Sunday, May 30, 2021 am

TEACHINGS OF JESUS (48)
"I AM" Sayings of Jesus (4)
I AM the Door
John 10:7

We are currently examining the I AM sayings of Jesus. Thus far we have noted His declaration as being eternal God, the Bread of Life, and the Light of the World. Today we turn to John 10 where we find 2 "I AM" statements of Jesus. In this lesson, we will examine the first on, "I AM the door of the sheep".

I. Background and context

a. Background – the past few lessons we have noted the possibility (but it is certainly not definitive, nor necessary) that they are tied together from a timing standpoint (around the Feast of Tabernacles).

b. And that is also possible with our text today and all of chapter 10.

   i. Consider that Jesus here says, "Most assuredly, I say to you…" (10:1) which could tie it to the previous chapter(s). Having concluded His discussion of being the light of the world. The Pharisees ask, "Are we blind also?" To which Jesus replies that rather than being (ignorantly) blind, they knew what they were doing in condemning Him. Therefore, they were still in their sins.

   ii. Jesus in 10:1 could be following this up as He begins to elaborate about how there is only ONE entrance to the sheepfold.

   iii. 10:1 – Jesus warns that if one enters the sheepfold by a different way, he is a thief and a robber.

   iv. 10:2 – but the shepherd enters by the door – a TRUE shepherd will enter the proper way.

   v. 10:3-5 – the doorkeeper will open the door to the shepherd, the sheep will hear his voice as he calls them out one by one (more on this in our next lesson on this series – Jesus as Shepherd). Jesus proceeds to describe how they listen to the shepherd, but NOT a stranger. They flee from the stranger.

   vi. 10:6 - Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand what He was speaking about.

   vii. So Jesus continues by declaring He is the Door to the sheep (vs. 7, 9)

   viii. All who came before were thieves and robbers. Consider the Pharisees and council who considered themselves elders and leaders, and thus shepherds. They were leading Israel in a wrong direction, and the righteous would have known this.

   ix. 10:9 – as the door Jesus said, "Anyone who enters by Him, would be saved and go in and out and find pasture.

   x. 10:10 – Jesus contrasted Himself with the thief – he comes to steal, kill and destroy (it is about him and his wants). But Jesus came "that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

   xi. More next week when we discuss Jesus as the good shepherd.

c. A brief discussion of shepherding in 1st century Palestine is helpful here.

   i. First, sheep were quite common among the Jews, and the region around Judea was more suited for shepherding than farming. They were somewhat of a staple in their diets, and used for sacrifices, etc.

   ii. One thing to consider about sheep is that they are not highly intelligent. They depend on their shepherd for food, protection, and survival. They also work better in groups.

iii. Another observation is that they know their shepherd and follow him. In a community choral, you could have numerous flocks of sheep, but when a particular shepherd came in and begin calling his sheep by name, they would respond and follow him to pasture.

iv. The sheepfold in Palestine would typically be like a choral with a wall or fence on all sides except for the entrance (the door, or gate). Some sheepfolds were individual, and others were community. It was not uncommon (and still true in modern times) for a choral to not have an actual gate. When the sheep were all securely in the sheepfold, the shepherd would then lay down across the entrance. As such he would know if a sheep tried to leave, or something tried to get in. A true shepherd would respond to protect his sheep, while the hireling would flee (more on this in our next lesson).

II. How is Jesus the door?

a. Twice, as we have noted, Jesus said He was the door to the sheep. As the door, He determines who goes in and out, and when.

b. <u>He is the only way to heaven</u>. That is the point Jesus was trying (and still is) to drive home. His point to His audience, whether they liked Him or not, they need Him for their salvation. Their standing with God was dependent upon that.

c. <u>Contrast this with the corrupt leaders Jesus was continually confronting</u>.

i. We have seen this over and over and will continue to see it in the contexts of our studies of His teaching.

ii. Jesus knows of their hypocrisy (Matthew 23), their corruption of God's laws (Matthew 15:3-6), their prideful self-righteousness (Luke 18:10-14, Matthew 5:20, etc.).

iii. He knew what their intentions were and what they were willing to do to keep their power.

iv. He knew the danger that many of His followers faced in continuing in their ways. How often does Jesus plead with followers to follow Him only?

v. These were the "thieves and robbers" that Jesus had reference to. He addressed them 3 times in this text

1. John 10:1-2, 8 & 10.
2. An interesting study of the major prophets addresses corrupt shepherds –
    a. Isaiah 59:9-11, *All you beasts of the field, come to devour, All you beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind, They are all ignorant; They are all dumb dogs, They cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yes, they are greedy dogs Which never have enough. And they are shepherds Who cannot understand; They all look to their own way, Every one for his own gain, From his own territory.*
    b. Ezekiel 34:1-10, another strong passage rebuking their failures as shepherds.
    c. Jeremiah 23:1-2, Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture.

vi. The POINT Jesus is making here – God's people had been ravaged by these corrupt leaders. He is calling upon them to follow Him INSTEAD of them.

d. <u>Consider that idea of a door is granting access</u> – Jesus is the access to the Father that they needed. Ephesians 2:18 says, *For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.*

e. He is the door to:

i. ***Salvation*** – John 10:9, "If anyone enters by Me, He will be saved."
Hebrews 7:25 notes, *Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

ii. ***Safety*** – Matthew 11:28-30 – Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden…

iii. ***Life abundant*** (not sparse) – John 10:10 – Jesus is not wanting us to just get by in this life. He does not offer us just enough. He offers abundance.

f. <u>What did Jesus mean when He mentioned going in and out to find pasture in vs. 9</u>?
    i. Some use this to imply once saved, always saved or the impossibility of apostasy. That is contrary to many passages of scripture – 2 Peter 2:20=22, Galatians 5:4, Hebrews 10:26-27, etc.
    ii. But in reality, Jesus is dealing with sheep and their shepherds engaged in their lifetime activities. They would go out to find pasture, and come back in for protection at night.
    iii. That is NOT descriptive of a Christian's see-saw salvation. It's a Christian doing his work, ALL OF IT, while letting his light shine and serving Him. I equate this MORE to the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, etc.) than one's faith wavering without consequence.

III. Lessons to learn from this?

a. <u>There is only ONE way to heaven</u> – and that is through Him.
    i. This is continually emphasized in scripture –
        1. Ephesians 4:4-6 – the 7 "ones" – one Lord, one Faith, one baptism…
        2. Acts 4:12 – no other name by which we may be saved…
        3. John 14:6 – the way, truth and life – no one comes to the father…
    ii. Yet many today follow after different "saviors" – Muhammed, Joseph Smith (Mormons, LDS), Buddha (and other Eastern mystics and philosophers), Mary Baker Eddy (Church of Christ Scientist), or even some charismatic leader of a church.
b. <u>Jesus knows who His sheep are</u> – we can take consolation in the fact that He knows all who belong to Him. More on this in our next lesson (Shepherd)
c. <u>Beware of wolves</u> – a wolf would be someone who intends to deceive you with false doctrines.
    i. The Bible is clear there are false teachers and false doctrines.
    ii. 2 Peter 2:1-3, Acts 20:28-30 – the warning to elders to watch out for wolves.
    iii. IF Jesus is the only door, then anyone who teaches a different way is FALSE.
    iv. Consider Galatians 1:6-9.
    v. AND our responsibility is also clear – Ephesians 5:11 & 2 John 9-11, etc.
d. <u>How does one enter into the sheepfold through Jesus?</u>
    i. By obeying the gospel. God's plan of salvation is revealed throughout the New Testament.
    ii. It includes hearing His word (Romans 10:17), believing it (Romans 10:9-10), repentance (Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38), confessing Him as Lord and Son of God (Romans 10:9-10, Acts 8:35-39; and finally being baptized into Christ - Galatians 3:27, Romans 6:3-4, Acts 22:16, etc.
e. <u>We must enter into His flock and stay with Him for safety and spiritual protection</u>.
    i. Revelation 2:10 declares that we faithful until death
    ii. Hebrews 10:36-38 talks about how we need endurance.
    iii. Luke 9:62 reminds us that we cannot look back and be pleasing unto God.

And thus we can Jesus is our door. He is the ONLY entrance that can lead to salvation and ultimately our home in heaven. In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus described this as the narrow way that few find (Matthew 7:13-14). We need Him. Therefore, let us resolve that we will NOT be like the Pharisees that rejected Him because He was not what they wanted. And even today, let us NOT reject His will to follow the whims of some man who is teaching another gospel. Jesus has made a way open, and it is available to everyone of us. What about you? Have you walked through that door? Think about it!