

## EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #44

John 10:22-42

Not long ago a study was conducted among high school students to determine who they would turn to in time of trouble or crisis. Fathers came in at number 25 on the list. Mothers came in at number 11 on the list. At the top of the list were music and friends. Nowhere on the list was Jesus Christ.

During the Palestinian uprising in the late 1980s, the Israeli army decided to punish the people who lived in a village near Bethlehem because they had not paid their taxes. The officer in charge rounded up all of the village animals and placed them in a large barbed wire pen. Later in the week a woman came to him and begged him to release her flock. She told the officer that her husband was dead and the flock was the only means of support that she had. The officer pointed to the pen which contained hundreds of sheep and said it would be impossible for us to even find your sheep. She asked if she could in fact find her sheep, would he let her take them and he said yes. A soldier opened the gate and the woman's son produced a small reed flute. He played a simple tune again and again and soon sheep's heads began to pop up across the pen. The young boy kept playing his music and started walking for home and about 25 sheep followed him (Gary Burge, *John*, p. 302).

There are two sheep tests Jesus Christ gave when He was physically here on earth: one was an ear test (**10:27a**) and the other was a foot test (**10:27b**). The ear test is simple - God's sheep hear Christ's voice that offers grace to any who will believe on Him. The foot test is just as simple - God's sheep follow Jesus Christ's voice that offers grace to any who will believe on Him.

When Jesus Christ was here on earth in the one place in the world where He should have been worshipped - Jerusalem, most hated Him and wanted Him dead. Numerically speaking, only a handful actually listened to Him, believed in Him and followed Him. Most people were either antagonistic to Him or indecisive about Him.

Indecision about Jesus Christ is really rejection of Jesus Christ! A person may reason, I'll just think over what it is I want to believe about Jesus Christ. Maybe I'll believe in Him and maybe I won't. That kind of thinking is damnable, because that kind of thinking actually rejects Jesus Christ.

If you are coming to church and are involved in the worship services and still have not decided if you are going to get serious about faith in Jesus Christ, you need to take a very honest look at yourself because your entire eternity is on the line. What we see in this text is this:

**VERY FEW RELIGIOUS JEWS IN JERUSALEM ACTUALLY BELIEVED IN JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT HIS SHEEP, BUT MANY OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM DID BELIEVE ON JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE THEY WERE HIS SHEEP.**

Just because people are religious and go to church every single week, does not mean they are God's sheep. At this point, Jesus is nearing the completion of His three years of public ministry. He had done so many miraculous things that all the books in the world could not contain a record of them (**John 21:25**). Still the religious Jews had not believed in Him and Jesus made it clear the reason you haven't believed is because you aren't My sheep. Here is the last public confrontation Christ has with these religious Jews. In this final discourse He really zeroes in on who He is and after He is done, He is through with this nation and from here on out He will only teach His own. This is their last opportunity to have a theological discussion with God. There are six confrontational facts I want us to see:

**CONFRONTATION FACT #1** – The time and place of the Jewish confrontation. **10:22-24**

This episode occurred at the Feast of the Dedication, in Jerusalem, in the temple at Solomon's porch during winter. Jesus had left Jerusalem after the Feast of Booths (**John 7:2**), which was an O.T. law feast held in the last part of October, and now He was back in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication, which is known as Hanukkah, which is held the 25<sup>th</sup> day of December. So these feasts have been about two months apart. We are now about 3½ to 4 months from the crucifixion. If Jesus were actually physically born on December 25, then this is all taking place near the very day He should be honored for His physical presence on earth.

**The Feast of Dedication was not an O.T. law feast.** It originated between the Old and New Testaments to celebrate the Jews' victory over Antiochus Epiphanes, who had desecrated the temple. Solomon's porch had a roof over it and being winter time it was cold, damp, rainy and snowy and gloomy and many went there to get out of the elements. That is where Jesus was. **What is so tragic about all of this is that Jesus should be the One being worshipped at all of these religious ceremonies.** He is the God/King who could give Israel national and spiritual deliverance, but they would not respond.

Talk about degrading, the Jews should have been worshipping Him in His temple. Instead, He is wandering around the temple area as if He were just another Jew trying to stay warm and dry. What these Jews did not know is that winter this day had come to them. God would be very cold to Israel from this moment on and this theological chill is still operative to this day.

**Verse 24** states that "the Jews" "gathered around Him" literally encircled Him. This Greek word suggests a very negative type of gathering (Luke 21:20; Acts 14:20). This was a very intimidating showdown type of tactic. The religious leaders who want Him dead are surrounding God, thinking they can intimidate Him and force Him to respond to them. They appear to be so pious, so scholarly by saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? Tell us plainly if you are the Christ, the Messiah." Now the reason they want Him to say this "plainly" is not so they may believe in Him, but so they may kill Him. This is their goal. This has been their evil plot ever since **John 5:18** when Jesus made Himself equal with God.

Jesus has been plainly teaching these people this for three years and He had been performing amazing sign miracles to prove He was the Messiah, so **the issue here was not Him keeping them in suspense; it was one of them rejecting Him and wanting to kill Him.**

**CONFRONTATION FACT #2** – Jesus responds to the Jewish confrontation. **10:25-30**

Jesus responds with the following seven responses:

**(Response #1)** - I told you I was the Messiah. **10:25a** – I told you with my words .  
**5:17; 8:12, 24, 58**

Very early on people called Jesus the Messiah (**John 1:41**). Nathaniel called Jesus the King of Israel (**John 1:49**). Even the Samaritans had called Him the Savior of the world (**John 4:42**). Peter had said that He alone had the words of eternal life (**John 6:68**). These Jews knew what He claimed and that is why they want Him dead. This is not about fact finding, but fault finding.

**(Response #2)** - I showed you I was the Messiah. **10:25b** - I showed you with my works .

When John's disciples went to see Jesus to ask if He were the Messiah, He told them go tell John the works I am doing and that was all it took (Matthew 11:2-6). Christ had done many miracles that were His sign credentials that He was the God/Savior/Messiah. Just a couple of months before He had given sight to a man blind from birth and they tried to discredit both the blind man and Jesus who healed him.

**(Response #3)** - The reason you do not believe the evidence is because you are not My sheep. **10:26**

**The issue of being saved from your sins comes down to what you believe will save you from your sins.** It is an issue of your faith, of your belief. The religious Jews believed in themselves and their religion to save them. They believed in their laws and codes and rituals. They refused to place faith in Jesus Christ, the only One who actually could save them.

Now Jesus takes this group deep into theology and says the problem is not My evidence, there has been plenty of evidence, the problem is you are not My sheep and that is why you do not believe the evidence. Here is one of the great mysteries of theology. In Greek, the “you” is emphatic which means Jesus places all of the responsibility and blame of not believing on each person, but the reason why they don't believe is because they are not Christ's sheep. So on the one hand, one is responsible for not believing to become a sheep but on the other hand one cannot believe on Jesus Christ unless he is one of God's chosen sheep. In fact, not one person “can” come to Christ apart from God the Father bringing that one to Christ (**John 6:44**).

Jesus said to these religious frauds, you aren't calling the shots about who goes to heaven, the Godhead is calling the shots and you won't believe because you aren't chosen by us.

**(Response #4)** - My true sheep hear Me and follow Me. **10:27**

If you aren't God's sheep you'll listen to anyone who will talk to you about religion. You'll listen to babbling nonsense and you won't defend truth or stand for truth because you aren't after truth.

First, the true sheep hear the Grace voice that only Jesus Christ saves them from sin (**John 5:24**). The true sheep know their only hope and chance for eternal life is to believe on Him for salvation and rely on God's grace. True sheep hear this, believe this and follow this and whenever some "wolf" tries to put human works or religion into the equation the true sheep runs away as fast as he can.

Now when Jesus Christ was here on earth physically the sheep could physically hear Him and follow Him. Now that He is gone it comes down to hearing the Word of God. If you have absolutely no desire to hear the Word of God and to be at church when it is carefully taught so you may learn and grow and apply, then you have just cause to ask this question - "Am I truly one of God's sheep?"

If you are actually one of God's sheep, you will love to go hear the Word of God and will love it when God speaks to you through His Word. You will not be critical of what you hear; you will love what you hear and will rejoice at what you hear. That is exactly what Jesus said to the seven churches of Revelation, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

**(Response #5) - My sheep are given by Me eternal life and eternal security . 10:28**

J. Vernon McGee used to say, "I believe in the eternal security of the believer and in the eternal insecurity of the make believer." **Jesus Christ wants His sheep to know they never need to worry about any evil predator robbing them of eternal life.**

**The origin of our salvation is Biblically speaking always traced to God, not us.** Salvation is a gift of God, not a work of man. I want you to carefully see what Jesus Christ promises to His sheep:

**Promise #1** - He gives His sheep eternal life. If it is eternal it cannot be temporal. If you can lose it in a week, a year or when you commit some sin, it isn't eternal.

**Promise #2** - He gives His sheep eternal life - it is given, it is a gift, not something we earn or merit and it is not something we may lose. No earthly shepherd can give a sheep life.

**Promise #3** - He promises His sheep they shall never perish. Jesus uses the most intense negation, which eliminates the possibility of something ever happening. Jesus is saying I promise My sheep that they never have the possibility or potential of perishing. Temporal death for a believer merely transfers the place of residency from earth to heaven. This promise is made by Jesus Christ, who is God, who cannot lie. If just one sheep could perish, He is a liar.

**Promise #4** - He promises His sheep that no one shall be able to take one sheep out of His hand. Christ holds every one of His sheep in His hand and no one can take any of them.

**(Response #6) - My sheep are given to Me by My Father Who gives My sheep eternal security. 10:29**

Now by adding this statement to what He has already said, it is clear that Jesus Christ wants His sheep to know that they are eternally secure once one believes on Him. This has nothing to do with how the sheep chooses to live his or her life. One famous preacher was once asked about this very point. What if the believer chooses to live like a heathen, wouldn't you be better to tell

them they could lose their salvation? The preacher said, absolutely not. Should we slander God with falsehood? Should I change the Word of God so it fits what you think? Would you tell your little two year old or six year old that if they disobey you, you will throw them out on the street? I think not and neither will God do that to one of His sheep. There are three facts brought out:

**Fact #1** - Every sheep has been given to God the Son by God the Father.

This is the doctrine of election. You were chosen by God the Father, and you were given to God the Son and God used the Spirit to track you down and bring you to His Son.

**Fact #2** - God the Father is the greatest ranked being in the Universe. In this context, the Father exceeds in greatness and power any who would try to tamper with His sheep. The ultimate authority of rank and power is God the Father. If you are in His hand you are safe.

**Fact #3** - Every sheep is in the Father's hand and no one can take them from the Father's hand.

There is a scene in Revelation in which there is a book at the Throne of God which is in the right hand and not one person is worthy to even approach the Throne, except for Jesus Christ (Revelation 5:1-5). Every sheep is held in the hand of God and no one can ever take that sheep out of God's hand for many reasons, one of which is that no one even has the worthiness to go to His throne. No one can get near you because no one can get near the Holy hand of the Holy God. When you believe on Jesus Christ, you are totally, completely and eternally secure.

**(Response #7)** - I and the Father are One . **10:30**

Here are six of the most powerful words pertaining to Christ's Deity that you will ever read. Now the Greek reads "I and the Father, *we-are*, one." (εγω και ο πατηρ εν εσμεν) The number "one" (εν) is neuter and anarthrous (no article), which means God the Father and God the Son are two distinct Divine Persons, but both are equally God with the same essence, oneness, character and quality. G. Abbott Smith said this neuter number emphasizes that there is only one God as opposed to the idea of many, but both Persons are the same Divine union (p. 134). So what we have here contextually is coequal Divine power protecting the sheep forever. God the Father and God the Son have every sheep in their eternal hands and no one can ever harm or take away their eternal life.

**CONFRONTATION FACT #3** – The religious Jews respond to Jesus. **10:31-33**

**These religious Jews do not really believe , but this is one time they do clearly understand .** The Jews took up stones to stone Jesus Christ for telling them the truth. This is nothing new (**5:16-18; 7:1**), they have done this before (**John 8:59**). There were always stones around the temple because of various construction projects. So Christ asks which of the good works which He had done with full authorization of God the Father were works for which they are stoning Him. They said because **You are a man and You are making yourself equal with God (v. 33)**. **It is true Jesus was a man and Jesus was equal with God. He is the God/man. Verse 33 stands as a key verse because you either come to terms with the truth of this verse or you will die in your sins.**

Now remember how this all started in **verse 24**, they wanted Him to plainly tell them who He was and when He does they want to stone Him. Here they are in His temple picking up stones to stone the One they should be worshipping.

**CONFRONTATION FACT #4** – Jesus responds to the religious Jews. **10:34-38**

**Point #1** - It is stated in the O.T. that you are “gods.” **10:34-35**

In Exodus 7:1, God said to Moses that He would make him like God before Pharaoh. The quote Jesus uses here is from Psalm 82:6 in which God rebuked the unjust judges by saying that they were “gods” in that they were sons of God who should have been judging justly according to His law, but they weren’t. God had given them His precious Word and had given them great power as judges to represent Him and they were abusing the power. They were taking the place of the law and acting like they were gods. Christ’s point is, even the Scriptures referred to people as ‘gods.’ In all reality these religious leaders had been acting like they were God, so what is so shocking if He refers to Himself as the Son of God. Notice the high regard Jesus has for the written Word in **verse 35**, you cannot break Scripture. God’s Word stands complete forever.

**Point #2** - If it may be said about Jewish humans, why not about Jesus the God/human. **10:36**

Jesus puts Himself next to the Father and says the Father sent Me into the world and I am His Son and why do you say I am blaspheming when I say this, when you say it concerning yourself that you are sons of God. If this phrase may be used of mere men like yourselves, how much more of Me the only One sent from heaven to earth?

**Point #3** - Base your faith on whether or not I do the works of God the Father. **10:37-38**

Christ says watch what I do and witness my works, which I am telling you prove that I and the Father are one. If I do these miraculous works, then believe Me and believe them. If I don’t do the works, then don’t believe Me. This is as honest as one can be.

**CONFRONTATION FACT #5** – The Jews reject Christ and desire to seize Christ. **10:39**

Notice the adverb “again.” This will always be the response of those who reject grace and love for their works and religion. The problem here was not evidence, it was their hearts. It didn’t matter what Christ did or said; they wanted Him dead.

**CONFRONTATION FACT #6** – Jesus leaves them and goes to people who believe on Him. **10:40-42**

The information here is not just a statement of geography, but one of theology. Jesus went to Perea, the area John had been (**John 1:28**), the Bethany area beyond the Jordan. Jesus will not come back to Jerusalem again until Palm Sunday and the final Passover that will lead to Him on the cross.

Not too many actually believed on Him in the comforts of religion in the Holy city, but many believed on Him out in the desert and wilderness areas. People flocked to see Jesus and to be taught by Jesus and many believed in Him as He taught them in the desolate areas of the Jordon River valley. “Many” people came to hear Him and “many” people believed on Him.

There are times when the truth of God and the one proclaiming the truth needs to go somewhere else. There does come a point, when God says your time to hear truth is up and I’ll take My truth to other people who want it.

What is interesting is that it is said that “many” believed. That word refers to a great number of people as opposed to a few (Smith, p. 371). What is so interesting is that when Jesus finally ascends into heaven, the actual number of disciples who had physically followed him were about 120 (Acts 1:15). What this tells us is that the majority of these believers we know nothing about except they believed on Jesus Christ and were eternally secure.

That is all you must do to be eternally secure - place all of your faith in Jesus Christ to be your Savior. Do not rely on yourself, your works, your religion, your goodness or your giving. You rely totally and completely on Him and you shall be saved and nothing shall ever pluck you out of the hands of God.