

G R A C E

Reformed Baptist Church

Soli ♦ Deo ♦ Gloria

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Good Shepherd part 2

John 10:1-19-30

November 6, 2005

Verses 19 – 21

- Yet again, the words of Jesus cause a division among the Jews.
 - The Greek word, here, is *SCI SMA*, or *scisma*, where we get our word **schism**.

- Some, once again, claim that Jesus is demon-possessed; yet, others affirm that He cannot be possessed, as “a demon cannot open the eyes of the blind.”

Verse 22

The Hebrew word Chanukah means "dedication." The story of Hanukkah begins in the reign of Alexander the Great. Alexander conquered Syria, Egypt and Palestine, but allowed the lands under his control to continue observing their own religions and retain a certain degree of autonomy. Under this relatively benevolent rule, many Jews assimilated into much the Hellenistic culture, adopting the language, the names, the customs, the dress of the Greeks, and marrying non-Jews as well.

In 200 BC, Palestine was under the control of the Seleucid King of Syria. In 168 BC, the ruler of the Syrian kingdom, Antiochus Epiphanes IV, stepped up his campaign to eradicate Judaism from the land, so that all subjects in his vast empire - which included the land of Israel - would share the same culture and worship the same gods. He began to oppress the Jews severely, placing a Hellenistic (Greek-influenced) priest in Jerusalem. He prohibited the practice of the Jewish religion, decreeing that circumcision and the possession of any part of the Hebrew Scriptures were punishable by death. He marched into Jerusalem, vandalized the Temple, erected a statue of Zeus on the altar, and desecrated its holiness with the blood of pigs (a non-kosher, unclean animal). Antiochus also sent Syrian overseers and soldiers to villages throughout Judea to enforce the edicts and force Jews to engage in idol worship.

When the Syrian soldiers reached Modin (about 12 miles northwest of the capital), they demanded that the local leader, Mattathias the *Kobein* (a member of the priestly class), be an example to his people by sacrificing a pig on a portable pagan altar. The elder refused and killed not only the Jew who stepped forward to do the Syrian's bidding, but also the king's representative.

With the rallying cry "Whoever is for God, follow me!" Mattathias and his five sons (Jonathan, Simon, Judah, Eleazar, and Yohanan) fled to the hills and caves of the wooded Judean wilderness.

Joined by a ragtag army of others like them, simple farmers dedicated to the laws of Moses, and armed only with spears, bows and arrows, and rocks from the terrain, the Maccabees, as Mattathias' sons, particularly Judah, came to be known, fought a guerilla war against the well-trained, well-equipped, seemingly endless forces of the mercenary Syrian army.

In three years, the Maccabees cleared the way back to the Temple Mount, which they reclaimed from the pagan forces. They cleaned the Temple, dismantled the defiled altar, and constructed a new one in its place. Three years to the day after Antiochus' mad rampage (*Kislev* 25, 165 BC), the Maccabees held a dedication (*hanukkah*) of the Temple with proper sacrifice, rekindling of the golden *menorah*, and eight days of celebration and praise to God. Proper Jewish worship had been reestablished.

According to tradition, as recorded in the Talmud, at the time of the rededication, there was very little oil left that had not been defiled by the Greeks. When Judah's forces searched the Temple, they found only one flask of oil on which the seal of the High Priest remained (which indicated it was not defiled). Oil was needed for the menorah (candelabrum) in the Temple, which was supposed to burn throughout the night every night. There was only enough oil to burn for one day, yet miraculously, it burned for eight days, the time needed to prepare a fresh supply of oil for the menorah. An eight day festival was declared to commemorate this miracle. Note: the holiday commemorates the miracle of the oil, not the military victory.

From that point forward, it was decreed that every year, on 25 *Kislev* (November / December), Jews would commemorate the rededication of the temple and the miracle of the oil. The festival is also referred to as the "Feast of Lights" because the lighting of the lamps and candles in Jewish homes symbolizes the belief that "the right to worship appeared to us [possibly 'shone upon us'] at a time when we hardly dared hope for it" (Josephus, *Ant.* xii. 325).

Both the use of lights and the joyousness of the occasion ensured that it would be compared with the Feast of Tabernacles; indeed, it was called 'a Feast of Tabernacles in the month Kislev' (2 Maccabees 1:9). Unlike Tabernacles, however, it could be celebrated at home.

D.A. Carson

- ❑ As with the other Jewish feasts mentioned in the Gospel of John [Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles / Booths], **Jesus Christ is the perfect fulfillment of the Feast of Dedication.**
- ❑ **Therefore, Jesus is not only "the Good Shepherd" but "the Light of the World" (a continuation of the theme in Chapter 9).**

Verse 23

- ❑ This verse opens with the words, "it was winter..."
 - Some commentators have suggested that John intends for the reader to understand "winter" as having spiritual significance.

- “Winter” is often viewed in the same light as “night” (John 13:3), i.e. spiritual death/darkness.
 - “A great deliverance from an Antichrist and the triumph of true religion was being celebrated [during Hanukkah], but the frosty temperature without corresponded to the frozen spirits of ‘the Jews.’” Beasley-Murray
- “Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.”
 - The reason John tells the reader that Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon may simply be because “it was winter,” i.e. it was cold in the open courtyard.
 - However, John may have chosen to mention this detail because it, in a sense, looks forward to the time when new believers, after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, would gather in the portico of Solomon to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:11; 5:12).

Verse 24

- The phrase, “How long will You keep us in suspense?” could also mean, “How long are you going to annoy us?” However, the former is likely what was meant.
- This question implies that Jesus has not been straightforward, as though He has not been fair.
- They, then, ask what they really want to know, “If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”
 - Interestingly, up to this point, Jesus has yet to publicly, in a Jewish context, explicitly declare Himself as the Messiah.
 - The reason for this is likely because in first century Palestine, the title Christ [“Christ” is the Greek word for the Hebrew word “Messiah”] carried with it political and military connotations that Jesus avoided associating Himself with.
 - However, even if Jesus had told the Jews, “I am the Christ,” they would not have believed Him.
 - Further, it must be stated that, for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, it is PERFECTLY CLEAR, given all what Jesus has already said and done, that He is the perfect fulfillment of the Old Testament; the One sent from the Father; the Christ. He could not have been clearer.

Verse 25

- Jesus, now, responds clearly to the Jews: “**I told you, and you do not believe;**”
- He, then, states, “the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me.”

- This statement is perfectly consistent with Jesus' words in John 5:36. Further, in Chapter 5, Jesus makes it clear that He has many witnesses to verify the truthfulness of His testimony [consistent with Deuteronomy 19:15]:
 - John the Baptist
 - His [Jesus'] Works
 - The Father
 - Scripture

Verses 26 – 30

- This is one of the most “difficult” statements of Jesus in all of Scripture.
 - Recall John 6:60, “Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, “This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?””
 - The Greek word, here, for “difficult” is *skel(ay)ros*, σκι ἡρός [also in Matthew 25:24; Acts 26:14; James 3:4; Jude 15]
 - *Skelayros* does NOT mean “hard or difficult to understand”; rather, it means “**harsh**” or “**offensive**.”
- Jesus explains that the reason the Jews do not believe in Him is simple: “They are not His sheep.”
- John Calvin, referencing Galatians 4:9 accurately states, “Before men know God, they must first be known by Him.”
- This passage parallels John 6:37, 44: “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out...No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”
- In Verse 29, Jesus states, “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all...”
 - This rendering does NOT indicate that the Father is superior to the Son [this will be dealt with in John 14:28 (“...the Father is greater than I”) – even here, Jesus is speaking of a *functional* subordination to the Father, not an *ontological* subordination]; rather, this verse emphasizes **the nature of eternal security**. The word “all” refers to “no one.” Further, it must be read in light of Verse 30 in order to understand truly what this Verse means.
- In Verse 30, Jesus states, “I and the Father are one.”
- First of all, this Verse literally reads, “I and the Father, *we* are one.” The verb for “are” is plural in the original Greek.
- Secondly, the word for “one” is NOT masculine in the original Greek...it is neuter.
- Therefore, Jesus is NOT stating that the Father and the Son are the same person.

- James White, in his book, *The Forgotten Trinity*, asserts that John 10:30 is “the single most popular passage cited in defense of modalism.” Modalism is a historical heresy that “is a denial of the Trinity which states that God is a single person who, throughout biblical history, has revealed Himself in three modes, or forms.” Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry
- James White notes that, given the context of this Verse, the Father and the Son “are one in giving eternal life, they are one in protecting the sheep, they are one in the covenant of redemption”...they are one in **purpose**.
 - Notice also that Scripture refers to a husband and wife as “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24); however, they still remain two distinct persons. To describe them as “one flesh” connotes a special degree of closeness or intimacy. So, also, it is with the Father and the Son.
 - Also, in John 17:22, Jesus prays that His disciples “may be one as we are one.” Clearly, here, the Lord is referring to “one” in *unity* and *purpose*.
- Also, if modalism is correct, and God exists eternally as one person, then there is/was no atonement for our sins. The reason for this is that the Father sent the Son as a propitiation for our sins. The Son, then, became the object of the Father’s wrath. If there is not a distinction in the persons of the Trinity, then, the Father’s wrath was not satisfied.

As Jesus bore the guilt of our sins alone, God the Father, the mighty Creator, the Lord of the universe, poured out on Jesus the fury of his wrath: Jesus became the object of the intense hatred of sin and vengeance against sin that God had patiently stored up since the beginning of the world.

Modalism ultimately loses the heart of the doctrine of the atonement – that is, the idea that God sent his Son as a substitutionary sacrifice, and that the Son bore the wrath of God in our place, and that the Father, representing the interests of the Trinity, saw the suffering of Christ and was satisfied (Isaiah 53:11).

Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, p. 254

- Therefore, given the context of this passage, Jesus’ words indicate the following truths:
 - First, because “My Father is greater than all,” no one **is able** to snatch them out of His hand. In other words, no one **has the ability** to do so. The “no one” here refers to the “thieves and the robbers” [of Verses 8-10] which include all spiritual forces of wickedness [i.e. Satan and his demons, which are all *created beings*], as the Father is greater than them all.
 - Secondly, because “I and the Father are one,” and we are perfectly united in the redemption of “My sheep,” and, therefore, no one is able to snatch away those for whom the Son has laid down His life (Verse 11) and has given eternal life to (Verse 28) – for these are those also whom the Father has given to the Son (Verse 29).
 - REMEMBER, our eternal security is based upon the ability of the Son and the Father to preserve us, not on our ability to remain in Christ.

- It is interesting that the most “difficult” or “offensive” statements in the Gospel of John with respect to the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation (John 6; John 10; etc.), are each immediately followed by a statement concerning the absolute sovereignty of God in the preservation of His people. In other words, it is as though “you cannot have one without the other.”
 - “Our continuance in eternal life depends not on our feeble hold on Christ, but on His firm grip on us.”
Morris
- “This [passage] conveys the image of utter security on the part of Jesus’ followers”
Andreas Kostenberger.

◇ Therefore, Jesus’ sheep are those who:

1. **Were chosen before the Foundation of the World** [Ephesians 1:4]
2. **Are redeemed by the death of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who is sent by the Father** [to redeem His people] **and lays down His life for the sheep** [John 10:11]
3. **Are effectually drawn by the Father** (by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word of God, on the basis of the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) [John 6:44]
4. **Are given to the Son by the Father** [John 10:29]
5. **Are Known by the Good Shepherd** [John 10:27]
6. **Hear and know/understand the voice of the Good Shepherd** [John 10:4,27]
7. **Follow the Good Shepherd** [John 10:4, 27]
8. **Are preserved by Him [and the Father] – i.e. they will NEVER perish** [John 10:26-30]

* Once again, we see here the nature of the Covenant of Redemption.

- It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul states in Romans 8:38-39 that nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”