

Twenty-One Days With John

Day 10 – John 10

Prayer:

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Psalm 23 [NIV]

Meditation:

John 10 is known the “Good Shepherd Chapter” of the Bible. In a way, it’s the perfect match to the “Good Shepherd Chapter” of the Old Testament, Psalm 23.

It’s no accident that Psalm 23 is so frequently used for last rites and funerals. If there’s any comfort in any of the images of God in Scripture, it’s the image of God as “Shepherd” which is the most comforting. It is this comfort which John wants for his hearers as he describes Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

For centuries the Jews had looked for a shepherd, one of who would lead them. Moses, the great prophet, was a good shepherd. He led the people of Israel toward the Promised Land. In so doing, Moses led them to food and water throughout the long and hazardous journey through Canaan. He was *a* good shepherd.

David, though certainly not without sin, was considered a good shepherd. As King of Israel, he presided over the “Golden Age” of Israel. During his reign surrounding enemy nations were subdued and conquered, Jerusalem was rebuilt, and the people lived in safety and unparalleled prosperity. He, also, was *a* good shepherd.

The Jews also longed for a great high priest. They longed for one who would go between them and God. Aaron’s priesthood was imperfect. The so-called incident with the “golden calf” certainly proved that (Exodus 32).

The greater high priest was Melchizedek. They longed for a priest like Melchizedek, to whom Moses presented his tithe. If only God would send a perfect, holy priest like Melchizedek, to mediate on their behalf they could find God’s favor.

Israel’s longing for the ultimate Prophet, Priest, and King converged in the image of the Messiah. As prophet, priest and king, the Messiah would be the perfect Good Shepherd as described in Psalm 23. Jesus, John notes, is the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 23. Jesus is greater than Moses, David and Melchizedek. He is God’s Chosen One.

The Jews understood Jesus’ words, “I am the Good Shepherd.” By it, they knew that Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah. By it, they knew Jesus blasphemed., that is, He called Himself “God.”

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Against Jesus claim, the Jews responded, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?” (John 10:20 NIV). Their blindness, diagnosed in Chapter 9, unfortunately is still very much present.

In the final verses of this chapter, note John records another “Festival Narrative.” In a fitting climax to this chapter the Jews ask Jesus, “Are you the Messiah? Tell us plainly” (John 10:24).

The truth is Jesus *already* had! Jesus gave them all kinds of signs and, as the Word made flesh, taught them the Word of God. Would they believe? Of course not! And they won't as long as they can't hear His voice.

The chapter concludes with another attempt on Jesus' life. They recognized that Jesus' actions were a perfect representation of all that was expected from the Messiah. They recognized Jesus' words and teaching claimed the authority of God. They recognized how Jesus was doing what the Messiah was to do. But they wouldn't believe. Jesus was not the Messiah of God. He was the Messiah of Satan. Had they been sheep, they would have listened. But since they couldn't hear God's voice, they tried to stone Jesus.

However, all is not lost. Though the Jews wouldn't believe, note the response of the crowds in the area of where John the Baptist once baptized. John recorded their response. They recognized Good Shepherd, the Promised One, the Messiah: “many believed” (John 10:42).

Prayer:

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, be my Prophet, and speak Your will to me through Your Word. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, be my priest, Lord, and forgive my sins. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, be my King and rule my life to conform to Your will each day. In Your holy name I pray. Amen.

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