

Dark Days Ahead

Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24

Introduction

“Dark times lie ahead of us and there will be a time when we must choose between what is easy and what is right” – Albus Dumbledore to Harry Potter in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Dark times or dark days are times of misfortune, struggle, and suffering. We have gone through dark days, and we know that there are dark days ahead, *days of clouds and thick darkness* (**Ezekiel 34:12**). The question is, “How can we make it through the dark days?”

Tempted to Quit

As Albus Dumbledore said to Harry Potter, we have a choice to make when the going gets tough. We can choose what is easy or what is right. In this day, we are in a war with *wokeism* and all the anti-Christian theology and doctrine it brings into play. LGBTQ, with its anti-family rhetoric and child mutilation is growing in strength in our schools. DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) is taking over workplaces and our government. Critical Race Theory, with its historical revisionism is attacking the very foundation of our country. All these things work together to make up the clouds of thick darkness that are beginning to envelop us. To fight means to risk being ostracized, fired, or even jailed. The choice, the easy thing is to give up, to quit, to just keep our mouths shut.

Going Astray

Another temptation is to “jump ship” and go over to the “dark side.” These ideologies wield such clout because of their government support and endorsement that we may feel pressured to give in. Another thing about lies is that the best ones contain half-truths. For example, diversity sounds good, until you realize it’s not just racial and ethnic, but theological diversity as well. Equity is okay, except *wokeism* is talking about equality of outcome, not equality of opportunity. And inclusion includes doing away with all masculine pronouns for God in the Bible. We don’t want to get caught up in that, do we?

God Never Stops Searching

The good news is that God never stops searching. In 1890, English poet Francis Thompson wrote a 182-line ode to the unending pursuit of God’s love for the human soul, titled, *The Hound of Heaven*. It talks about how God, the Hound of Heaven, never stopped chasing the main character through the years, until he stopped running and allowed himself to be caught. Then, he realized just how good it was to belong to God. God is the Great Shepherd who keeps searching for us, especially in the thick darkness of our sorrows and trouble.

Christ Is Our Shepherd

God says, “*I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and He shall feed them: He shall feed them and be their Shepherd*” (**Ezekiel 34:23**). By sending Christ into the world to die for us on the cross, the father has set Him up as our Shepherd. The Shepherd takes care of the sheep, especially during dark days.

Looking Forward

One of the things that keeps us going in the dark days is the hope of salvation we talked about last week. We know that behind every cloud is a silver lining. The storms that we're going through now and will go through in the future are temporary. We can make the right choice, the hard choice, and stay in the fight because we have the ultimate salvation. The last and greatest enemy we must face is death, and Christ conquered death on the cross. Through His death and resurrection, we have eternal life, life beyond the darkness and storm. We have eternal life in the light and life of Jesus Christ.

Shepherding Us by Word and Table

Another reason not to fear the dark days ahead is this. No matter how bad things get, we know our Shepherd won't abandon us in the wilderness. Even if nothing is going our way and the whole world is against us, the Shepherd will continue to care for us and feed us. He feeds us on His Word and His body and blood. Our Shepherd has taken care of us in the dark days behind us and He will continue to care for us during the dark days ahead of us, until that great day when He calls us home.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
