

- I. More questions about Jesus' deity
 - A. John 10:22-31 . . . At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; [23] it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. [24] The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." [25] Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. [26] But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. [27] My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; [28] and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. [29] My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. [30] I and the Father are one." [31] The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.
 - B. Pray
- II. The Jews ask if Jesus is really the Messiah. When He tells them, they want to kill Him.
 - A. John 10:22-23 . . . At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; [23] it was winter (*our December*), and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.
 - 1. The Feast of the Dedication is not found among the feasts established by God in the Mosaic Law. This feast was started in 164 B.C. to memorialize the cleansing and rededication of the temple in Jerusalem for God's use alone. The more popular name for this feast today is Hanukkah.
 - a. Prior to 164 BC, a Syrian leader named Antiochus Epiphanes conquered Jerusalem and desecrated the Temple. After some years, Judas Maccabeus drove out the Syrians, cleansed the Temple of the idols, and held a national feast in honor of rededicating the Temple to God's use.
 - b. And the focus of this yearly feast was not the past reclaiming of the Temple and the nation from Syria, but rather the focus is on having a clean Temple that would be available for the coming Messiah who would come to the Temple, establish his kingdom, and make Israel an independent nation once again.

2. It is at this time of year and in this specific setting that John tells us about Jesus walking in the Temple and being asked the question in vs 24.
- B. John 10:24 . . . The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."
1. Jesus had given the crowds both words and deeds to let them know He was the Messiah, that is, God's son, or Immanuel.
 2. We know from the four Gospels that some had a sufficient understanding of the Old Testament to figure out that Jesus was the Messiah. And we know that some concluded from what Jesus said and did that He was the Messiah. An example of this would be Philip and Nathanael (John 2:43-51 – Philip and Nathanael).
 3. But as is often the case, there are those who are looking for a savior, but they do not want Jehovah-God, and they do not want Jesus Christ. And so, in spite of what they see and hear, it is not enough to bring them to repentance and faith in God and in His son, Jesus Christ.
- C. John 10:25-26 . . . Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. [26] But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep."
1. I want to begin by pointing out that Jesus does not expect unbelievers to rely on words alone for coming to faith, but rather on words and deeds, or identifiable works.
 - a. Anyone can make a claim to being God's person in a particular place at a particular time, but only those sent by God can consistently produce the works of God that verify such a claim.
 - (1) And here again, we need to examine the works to see if they are real, verifiable, and within the boundaries of scripture.
 - (2) Some produce what they claim to be "God-works" which in reality are either outright deceptions or works that do not fit within the boundaries of God's word and cannot be clearly supported by God's word as coming from God.
 - b. Jesus had the integrity and confidence that He was sent from God to provide a two-sided means for carefully examining who He was. And this is not the first time Jesus used this two-sided means of determining if someone was from God or self-appointed.
 - c. For example, Jesus linked words and deeds for verifying the integrity of a church leader when He said, "Beware of the false

prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing (*words*), but inwardly are ravenous wolves. [16] You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:15-16).

- d. This same two-sided verification took place when John the Baptist, who was in prison at the time, wanted to know if Jesus was the Christ. We read this in Matthew 11:2-5, "Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples [3] and said to Him, 'Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?' [4] Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and report to John what you hear and see: [5] the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.'"
 - e. The point here is simply this, we are not to determine the God-appointment and integrity of a church leader only by his words because he might be a great, awe inspiring, motivating, or even entertaining speaker. God's people are to look at both the words and the works – or deeds – of every church leader to determine if they are serving and leading by God's doing or if they are their by their own doing.
2. Now lets return to the request in vs 24 by the Jews and answer in vs 25-26 by Jesus. The Jews said, "If You are the Christ, tell us plainly," and Jesus answered, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. [26] But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep."
- a. Now you may be thinking that the request in vs 24 is reasonable. But it isn't! You see, even if Jesus had plainly said, "Yes, I am the Messiah, the Christ of God," it would not have been enough to bring them to repentance and faith in Jesus.
 - b. And Jesus explains that their stubborn unbelief is the result of not being His sheep. True, they were Israelites and therefore the chosen people of God, but they were Israelites with hardened hearts and rebellious ways, which is not representative of the heart and ways of those who believe in God, submit to His will, and trust in Jesus Christ.
 - c. Therefore, Jesus says they are not His sheep and as a result they cannot hear His voice (vs 27).
3. Now you may be thinking that no unbeliever is considered one of Jesus' sheep, and since when does that mean they cannot come to

repentance and faith in Jesus Christ – no matter how sinful they have been?

- a. Plus, what about the scriptures that speak of the convicting work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11), and the work of God and Jesus in drawing all unbelievers to Jesus (John 6:44, 12:32)?
 - b. Or what about the perpetual work of creation in revealing God and the evidence of the existence of God placed in every human heart by God (Romans 1:19-20)?
 - c. And do not the scriptures say that God desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4) so that no one dies in his sin (2 Peter 3:9)?
4. So why would Jesus say that these Jews cannot hear because they are not His sheep? According to Jesus, the problem with these Jews is not as simple as them not being His sheep. Jesus put it this way in John 8:44-45, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. [45] But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.”
5. The point here is that these Jews knew a sufficient amount of scripture truth AND they were making claims to be spiritually knowledgeable and astute enough to lead the people toward God. And yet, they were intentionally leading the people away from God and trying to turn the people against God’s Messiah.
- a. I say “intentionally” because they wanted something other (*such as power, prestige, and earthly riches*) more than they wanted God and godliness for themselves and the people. Therefore, they were acting according to their greatest want, not what they knew to be the right want.
 - b. There are unbelievers in our world today just like these Jews of Jesus day. They know the truth, but because they want something other than the truth more than they want the truth, they are intentional in their unbelief. As a result, they harden their own heart to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. They blind their own eyes to the works of God that reveal the reality and worthiness of God. And they block their own ears so they cannot hear the truth of God’s word.

D. John 10:27-30 . . . My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; [28] and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. [29] My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. [30] I and the Father are one."

1. These four verses are full of truth that to some seems confusing, to others provides evidence that supports their particular theology, to others is a cause for intense debate, and to the Jews of Jesus day provided an unquestionable reason to kill Jesus. Today, we will allow the mystery that surrounds some of these verses to remain a mystery while making our best effort to explain what we can.

2. [27] My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

a. If we read these words in light of today's understanding of God and His ways, or in light of the theology we prefer without taking into account the context, we can easily conclude Jesus is setting the stage for the advent of Calvinism and Reformed theology.

(1) However, if we include the context, which includes the historical setting, we see that Jesus is talking to Jews who are direct descendants of Abraham and therefore, by God's doing, God's chosen people.

(2) In other words, according to the context, we see that some of the Jews were Jesus' sheep while others were not. By birth and religious upbringing, all could be, but only some were while others listened to and followed leader other than Jesus.

(3) Therefore, only those Jews who were Jesus' sheep listened to and accepted what Jesus said as "truth," while the rest rejected Jesus .

b. In applying this to our day, we know that the church has both believers (*wheat*) and unbelievers (*tares*) in attendance. They worship and listen and serve— side by side, yet only those who have repented and trusted in Jesus and are therefore genuinely born again listen and grow and intentionally pursue whole-hearted, whole-life godliness. The tares may make changes and improve— here and there, but they want nothing to do with whole-hearted, whole-life godliness because they also have fleshly and worldly desires that are more important to them than God and His ways.

c. Alright, what about this statement in relation to Calvinism?

- (1) The scriptures tell us that God's people are a chosen, elected, and predestined people – so we are foolish to discount this part of God's revelation. But these are not the only scriptures to consider.
 - (2) The scriptures also tell us that God does not want any to perish but all to come to repentance, that whoever believes in Jesus shall not die in their sin but have eternal life, that whoever is willing to do the will of God will know that Christ's teachings are true.
 - (3) So what we have is a mystery – an unexplainable mixture of God's sovereign choosing and electing and man's free will in responding to God and His truth. So we will leave it a mystery rather than separating them as if one is right and one is wrong.
3. [28a] and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish;
 - a. Jesus already said as much in John 6:40, "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."
 - b. And in his first epistle, John writes, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. [12] He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life" (1 John 5:11-12).
 - c. But there is more here, for Jesus also said, "and they will never perish." Now without question, the word "NEVER" means exactly that! Those who Jesus gives eternal life will never perish. So does this mean that once we are saved we are always saved no matter how we choose to live or what we choose to do after being saved?
 - d. It could, but if we look closely, we see that Jesus does not end His statement here, but rather continues on and says –
 4. [28b-29] and no one will snatch them out of My hand. [29] My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.
 - a. Once again we are faced with a bit of a mystery if we are willing to consider these words in light of the whole of scripture.
 - b. For example, Peter, who by the time he wrote his letter should have understood these words of Jesus in a proper way, said, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become

worse for them than the first. [21] For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. [22] It has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A dog returns to its own vomit,' and, 'A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire'" (2 Peter 2:20-22).

- c. And the writer of Hebrews wrote, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27] but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. [28] Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. [29] How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? [30] For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' [31] It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:26-31).
- d. Without question, there are statements that support eternal security, like the words of Jesus in vs 28-29. And there are statements that support our ability to return to our old ways and in so doing, apparently lose our salvation – though we can again come to our senses and repent. Nonetheless, this presents a mystery, which in my opinion has some explanation but not a complete, satisfying explanation. So let us leave it a mystery and choose to live our Christian life carefully, thoughtfully, and seriously until our dying breath, rather than think we can safely continue in the practice of any sin.

III. Conclusion

- A. We will pick up with the words in vs 30 the next time we meet. [30] I and the Father are one.