὰ	τῆς	φωνῆς	μου	ἀκούει,	κἀγὼ
G3588	sheep	G3588	My	G3588	voice	my	hear	and I
	G4263		G1699		G5456	G3450	G191	G2504

γινώσκω	αὐτά	καὶ	ἀκολουθοῦσίν	μοι
know	them	and	they follow	me
G1097	G846	G2532	G190	G3427

Additional Cross-References

John 10:16 (Parallel theme): 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.

John 10:14 (Parallel theme): I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

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 Corinthians 8:3 (Parallel theme): But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

Hebrews 3:7 (Parallel theme): Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

John 5:25 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

John 8:12 (Parallel theme): Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Galatians 4:9 (Parallel theme): But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

John 10:8 (Parallel theme): All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

John 8:43 (Parallel theme): Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.