



ALABASTER
GUIDED MEDITATIONS

JOHN

READ | REFLECT | RESPOND | REST





10

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP

¹ “I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! ² But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They won’t follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don’t know his voice.” ⁶ Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn’t understand what he meant, ⁷ so he explained it to them: “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. ¹⁰ The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. ¹² A hired hand will run

when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because he’s working only for the money and doesn’t really care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, ¹⁵ just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd. ¹⁷ The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. ¹⁸ No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.” ¹⁹ When he said these things, the people were again divided in their opinions about him. ²⁰ Some said, “He’s demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?” ²¹ Others said, “This doesn’t sound like a man possessed by a demon! Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

JESUS CLAIMS TO BE THE SON OF GOD

²² It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. ²³ He was in the Temple, walking through the section known as Solomon's Colonnade. ²⁴ The people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name. ²⁶ But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, ²⁹ for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. ³⁰ The Father and I are one." ³¹ Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. ³² Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?" ³³ They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God." ³⁴ Jesus replied, "It is written in your own Scriptures that God said to certain leaders of the people, 'I say, you are gods!'" ³⁵ And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people who received God's message were called 'gods,' ³⁶ why do you call it blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world. ³⁷ Don't believe me unless I carry out my Father's work. ³⁸ But if I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don't believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father." ³⁹ Once again they tried to arrest him, but he got away and left them. ⁴⁰ He went beyond the Jordan River near the place where John was first baptizing and stayed there awhile. ⁴¹ And many followed him. "John didn't perform miraculous signs," they remarked to one another, "but everything he said about this man has come true." ⁴² And many who were there believed in Jesus.

JESUS CLAIMS TO BE THE SON OF GOD

JOHN 10:22-31

READ

1. Read John 10:22-31 slowly (aloud, if it's not intrusive to others).
2. Read the artist's introduction, noting the words about how the theme of mystery carries throughout the book.
3. Look at the photos on pages XX and XX.

REFLECT

4. Read the passage again, slowly.
5. Notice the confusion and frustration of the people around Jesus and their final response (v. 31).
6. Examine the photos on pages XX and XX and note the differences.
7. Why do you think they are different?
8. Finally, read verses 27-29.
9. How do Jesus' words there address the mystery involved in our life with God?

10. What is your response to Jesus' statements in those verses? What, if anything, do you sense God inviting you to consider? To feel? To do?

RESPOND

11. Tell God how you feel about the mystery and journey of discovery in our life with God.
12. If you wish, ask for help recognizing God's voice.

REST

13. Read aloud verses 27-29 again.
14. Exhale.
15. Experiment with resting contentedly even when there is a lot you don't know or understand.
16. As you do so, position your body in whatever way expresses this: seated and head bowed, standing with arms and hands raised, kneeling on the floor, remaining in position of the body in the photo.