

John 10:22-42

II. Jesus Reveals Himself to the World (1:19-12:50)

P. The Sixth Sign – Healing the Man Born Blind (9:1-41)

Q. The Seventh Discourse – The Good Shepherd (10:1-21)

R. Titles and Works (10:22-42)

The action finally breaks in John 10:22. Everything since John 7:2 happened during or shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles, but now events shift forward a few months to the winter.¹ Yet, inasmuch as the timeline progresses, we're quickly going to return to the topic of sheep like we saw in the first half of the chapter.

As Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Feast, the Jews demanded of Him: *If You are the Christ, tell us plainly* (v. 24). In fact, He confessed that very thing to the woman at the well (4:25-26); and it was Peter's confession, too (6:69). Even if He hadn't broadcast that exact phrase, what other conclusion could one come to when faced with His teachings and His works? And, when they had come face to face with His teachings and His works, they didn't believe Him, anyway! Was saying that precise phrase going to change their minds? Or was it only going to serve to whip them up into another frenzy?

Instead of answering *plainly* as requested, Jesus once again takes the longer route in vv. 25-30. In part, He tells them that they *do not believe, because they are not of My sheep* (v. 26).² They'll continue to doubt and accuse and find fault, because they weren't called and named among God's sheep! If they were numbered among God's sheep, they would believe, for His sheep hear Him, He knows them, and they follow Him. To those sheep He gives eternal life, and note what Jesus says in vv. 28-29:

*And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; **neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and **no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.***

The Father gives the sheep to the Son → the Son gives them eternal life → they shall never³ perish. What a great comfort for those who are His sheep! To know that the grace and mercy of God extends not only from eternity past in God's selection of His flock, but it will extend through eternity future with the preservation of His flock. *We shall never perish.* This is the same concept we see in Romans 8:28-30. He foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified us. We are eternally secure from the moment that the first link is put in place!

Back in John 10, Jesus reiterates this in both vv. 28 and 29 (see the words in blue above). No one has the ability to remove us from the hands of the Father or Son. Now, sadly, some take this to mean that people can voluntarily remove themselves from their hands. In other words, someone can believe in Jesus and receive eternal life, yet subsequently renounce Jesus and willingly forfeit their eternal life. In a way, we could perhaps understand the passage to mean that (although it would require *no one* to have the exception of the person themselves). Yet, other passages prohibit this interpretation. Jesus *loses nothing*

¹Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand (7:2) vs. Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem (10:22).

²Note again the relationship of belief to being of the fold. One isn't a member of the flock because they believe; the Word of God is clear: one believes because they are a member of the flock.

³The Greek construction is the strongest possible way to negate something in the language. Thus, the CSB translates it as *they will never perish – ever!* We could perhaps translate it idiomatically by saying *they shall in no way, shape, or form perish.*

(John 6:39). Nothing we can say or do, not even a deliberate rejection, can undo belief.⁴ Assuming none of us will deliberately forsake Him in the future, let us derive hope and peace from the fact that, even on our worst days, even when we're stuck in sin and trials and tribulations, nothing is going to snatch us from Jesus' hands! To use Paul's phrasing in Romans 8, we're going to be glorified no matter what! While sin hinders our fellowship with God, don't let the guilt of confessed sin drive a wedge between us and Him!

Continuing on, Jesus makes a statement in v. 30 that surely gets the Jews' blood boiling yet again: *I and the Father are one*. In a way, this answers their initial question about Him telling them *plainly*. We know it does, too, because of their response: they once again *took up stones. . . to stone Him*. Jesus – and I can't help but think that He's doing this a bit tongue-in-cheek – responds: “Hey, I've done a lot of good things that back up the claim I just made. For which one of them are you stoning me?” But the Jews hit the nail on the head, and answer their own question, with their response in v. 33:

For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.

Ding ding ding! This is a prime example of knowing the truth but lacking the common sense to see what's literally right in front of them. God in the flesh. Within reach. Engaging them in conversation. Of course, John includes this because it backs up his claim and purpose of his writing of the Gospel (cf. 20:31). Even the Jews recognized Jesus for who He is, but yet they failed to recognize it! No one is disputing what John is setting forth. Men and women will die and be martyred in His name. Jesus is the real deal, and John is recording Jesus' teachings so that others might know and believe in His name.

Jesus responds by quoting Psalm 82:6, a passage that refers to human authorities and rulers as *gods*. If the Old Testament can refer to humans as *gods*, and the Old Testament *cannot be broken*, then it's within the realm of possibility that Jesus can rightfully claim that title, as well. The judge should be His works. Do His works back up His claims? Because if the works back up the claims, the Jews better fall in line and recognize Him as their Messiah! For John's purposes, he weaves the works in and through Jesus' teachings to demonstrate just that: not only did Jesus make this claim, but He had the works to back it up, as well.

With that, Jesus slipped away, *He escaped out of their hand* (v. 39), and *many believed in Him* (v. 42) as He returned to the place where the Baptizer originally baptized.

⁴Now, perhaps we can go down the road of whether or not they were “truly” or “genuinely” saved to begin with (which aren't qualifiers found in Scripture with any regularity, if at all). And it's a valid point. There are those who reject Jesus who perhaps never did believe in Him, but simply professed to for whatever reason. We aren't talking about those people! Unbelievers were always unbelievers!