

“Jesus and the Father are One: The Jews Reject Jesus the Good Shepherd”

John 10:22-31

Introduction: (Read John 10:22-31) - We are told that Jesus’ encounter with the Jewish leadership takes place in Jerusalem at “the Feast of Dedication.” John places it immediately following the close of the previous interaction with the Jewish leaders which took place around the miraculous healing of the man born blind and culminates in Jesus setting Himself in contrast to the Pharisees by declaring Himself to be the “Good Shepherd.” There is an obvious thematic connection in what Jesus declares/teaches in 10:1-18 and what He declares in this exchange. John connects these “interactions” within the narrative by the transition he provides as he closes the “Good Shepherd” parable and opens the narration of this interaction. As we walk through this text I will be reaching back a bit in order to tie some of the key thematic content taught in 10:22-30 to the things Jesus said in the parable.

Jesus is going to say some amazing and hope filled things about who He is and the gospel promises He makes AND the gospel work which He will do to secure those promises. The question to you and me is ultimately, “What will we/you do with Jesus – as He presents Himself – and the promises He makes?” Beginning in chapter 5 and progressing through chapter 12 the opposition of the Jewish leadership intensifies until it culminates in the plot to kill Him (cf. 11:51-53, 55-57; 12:9-10, 17-19). At the close of the parable of the Good Shepherd John noted that there was a division among the Jews over Jesus’ incredible claims. He now opens this section with the Jews gathered around Jesus asking Him to declare clearly and openly who He is (cf. 10:19-21, 24). Jesus responds by doubling down on who He is and what He promises – what He came to do! **What say you? Who do you say that He is?**

Before the Cross the Jews Sought to Separate Jesus from the People by Casting Him as a Liar, a Lunatic, a Servant of Satan and a Blasphemer – Since the Cross the World Has Sought to Dethrone Jesus and Separate Him from His People by Disputing Fundamental Gospel Claims¹ - The arguments attempt to call into question the claims that we as Christians make about Jesus person and work progress along different lines.

- They progress along the lines of scholarship which interacts with the ancient texts in an attempt to find the true Jesus – the historical Jesus. They attack the credibility of scripture, its reliability and the claims it makes about Jesus – who He is and what He actually did.

- They also progress along the lines of scientific inquiry and discovery. These are arguments that often arise as implications rather than explicit attempts to disprove the claims we make about Jesus.

¹ To consider some of modern culture’s claims against Jesus see “Dethroning Jesus,” by Darrell L. Bock & Daniel B. Wallace.

- There are those which progress along the lines set by a pluralistic society/culture. They are brought to bear on our faith by evolving social norms, philosophical truth claims and the intersection of different world religions brought about by an increasingly secular culture in a shrinking world.

We find ourselves in the very same place as the disciples in Matthew 16:13-20 when Jesus asked them, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” After the disciples told Jesus what people said about Him Jesus then asked, “Who do you say I am?” That is the question we face today – faced in every generation. What this for you and me – at every level and in every context of life – are unqualified!! Please make no mistake – there is no compromise between what the culture says or will accept and what the Lord declares about Himself – cf. Philippians 2:9-11. Jesus’ claims were too pure, unarguable, and exclusive and His witness too strong so their only recourse was to kill Him. It is no different in any generation of the church. So resolve the question this morning – **“Who do you say He is?”**

Jesus Answers The Question Of The Jewish Leadership – 10:22-26

- 10:24 - The Jews’ question comes with the false inference that Jesus has not been clear in His claims/teaching.

- 10:25 – Jesus’ answer is twofold and unequivocal;

1. “I have told you and ***you do not believe***” – “you persist in unbelief” (*εἶπον* ὑμῖν καὶ *οὐ πιστεύετε*). He has just told them who He is in a parable but His words, up to this point, have been unmistakable (cf. John 4:25-26; 5:16-47; 8:23-25, 58; 9:35-37).

2. “The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me” (*τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ* ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς μου ταῦτα μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ· ἀλλὰ ὑμεῖς οὐ πιστεύετε). These “works” are packed with declarations of who He is. They are filled with the promises of what He has come to do. They reflect the love and compassion, the kindness, which drive His work in our lives. They all point to the cross where the work of the gospel will be completed. He did all of His works so that they would believe in Him and be saved – that they/we “might have life in His name” – cf. 20:30-31.

Jesus Re-engages The Parable Of The Good Shepherd In Order To Explain The Difference Between The Unbelief Of The Jewish Leaders And The Faith Of Those Who Are His – cf.

10:26-31 – Much of the language of the previous parable is packed into these succinct statements. Moreover, these succinct statements give power and clarity to the teaching/promises of the parable.

- 10:26 – They do not believe because they are not His sheep (*τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ* ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς μου ταῦτα μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ ὑμεῖς οὐ πιστεύετε, ὅτι οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐκ τῶν προβάτων τῶν ἐμῶν). Very simply put – the difference between those who reject Jesus and

those who believe in Him is that those who believe are His “sheep.” Those who do not believe – do not believe because they do not belong to His sheep – **they are not His** (cf. 10:3-4, 14).

- 10:27 – The characteristics of one who truly belongs to the Good Shepherd – one who is truly one of His sheep – or the true “sheep-like” faith described by Jesus is twofold:

1. It is relational or familial – “My sheep listen to/hear me” and “I know them.” This is the sweet imagery seen earlier in the parable – cf. 10:3-4, 14. Notice how the sheep hearing or listening to the shepherd in 10:27 is set in terms of “knowing” His voice in 10:4 and “knowing” the shepherd in 10:14b. Furthermore, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, “knowing” His sheep in 10:27 is described in 10:3 as calling “His own by name” in 10:3 and “knowing” them in 10:14. This is two-directional familial intimacy.

2. The truth of relationship is seen in the response of faith – “they follow me.”

- 10:14-18 – The relationship between the sheep and the shepherd is a direct reflection of the relationship between the Lord Jesus, the Son of God Incarnate, and His Father. **It is at this place that it all becomes strong and deep!!**

10:15 – This is not a rogue mission by the Son/Jesus. Jesus and His Father act with a singleness of mind and with singleness of heart – the gospel plan is the plan of the Triune God and compelled by the shared love of Father, Son and Spirit (cf. 10:17 and 14:30-31; also 17:20-21, 23-24, 24-26).

10:16 – Jesus is sent by the Father to rescue those who already belong to the Father – (καὶ ἄλλα πρόβατα ἔχω ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς ἀλλῆς ταύτης· *κάκεινα δεῖ με ἀγαγεῖν* καὶ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἀκούσουσιν, καὶ *γενήσονται* μία ποίμνη, εἰς ποιμήν.) The language of the verse seems to indicate that Jesus has these “other sheep” presently – even as He speaks – and it is necessary for Him to gather them. So – they *will* hear His voice and they *will become* one flock under one shepherd.

Note: As Jesus prays in John 17:6-10 it seems clear that He is saying the ones He came to save were the Father’s before He was sent and He was sent to “gather them.” As He carries out His rescue mission we come to see that there was an inseparable “oneness” to the entire gospel mission – **All compelled and carried out by an eternal Intra-Trinitarian love!!** This is the mystery of election (cf. Ephesians 1:3ff; Romans 8:28-30).

10:17-18 – In the light of Jesus’ mission from the heart of God – sent by the Father – we can better consider the “authority” He says He has to both “lay” His life down for the sheep and “to take it up again.” The language of authority is much more than strength of power. It speaks to “mission-al” authority. **With an abundance of caution I say** – it seems to me that the authority speaks to the plan and mission of redemption and therefore His “laying down” of His life on the

cross and His “taking it up again” are effectual – they together are the finished work by which Jesus takes our humanity into the presence of God – by which we are made to share in the life and love of God (cf. John 19:10-11a,30; also Acts 2:22-24, 32-36; Hebrews 10:11-14; Ephesians 1:15-2:7; Colossians 3:1-4).

- 10:28-30 – Because this is an eternal work of the Triune God it is a guaranteed and sure hope.

1. 10:28a – I give to them eternal life (*καὶ ἐγὼ δίδωμι αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀπόλωνται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*). The eternal life in its “giving” is in progress presently and you and I who have been given eternal “will never perish, for eternity.” There is a powerful kind of redundancy in this language.

“Eternal life” absolute and never ending nature – its duration is never ending (cf. John 3:16; 11:25-26; Hebrews 11:25; 2 Timothy 1:8-10). It is life that is beyond death.

“Eternal life” is “knowing God” and “His Son, Jesus” (cf. John 17:1-3). Never ending life – as it is or even without decay etc. – without God would be empty (cf. John 14:1-6; 15:8-11; 17:20-24; Ephesians 3:14-21; Philippians 3:7-10; Colossians 2:8-10; Revelation 21:1-7)!! This is the quality of eternal life – abundant life which is of greater worth than all this life here can offer.

2. 10:28b - Jesus then returns to the language of the parable and the earlier reference in 10:12 - καὶ ὁ λύκος ἀρπάξει αὐτὰ καὶ σκορπίζει- 10:12; καὶ οὐχ ἀρπάσει τις αὐτὰ ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς μου. - 10:28. There is no threat to the life of the believer in relationship to Jesus – nothing can separate us from Him!!

3. 10:29-30 – This transitions into this wonderful and indivisible oneness of the Triune God - καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται ἀρπάξαι ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ πατρὸς. - 10:29 – You are safe – you’re saved and your life is safe in the strength of His love!!! This is that very thing for which Jesus prayed (cf. **17:11-19**). **This was a comfort to Jesus, who loves us so, because He is entrusting us to His Father who loves us with an equally pure and powerful love!!**

- 10:30 – The one who made the promise and guarantees what He gives to us is Himself the God of all of creation – He is the Creator who created in love! It was against Him we rebelled! We were instantly cast into death – separation from the life and love of God for which we were created. We were exiled for the presence of God and He pronounced the curse on fallen humanity – sin and death reigned and we were under His wrath. But His love as Creator now pursued us with the love of redeemer...

- 10:31 – This is an insane claim – *If it were not true!!* Their unbelief turned to murderous opposition. It is true – before such majestic love the Jews remained in darkness. However, no argument of the Jews could penetrate and divide the shepherd from the sheep.