

John 10:22-42
Jehovah Jesus

Introduction: John wrote his Gospel as an evangelistic tract. His goal was to persuade unconverted Jews, living throughout the Roman Empire, to believe in Jesus. As we read this, ask yourself, *How did John design this information to cause an unbeliever to believe in Jesus?*

******Why did the Jewish leaders not believe that Jesus was the Christ (10:22-30)?** The reason they did not believe is because they were not part of His flock, not His sheep, 10:26.

Riddle: Look carefully at 10:26. Were they not sheep because they did not believe, or did they not believe because they were not sheep? Scientists speak of cause and effect. Notice that the word “because” is found in 10:26. “Because you are not part of my flock”, the effect is that you do not believe.

Inconvenient Truth: Barking does not make a dog a dog; being a dog makes a dog bark. Believing does not make a person a sheep. Being a sheep makes a person believe.

ESV **John 8:47** Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.

Since believing does not make a person a sheep, how does a person become a sheep? That decision was made by God before we were ever born:

ESV **John 5:21** . . . the Son gives life to whom he will.

ESV **John 6:44** No one can come to me unless the Father . . . draws him.

ESV **John 6:65** . . . no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.

ESV **Ephesians 1:4-5** . . . he chose us in him before the foundation of the world . . . In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will . . .

ESV **Ephesians 1:11** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will . . .

Literary Purpose: What reason did John give his readers for the obtuseness of the Jews (10:26-27)? They could not see who He was because they were not His sheep. Even their unbelief falls under the umbrella of God’s sovereignty.¹

¹ Carson, *John*, 393.

- **Feast of Dedication (10:22):** This is more commonly known as Hanukkah or the Feast of Lights. It celebrated the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 B.C. after it was cleansed from defilement by the Greeks. This ceremony was usually held in December.² John mentioned the feast as a time marker that moves the narrative along.³

Application: This was an extra-biblical feast, not prescribed by Moses (the same is true for the synagogue system). That Jesus participated in both gives a hint into His attitude toward our participation in more recent extra-biblical holy days, such as Christmas.

The Jews asked if Jesus were the Christ or not (10:24). What two-part answer did Jesus give in 10:25? Jesus answer concerned both words and works. First, Jesus said that He had already told them the answer. Second, He said the works He did spoke for themselves (actions speak louder than words).

Whereas Jesus privately told people that He was the Messiah (such as the woman at the well), He did not literally, plainly, flatly declare as much publically to the leadership. So, how had Jesus already told them if He were the Christ (10:25)? He revealed His true identity through veiled comments designed to lead them to the proper conclusion.⁴ They simply did not have ears to hear.

Example: It would be like a man who showered a woman with gifts, bought her flowers, opened the door for her, paid extra special attention to her, and spoke very tenderly to her, but never actually told her he loved her, leaving her to draw her own conclusions.

Based on 10:26-27, how can you tell if someone belongs to Jesus' flock? Jesus' sheep 1) believe, 2) hear His voice and 3) follow Him.

Application: Many today claim to be one of Jesus' sheep, but their lack of interest in following His voice betrays the fact that Jesus is not really their shepherd.

What can we learn about eternal life from 10:28-29? Eternal life can never be lost. Eternal life is, by definition, eternal. If a person had eternal life ten years but then somehow lost it, he did not really have eternal life; he had ten-year life. Salvation is a gift; you didn't do anything to earn it and you can't do anything to lose it.

ESV **John 6:37-39** . . . this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

What illustration did Jesus use to show why His sheep could never be lost (10:28-30)? The picture Jesus gave was that His sheep are securely in His hand, and wrapped around Jesus' hand is the Father's hand. Jesus said that no one will snatch them out of Jesus' hand, and that no one "is able" snatch them out of the Father's hand, who is greater than all.

ESV **Colossians 3:3** . . . your life is hidden with Christ in God.

² Dennis & Grudem, *Study*, 2044.

³ Carson, *John*, 380, 391.

⁴ Carson, *John*, 392.

When Jesus declared that He and the Father are one, *in context*, what is the very least that He meant (10:30)?

1) Purpose: They are one in purpose with respect to the works Jesus did (10:25b) and to the eternal security of the sheep (10:29). At the very least, it is a functional oneness. Jesus and the Father are in total synch; they have the same mission.

ESV **John 5:19** . . . the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

2) God-like: More than being one in purpose, Jesus' statement also suggests that He and the Father are very much alike. Sin keeps even the most devout amount us from knowing God better than we do. Yet Jesus claimed to be totally in tune with God. Jesus was claiming to be both from God and God-like.

Example: My dad passed away in the 90's. You'll never meet him this side of eternity. I'm not my dad. I obviously am a separate person from my dad. But, I am a lot like my dad was, so much so that I could, with a clear conscience, say that if you know me, you know what my dad was like.

ESV **John 14:7** If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.

ESV **John 14:9** . . . Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

3) Jehovah God: As we know, Jesus was far more than a carpenter. So too this statement that He and the Father are I suggests more than merely that they were one in purpose. Jesus and the Father are one in divine essence. In chapter one, the author clearly stated that Jesus was God.

ESV **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God.

By the time John got to the events in chapter 5, the Jews clearly understood Jesus claiming to be God:

ESV **John 5:17-18** . . . the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because . . . he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

In John 20, Thomas flatly declares Jesus to be God, and Jesus accepted his worship:

ESV **John 20:28** Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Trinity: This statement by Jesus gives another glimpse into the truth of the Trinity. God is one being who exists as three distinct persons.

ESV **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

From other Scriptures, we know that what Jesus most certainly did *not* mean is that they are the same person. Jesus and the Father talk to each other and co-exist together as two separate, co-equal, co-eternal persons. The heresy that they are the same person is called modalism. An example of this error would be to explain the Trinity by saying that I am a father to my kids, a husband to my wife and a son to my parents; the problem is that I am the same person in every relationship, but playing a different role.

More Than They Bargained For: The Jews asked Jesus for clarification on His Messianic status, and He gave them an answer far beyond what they were asking.⁵

******Why did the Jews try to stone Jesus (10:31-39)?** They understood that Jesus was claiming to be God, 10:33.

Jesus' claimed that He and the Father are one (10:30). Why was that interpreted to mean that Jesus made Himself out to be God (10:33)? The Jews were rightly very keen on the truth that there is only one God; Jesus seemed to be claiming to be another God, separate from yet equal to God.

ESV **Deuteronomy 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

What is blasphemy (10:33)? Our English word is transliterated from the Greek *blasphemia* and so in a sense it remains an untranslated word. Blasphemy is like slander against God. In this case, they accused Jesus of saying something about God that was not true: That there was more than one God, and that Jesus was one of the these other gods.

Irony: The real situation is not that Jesus, a mere man, thought He was God. The real situation is that Jesus, who really is God, humbled himself to become a man. The Son of God became the Son of Man so that sons of men might become sons of God.

In order to stop the Jews from stoning Him (10:31), Jesus rapid fired a series of questions at them (10:32-36):

1) What statement was really being made in Jesus' first question (10:32)? Jesus had done many undeniable good works (healings). Actions speak louder than words. The evidence pointed to the fact that Jesus was someone quite remarkable, someone closely associated with God. Whoever He was, He should be taken seriously.

2) What is the answer to Jesus second question (10:34)? Yes, it is indeed written in the Hebrew Scriptures that the one true God (Jehovah) called beings other than Himself "gods" (Ps 82:6). Whether these lesser beings were human rulers or spirit beings is debated; the point is that Jehovah Himself referred to lesser beings, beings that He Himself had created, as "gods". They were acting as gods in their role as judges.

⁵ Carson, *John*, 395.

Example: In *The Killer Angels*, Michael Shaara wrote, “There’s nothing so much like a god on earth as a General on a battlefield.”

3) Jesus’ third question, found in 10:35-37, is sort of an if/then question. What is the logic behind it? Since the Hebrew Scriptures record that God Himself called created beings by the title “god”, then it was not *necessarily* blasphemy for Jesus to indicate the He too was a god in some sense.

Idea: To make it clearer, read 10:35-37, leaving out everything in 10:35 after the word “gods”, plus add the word “how” to the beginning of 10:36.

Private vs. Public: Jesus told believers in private that He was the Messiah and that He was God. However, He never did publically announce to the leadership that He was the Messiah, nor did He did flatly announce Himself to be God in human form. Instead, He said and did various things to lead them to the right conclusion.

What basis did Jesus give in 10:36 for calling Himself the Son of God? The rest of the quote from Psalm 82 states, “you are gods, sons of the Most high”, so the connection is tight. The ultimate basis for Jesus claiming to be the Son of God was because the Father consecrated Jesus and sent Him into the world. He was on a mission from God just as the “gods” of Psalm 82 were on assignment from God. In this case, of course, Jesus really is God the Son, sent by the God the Father.

What does “consecrated” mean (10:36)? The NIV has “set apart”. The time marker given by John was that this happened during the Feast of Dedication of the temple, but it was Jesus who was truly and ultimately dedicated to God.

The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy because He said that He and the Father are one (10:30, 33). In His answer to them, Jesus mentioned that they said He blasphemed because He said he was the Son of God (10:36). How did it go from the blasphemy that He and the Father are one to the blasphemy of Jesus claiming to be the Son of God? In their minds, there obviously was a tight connection between being one with the Father and being the Son of God. To claim one was to claim the other.

Why did Jesus make the statement that Scripture cannot be broken (10:36)? The Jews held Scripture in high regard. Jesus was pointing out that it was unacceptable to set aside clear statements from Scripture just because the text He quoted was inconvenient to them at that moment. Jesus gave them a scriptural reason why it was acceptable for Him to call Himself the Son of God.⁶

Example: Supposed an armed man suddenly burst into your home, but you were able to kill him first. The government then charged you with murder. However, you then showed them their own law where it states that if a person kills another in self defense, it is not murder, but justifiable homicide. That is sort of what Jesus did here in this situation.

⁶ Carson, *John*, 399.

Secondary Application: What can we learn about the reliability of Scripture from 10:35?

Jesus built his argument on just one word (“gods”). Every word in the Bible is true and accurate. It cannot be broken; it is reliable, dependable.

What evidence did Jesus offer the Jews as proof of His true identity (10:37-38)? He once more offered the proof of the works that He did. As before, actions speak louder than words.

What offensive claim did Jesus make at the end of 10:38? He claimed that the Father was in Him and that He was in the Father, which is close to saying that He and the Father were one.

Based on 10:39, did the Jews understand all this to mean that Jesus did or did not still claim to be God? Why? They would not have sought to arrest him unless they understood Jesus to still be claiming to be God.

End of an Era: This encounter with the Jews marks the end of Jesus’ public ministry in John’s record.

******What two factors caused many to believe in Jesus (10:40-42)?** The signs Jesus did, combined with John the Baptist’s prior testimony, led many to believe.

Application: John wants his readers to believe in Jesus also.

So What?

What did we learn about who Jesus is from 10:22-42? He is the Christ, gives eternal life, is one with the Father, is God, is the Son of God, and He is in the Father and the Father is in Him.

Why did the Jews *not* believe that Jesus is the Christ? They did not believe because they were not His sheep.

Does believing make you a sheep, or does being a sheep make you believe?

What are the signs that a person is one of Jesus’ sheep? Jesus’ sheep hear Jesus voice and follow Him (in obedience).

What promises did Jesus make about His sheep? He promised to give them eternal life, and that no one could snatch them out of His hand.

What does John the author want from us, his readers? He wants us to believe in Jesus, to accept Him as the Christ and as God in the flesh, so that we too might have eternal life.

**** = Ask this question before reading the text. This will engage people’s minds and focus their attention.

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- Stephen E. Atkerson NTRF.org Revised 12/29/2019