

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Ch. 10

A gaggle of tempting voices claws for our attention. Each wants a piece of us. Whom do you believe? Most look good. If only we had a trustworthy search engine, a lie detector to separate sincere from sham. Perhaps that's why you're here.

Something tells you that we're not random acts of chance, that there must be a purpose for living, an afterlife and a Master Designer.

The John File

John, son of a well-to-do Israeli fisherman named Zebedee, wrote the Gospel of John. At about age 25, in 26 A.D. or so, he and his sibling James left their fishing biz at the invite of a charismatic carpenter from Nazareth who said, "Follow me." They did, became two of Jesus' 12 disciples, and changed the world.

John was with Jesus three years, soaking up His teaching, awed by His miracles, standing by the cross as He was executed, discovering the empty tomb, seeing Jesus walk'n'talk in His post-resurrection body, then watching Him return to heaven.

By 80 A.D. when John began writing his Gospel, the rest of the New Testament was already put to bed. Peter and Paul had been martyred. Rome had destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. And now, 50 years after Christ's death and resurrection, false teachers were denying that Jesus was God. So John, an eyewitness, writes to reaffirm Jesus' divinity and historicity.

He refers to Jesus as "The Word" because God's always been communicating to us. God the Son came to earth -- and became a man! -- with breaking news that those who follow Him will spend eternity *with* Him. Paul wrote to Christ's early followers in that if Jesus had not been raised from the dead, their faith was futile, and they were still mired in sin. (1 Corinthians 15:13-14)

DISCUSS:

Bleating Hearts Club

Jesus has been performing astounding, supernatural miracles, e.g., turning water into wine, feeding thousands with a mere handful of bread and fish, walking on the Sea of

Galilee, healing the blind and lame. Each miracle clearly proving He is God's Son. Many were convinced and placed their faith in Him. Others, like the Pharisees, called Him a blasphemer and set out to destroy Him.

The enigmatic carpenter's son from Nazareth knows how to relate His bigger-than-life message to everyday folks in terms they can get. He carefully distinguishes Himself from the "false shepherds," i.e., that sect of 6,000 Pharisee rustlers who, by insisting that Christ was a phony, are robbing their flock of the truth that believing in Jesus alone provides personal salvation. Jesus accuses them of twisting and distorting God's law. Their teachings become the basis for today's Talmudic Judaism.

In ch. 10 it's early October in 29 A.D., the season of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, a time for recalling their 40-year wilderness trek from Egypt to the Promised Land. **Let's read all of John ch. 10.**

DISCUSS:

Messiah's I.D.

Jesus lays out the test for identifying the True Shepherd:

- (1) He enters by the gate. No one but Jesus ever came to Israel in total fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophets had predicted about their coming Messiah.
- (2) The gate had been opened for Jesus by the gatekeeper, John the Baptist, who identified Jesus: "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
- (3) The sheep listened for His voice, and He called them by name. Jesus deals with us one-to-one, as He did with Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the invalid at the pool of Bethesda, the man born blind. Jesus is not some impersonal statue, some dead deity. He loves you and comes to you intimately.
- (4) He leads His sheep out to pasture, going ahead of them. He wants to take you and me out of spiritual darkness, to be our Guide in this life, even walking with us through death into eternal life with Him.
- (5) His sheep follow Him because they know His voice. Sirens tempt even Christ's followers, but Jesus' sheep recognize His voice as He speaks to them in the Scriptures.

The Shepherd is also the Lamb of God, foretold by Isaiah 700 years B.C. (**Isaiah 53:3-11**). This Shepherd loved us so much, He was willing to die for us. The pure, sinless Son of God was about to lay down His life for sinners like us. Some reject Him. Others believe. There's no middle ground. (**Let's read John 10:22-39.**)

DISCUSS:

It's now late December, Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, marking the 165 B.C. rebuilding of the temple. Syrian King Antiochus Ephiphanes had desecrated it, trying to replace Judaism with Greek culture. This ushers in the Maccabean Wars.

The Pharisees push Jesus: "Are you the Messiah or not?" Still today people reject Him by ignoring what they know about Him. The Pharisees expected a military hero to overthrow their Roman bullies. But Jesus came to die for their sins, to be their Savior. He wasn't "the God they wanted." And they never got close enough to know Him. You can stroll by Poulsbo's iconic bakery but never know the satisfaction of their Scandinavian pastry unless you taste it.

Can a truly "born-again" follower of Christ ever lose his salvation? Won't you be forever grateful that Jesus says nobody can snatch His sheep from Him. Ever.

DISCUSS:

Either Or

Have you taken in a lifetime of info about Jesus? Have you seen that He defeated the power of sin at the cross, and the power of death and hell at the empty tomb? Have you let these words of John 3:36 sink in: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him?"

DISCUSS:

Life's Most Consequential Choice

Years ago I heard Adolph Coors IV say, "Life doesn't end with a shout; it just runs out." You either trust the God of the Bible, or you don't. **Your eternal destiny is your choice.**

Adrian Rogers says, "Everyone has an eternal *existence*. What we need is everlasting *life*, and I've decided to spend *mine* in the no-smoking section! If you're wrong about Jesus, it doesn't matter what you're right about." It's been said, "If you have it ALL and miss God's presence, what you have is worthless." Please get it right.

It's been said, "Salvation is like a parachute. You don't put it on to enjoy the flight. You put it on to save you from sure death when you jump." Jesus, God's sinless Lamb, willingly became the Perfect Sacrifice for your sins and mine. In the eyes of our just God, someone has to pay for our sins. Jesus did on the cross.

This Jesus flung uncountable stars into space who made dirt, each speck containing billions of micro-organisms. Jesus God created you, knows your name, died to save you from your sins and longs to be your Good Shepherd. Tell Him from your heart, "God, I give You my life and accept Your permanent forgiveness for my sins. Thank You. Amen."

His Deal

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