

JOHN

Lesson 10 w/Answers

John 9:1 - John 10:42

As we move to Chapter 9 of John's Gospel, we observe Jesus continuing to provide signs that he is the Messiah. Chapter 9 contains the well-known account of how Jesus healed a blind man on the Sabbath. To make it even more interesting, the blind man had been blind from birth and was well known to the Jews in Jerusalem. The Pharisees reacted negatively to this miracle, and in our study we will also focus on the Pharisees and their "blindness." However, we will also recognize that same blindness all around us today. How appropriate it is that Chapter 9 begins with Jesus declaring that he is "the light of the world."

In contrast to the false shepherds, i.e., the Pharisees, that Jesus calls out in Chapter 9; in John Chapter 10, Jesus will refer to himself as the "Good Shepherd." Unlike the false shepherds who do not care about their flocks and let them scatter when peril comes, Jesus will teach us about the Good Shepherd who gives up his life for his flock, and who assures every believer of their eternal security.

So let's look at the blind Pharisees, the false shepherds, and contrast them with the "Light of the World,"—our savior, "the Good Shepherd."

Read John Chapters 9 and 10, noting the differences between the religious leaders of the day and Jesus, the Messiah; then consider the following:

1. Notice at the opening of Chapter 9 that the disciples ask Jesus a fundamental question when they see a blind man who was blind from birth. They ask Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned? This man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Why would they have asked such a question? Where could this teaching have come from? Read Isaiah 29:18, 35:5, and 42:7; plus read Exodus 20:5 and Ezekiel 20:5.
 - a. ANSWER 1: The disciples were mistakenly taking these Old Testament passages and assuming that all of our human frailties, deformities, and illnesses are all the result of sin that is either in our lives, or that we are suffering as a result of our parents' sin.
 - b. ANSWER 2: There are many problems with taking this position. One of the major ones being that if we believe this, then we believe that all of us who are healthy, have our eyesight and so on, are living a righteous life; and anyone who does not have good health is a sinner. This is a judgment that is obviously based on the wrong premise.
2. Of all of the answers that Jesus could have provided them regarding why this man was born blind, I would imagine that none of them were ready for what he told them next. What does Jesus say is the reason that this man led a life of blindness, and what can we learn about our own lives as a result?
 - a. ANSWER: He tells us something that we would not expect: that God intentionally had the man born with blindness. God brought him into this world blind. This man would live a life in total darkness until Jesus healed him—all with the single purpose of revealing to the world that Jesus is the Messiah. We can learn from this that God's ways are different than ours, just as are God's thoughts different than ours. (See Isaiah 55:8) This indicates to us that no matter what our current situation and no matter how difficult it is, we need to honor God in all things. (See James 1:2-5) We also see in this and other examples that God has a purpose for all of us, regardless of our situation or physical condition. (See Jeremiah 29:11)

3. The Pharisees, blind to the truth of the Messiah, are not impressed by Jesus restoring sight; and they will, for the rest of his earthly ministry, reject Jesus and find numerous ways to accuse him of being a sinner. Read the following verses and note each argument the Pharisees use against Jesus and this miracle. (9:16, 28-29, 34 and 40-41)
 - a. John 9:16
 - i. ANSWER: They argued that Jesus was a sinner, because he did not keep the Sabbath.
 - b. John 9:28-29
 - i. ANSWER: They argued that they were disciples of Moses, but did not know whose disciple that Jesus was.
 - c. John 9:34
 - i. ANSWER: They rejected the blind man's testimony because he was "steeped in sin at birth,"—incorrectly believing that his blindness was the result of sin.
 - d. John 9:40-41
 - i. ANSWER: They refused to see that they were blind to the truth of the Messiah.
4. In verse 41 of Chapter 9, Jesus states that if the Pharisees were blind they would not be guilty of sin; but since they claim that they can see, their sin remains. Why do the Pharisees believe that they can see, but Jesus states that they are blind? Why are the Pharisees blind? And what exactly are they blind to?
 - a. ANSWER: The Pharisees believe they can "see" because they think they know all of the scriptures, traditions and teachings. However, they are actually blind, because they do not see the truth within those scriptures. They ignore all of the prophecy pointing to Jesus, favoring instead a willful blindness that allows them to remain in power and to continue to lead the people of Israel astray. Further, they are blind to God's eternal plan and His plan of salvation—available to all of mankind, Jew and Gentile. In John Chapter 10, Jesus will set them straight on this as well.
5. As we now turn our discussion to Chapter 10, I would like to relay a story regarding an experience that I had while excavating the dig in Jordan, Tall el-Hammam, the biblical site of Sodom. The most prominent feature of the site is a very tall and steep hill, with the upper city situated at the top. Around the site on every side are Bedouin sheep and goat herders and their flocks. Still living out of goat hair tents (as Abraham would have done over three thousand years ago), the shepherds go about their daily routine seemingly unaware of the excavation work. When you first arrive at the site each morning, you believe that the sheep are kind of scattered around the camp of tents; and it appears to us westerners that much is in disarray. However, one morning as we began the climb to the upper city, a Bedouin herder came out of the mouth of his tent, said something that we could barely hear (let alone understand); and immediately a group from the scattered sheep formed an organized herd directly around the shepherd. They had heard and recognized his voice. He then began walking out toward the pasture, and his sheep followed him—not the sheep that belong to the other shepherds, only his. At the end of the day, we were exhausted from a day of working in the hot sun and looked forward to packing up and heading back to the hotel. We could hear a lamb bleating loudly in the distance to the point where it was really getting annoying. Looking down over the hill, I saw that the shepherd was busy herding his flock into the sheep gate area, appearing to not hear the lamb calling for help. But once he had shut the gate, he very calmly climbed the steep hill, rescued the lamb, and came back and returned the lamb to the fold. It was an amazing day, and it literally made the Bible and Jesus' teachings about being the Good Shepherd come alive. I hope that hearing about it will for you as well. Read John 10:1-19 and note all of the points that Jesus uses to depict the difference between a good shepherd and a bad one.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Only the good shepherd comes through the gate; bad ones try to sneak into the sheepfold because they want to steal the sheep away.
 - b. ANSWER 2: The good shepherd enters through the gate, the sheep know his voice, and he knows them by name, just as we know Jesus—and he knows each one of us personally.
 - c. ANSWER 3: The sheep are only safe if they enter through the Good Shepherd's gate; he will keep them safe and lead them to find pasture. (See Psalm 23, for example.)
 - d. ANSWER 4: Sheep are led, not driven. The shepherd goes ahead of them to keep them safe from harm; knowing this, the sheep follow him.
 - e. ANSWER 5: A bad shepherd, a thief, comes only to steal and harm. They do not care for, or about, the sheep; they care only for themselves, just like the Pharisees of that day, and the false prophets of our day.
 - f. ANSWER 6: A good shepherd will lay down his life for his flock; a bad shepherd is only in it for the money.

6. In John 10:16, Jesus states, "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd." What does he mean when he refers to "other sheep" and "one flock, one shepherd?"
 - a. ANSWER: He is of course referring to the Gentiles who have not yet heard the Gospel. We can see here that it is God's plan that all come to know—Jesus, Jew and Gentile—and whenever this occurs, they become one, a single flock, with Jesus as their shepherd.
 7. John 10:27-30 is a very powerful and profound set of verses. Jesus is telling the disbelieving Pharisees that he is the Messiah, and he is stressing one other very important point that applies directly to you and me. (See also Romans 8:33 and Romans 8:39.) What is it?
 - a. ANSWER: Jesus tells them that his sheep "shall never perish." Now look at his following assertion: "No one can take them out of my hand." I have taught lessons before on the security of the believer; but, for sure, this one sentence tells us all that we need to know—absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God. You cannot lose your salvation, and you are assured of eternal life.
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In the remaining verses of Chapter 10, Jesus leaves the disbelieving Jews behind and returns to the other side of the Jordan, to the place where John The Baptist had first preached; and now many receive Jesus—"And many there began to believe in him."

Jesus truly is our Good Shepherd, leading us on the right path, caring for us, and protecting us from evil. What a wonderful blessing is to have a shepherd like Jesus, and to have an eternal home waiting for us that he has personally prepared for each of us!

Have a blessed week as you continue studying with us.

In Christ,

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