

John 10:22-42

In the previous passage Jesus declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd. Psalm 23:1 tell us “the Lord is my shepherd.” That means He is the One who looks out for us, leads us to good pasture, protects us, and cares for our well-being. Jesus was saying, “Yep, that is me, and there is no other!”

Sheep are the dumbest of animals. They cannot survive on their own. They need a shepherd. That’s us! We want to think we can do fine on our own, but I ask people how that is going? The answer is usually, “Not so good.” We were created to need a shepherd and be in a flock. Going on our own puts us in danger from the wolves.

22 At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,

22 Our previous passages were during the feast of Sukkoth (Tabernacles). Two months later is the feast of Dedication, now called Hanukkah. This is the one mention of Hanukkah in Scripture. The temple was re-dedicated after the Syrians/Seleucids had defiled it. The lights commemorate the miraculous supply of sacred oil during the dedication until more could be made (164 B.C.).

23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.

23 The temple outer court had colonnades on the sides which provided shade from the sun and protection from the weather. The eastern side was called the portico of Solomon. Rabbi would teach under the colonnades as people gathered around to listen.

24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

24 They wanted to know if Jesus was claiming to be the long-awaited Messiah. I do not think they had any intention of following Him even if He claimed to be the militant Messiah they expected. They just wanted to end the suspense so that they could denounce Him or inform Rome. They were losing money from the elimination of the temple business that the former high priest Annas had established.

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me,

25 The problem was that their expectation of Messiah was not God incarnate. They wanted another King David. But there was a greater problem than their misunderstanding of Messiah; their hearts were not open to God.

Even if they did not believe His previous claims of being the bread of life, the living water, the light of the world, the One to Whom you must come to receive eternal life, and the judge of mankind, they should believe because His miracles declared Him to be the fulfillment of prophecy (John 5:36). The Messiah was to cause the lame to walk and the blind to see (Isaiah 35:5,6). Jesus had done that and much more.

26 but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock.

26 People do not believe when they have another god. Their hearts are not open. They are in another fold, not the sheep pen of Jesus. We witness this frequently. You share with someone again and again. They do not want to believe. They are not honest about the information and do not look at it objectively. They are not His sheep. I have

heard many simply say that it is not a matter of truth or error to them, they just choose not to believe.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

27,28 Jesus reiterated a point from His sheep and shepherd sermon. Sheep know their master's voice. They follow their shepherd. The Jewish leadership was not following Jesus because they were not His sheep. Jesus is clearly saying that His way is different from that of the Jewish established system and leadership.

He gives His sheep eternal life, a relationship with the eternal God, and promises that they will never perish. That does not mean they won't die physically, but that their souls will not experience the second death (Revelation 2:11). In the language of Jesus, life is a relationship with the eternal God. Death is a separation from Him who is Life (John 1:4). Jesus' sheep are secure. No one can steal them away.

29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

29 God won't let them steal Jesus' sheep. They are in God's hands. Being in Jesus' fold is being in God's hands. What a comforting promise. God is greater than all. There is no enemy powerful enough to get you out of God's hands. We are secure. Praise God! It reminds me of the line in Martin Luther's hymn. *"And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear for God has willed His truth to triumph through us!"* Jesus was warning them that they better not try to fight against Almighty God (Acts 5:39).

30 I and the Father are one."

30 Did you hear that claim? He is one with the greatest of all! They asked Him to declare plainly if He was the Messiah. He did (John 14:9)! But this is not what they were expecting a messiah to be; this is greater.

31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.

31 They wanted to kill Jesus for blasphemy. They knew He was declaring equality with the One who is greater than all. Let me give you my contemporary version. "These are my followers, my sheep. Almighty God gave them to me to shepherd. They are in my hands, which is the same as being in God's hands, and you thieves cannot do anything about it, because God and I are one."

32 Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?"

32 Jesus is surrounded. It is not time for Him to die. It is not the manner in which He is to die, yet He continues to calmly give them reasons to believe (1 John 3:12). The word for "great" (*kalos*) in this verse is the same word that is used for "good" in "good shepherd," which suggests deeds of power and moral excellence, resulting in health and well-being.

33 The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

33 They knew what He was saying! He told them plainly. They just refused to receive it. He had proved it with His miracles. They did not care.

*34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'?"
35 If he called them gods to whom the word of God came--and Scripture cannot be broken--
36 o you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"*

34-36 At least He might talk them out of the worst crime a man could commit by showing them that God even calls those to whom the word of God comes, “gods.” Since that is the case, why accuse Him of blasphemy for saying, “I am God’s Son?” (Psalm 82)

37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; 38 but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." 39 Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. 40 He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. 41 And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." 42 And many believed in him there.

37-42 Jesus is pressing His claim that they should consider the mystical oneness He has with the Father because of the miracles He has performed in public, unmatched works of power that authenticated His claims. Are you His sheep? Are you following the Good Shepherd?

Questions

What was motivating the Jewish leaders?

What was the miscommunication between Jesus and the Jews?

Why can't they hear Jesus' voice?

Why is verse 29 reassuring?

Whose hands are you in?

What does verse 30 mean?

What is the fuller meaning of the word “great”? (in “great miracles”)